



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 11th MARCH 2024
AT 7.00PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL

PRESENT:

Cllr M Foster (Mayor)
Cllr I Agnew
Cllr D Albone
Cllr P Guilcher
Cllr J Jones
Cllr M North
Cllr S Patel
Cllr M Russell
Cllr A Skilton
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr C Thomas

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships
Mr E Bour – Head of Finance & Deputy RFO
Ms F Gumush – Deputy Administration & HR Manager
Miss A Green – Committee Clerk

Members of the Public –

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees that this is a formal meeting, the Mayor advised that members of the public will be given an opportunity to speak during public open session but not at other times. The meeting is being filmed and by being present attendees are deemed to have agreed to be filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings. The Mayor advised that attendees should not disclose any personal information of individuals as this would infringe the Data Protection Rights of that individual.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr G Barrett, Cllr M Knight, Cllr S Sajid, Cllr J Woodhead.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

None.

b. Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

Cllr Russell for Items 10d and 10j.

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. The Chairman had no announcements but mentioned that Cllr Strachan, who recently attended Town/Parish Council Network - Budget briefing at CBC and

would be updating Members on the outcome.

As the Council's representative, Cllr Strachan had the opportunity to meet with CBC's Chief Executive to discuss their budget provision. He explained that CBC was facing significant financial constraints, with only £34 million remaining in their reserves - equivalent to approximately six weeks of expenditure.

He further noted that CBC Officers emphasised their need to meet statutory obligations, particularly in the areas of care and special educational needs. Additional meetings would be held to provide further updates to town and parish councils.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Cllr Grant Fage, Ward Councillor

Addressing the Council, Cllr Fage referred to Item 10c of the agenda, which concerns the planning application for land north and south of Dunton Lane. He noted that he had raised questions with the Officer overseeing the application, particularly regarding the absence of detailed landscaping drawings.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

a. PCSO Ann Jeeves and Chief Inspector Jim Goldsmith

Speaking to the Council, PCSO Jeeves introduced Beds Connected, an online portal where registered residents can receive news, appeals, local crime updates, and prevention advice. She also noted that the platform allows them to conduct public surveys, the results of which are discussed at their quarterly meetings.

PCSO Jeeves highlighted that the top public concerns, as voted for by residents, were drug-related issues, anti-social behaviour, and speeding. She reassured the Council that these concerns were being actively addressed through speed guns, speed controls, and targeted efforts to tackle prolific shoplifting linked to anti-social behaviour and drug use.

Chief Inspector Goldsmith also addressed the Council, announcing that a new inspector, Janine Graham, had recently been appointed to the area and hoped to attend a future Council meeting to introduce herself. He further explained that the police team regularly presents performance reports to other town councils and was surprised this had not been done in Biggleswade. He assured Members that Inspector Graham would include these reports as a regular update to BTC moving forward.

Members raised concerns about recent incidents of anti-social behaviour affecting BTC assets, highlighting the significant time and financial costs incurred by the Council.

They also noted the growing number of e-scooters in the town, many being ridden at excessive speeds on both roads and footpaths and questioned what could be done to address the issue.

Chief Inspector Goldsmith clarified that e-scooters remain illegal unless part of an authorised trial scheme. However, due to delays in the scheme's rollout, their numbers have increased. He explained that when police are able to apprehend riders, they issue notices under Section 59 of the Police Reform Act. He added that in the next 4–6 weeks, officers will have better means to distinguish legal from illegal scooters, enabling them to seize those being used unlawfully.

6. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Cllr Skilton inquired about the possibility of installing CCTV at Drove Road Chapel following residents' concerns over anti-social behaviour, particularly after noticing that part of the chapel was being marketed for use.

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships explained that a mobile CCTV camera had been in place during the chapel's renovation works but was redeployed after the project's completion to other areas, such as the Rose Lane Car Park, where issues had arisen. He further noted that due to the sensitivity of consecrated ground and privacy protection laws, CCTV installation in certain areas of the cemetery was not permitted.

Cllr Russell raised concerns about the lack of a crossing on St Andrew's Street and urged Officers to revisit the issue with CBC. She stressed the importance of bringing the matter back to the agenda, noting that the Council had formally decided to install a traffic island on the street.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. P11 Item 9d. The word 'to' is missing in the paragraph where it reads: 'campaign promising'.

Subject to these amendments the Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 11th February 2025.

- b. Members **NOTED** the minutes of the Town Centre Management Committee held on Tuesday 18th February 2025.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

Item 5 Invited Speaker. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive noted that one of the outcomes connected to that was the establishment of a Working Group with Members of Northill Parish Council. He explained that he had been in contact with the Parish Clerk to discuss the approach to the A1 crossing.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive called for Members who wished to be part of the Working Group. Cllr North, Cllr Russell and Cllr Skilton all indicated their desire.

Item 8 Matters Arising. Cllr Albane pointing to the updates with regards to the footpath on Rivel Ivel indicated that he had received an email from Cllr Woodhead via the Town Clerk and asked that this be shared with Members.

Cllr Skilton updated that following a meeting of the Green Wheel Development group, both the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) and Central Bedfordshire Council are looking for alternative paths away from the river as erosion of the bank is such that it is now necessary to do so.

Item 8 Matters Arising. Cllr Albane asked if there had been any updates to the cutting schedule for Crab Lane since the last meeting. Officers responded that despite two further requests for information, they were informed that the Arboreal Team would be responding; however if no information had been received, they had been advised to put the matter on 'Fix my street'.

Item 9d Lloyds Bank Closure. Cllr Strachan asked that subject to advise from the Town Clerk, that this item could be kept on the agenda. The Town Clerk updated that all of the resolutions pertaining to this item had been resolved. He added that following the Council's application to Cash Access UK had declined the Council's application and raised concerns that the Council had submitted another application within a very short period of time. He also explained that Cash Access UK had conducted an assessment, and that they had examined local provisions, concluding that there was an urban location for ATM's within a mile and rural location within 3 miles. They concluded that they believe there is still good cash access. A petition would not change this decision. The assessment considers cash access rather than access to broader banking services.

Cllr Strachan proposed that the item be brought to the Town Centre Management Committee so that an argument was prepared before the November deadline, when Lloyds would be closing. Members **AGREED** that this was an acceptable proposal.

9. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **TRO-002 - Lawrence Road, Biggleswade, No Entry Except Cycles and Waiting Restrictions**

Members reviewed the Public Notice issued by Central Bedfordshire concerning the proposed restrictions on Lawrence Road.

During the discussion, several concerns were raised, including the limited scope of the restriction, the direction of travel, and parking implications.

Following deliberation, Members **RESOLVED** to support the proposed restrictions on Lawrence Road.

However, they requested that Officers highlight that the gated property at the location of the restriction should be avoided, when responding to CBC. Additionally, Members emphasised the importance of ensuring clear and unobstructed signage for drivers, free from interference by trees.

b. **New street trading application**

Members reviewed the street trading consent application from Central Bedfordshire Council's Licensing Department for Joanne Quinn of Jo's Ices.

Following discussions, Members **STRONGLY OBJECTED** to the application for several reasons, including:

- Inconsistent application process
- Objection to trading seven days a week
- Loss of another parking space in Market Square
- Lack of clarification on electricity requirements
- Need for awareness that payment is required on Market days
- Absence of a diagram showing the exact vehicle position
- Strong objection to any vehicle being positioned outside the War Memorial

c. **Community Governance Review**

Members reviewed information from Central Bedfordshire regarding a Community Governance Review covering the entire Council area.

Given the broad scope of the issue, Members agreed that it could not be fully addressed in a single meeting.

As a result, Members **RESOLVED** to establish a working group to facilitate discussions and collaboration with neighbouring councils.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/24/01790/PIP - 154 Hitchin Street, Biggleswade, SG18 8BP**

Appeal Reference: APP/P0240/W/25/3358620.

CBC Excerpt: Permission in Principle: Erection of 2 x two-bedroom houses with associated landscaping, bin stores, cycle stores and widened vehicle crossover.

Previous Objection at Town Council 9th July 2024:

“The Town Council **OBJECTS** to this application on the following grounds:

- Highways access.
- Overdevelopment.”

Members **NOTED** the application as it was currently in appeals.

b. **CB/25/00437/VOC – 8 The Avenue, Biggleswade, SG18 0PS**

CBC Excerpt: Variation of condition numbers 2 and 3 of planning permission CB/22/03013/FULL (First floor extension over existing garage. Two storey rear extension with dual hipped roof. Single storey rear extension.) Variation sought to change window, door positions and materials. Amendment to dimensions of extensions.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

c. **CB/25/00421/REG3 – Land to the North and South of Dunton Lane, Biggleswade**

CBC Excerpt: Erection of a battery energy storage system (BESS) with associated access, landscaping and ancillary works.

The Town Council **STRONGLY OBJECTS** to this application based on reports by Landscape Officers on the lack of vegetation and landscaping and the Archaeology Officers who have referred to the documented multi-period archaeological landscape.

d. **CB/25/00399/FULL – 26 Ivel Gardens, Biggleswade, SG18 0AN**

CBC Excerpt: Erection of a front part single, part two storey extension. Partial internal garage conversion.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments. The Town Council would however like that the Tree and Landscape Officers concerns are closely noted.

e. **CB/TCA/25/00074 – Brigham House, 93 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0LD**

CBC Excerpt: Works to trees within a Conservation Area:
T1 - Chestnut – Photographs

T2 - Chestnut – Photographs
T3 - Beech – Photographs
T4 - Chestnut – Photographs
T5 - Robinia – Photographs
T8 - Lime – Photographs
T9 - Lime – Photographs
T10 - Beech - Photographs

Members **NOTED** the application.

f. **CB/25/00305/FULL - The Plough House, 276 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 9TB**

Demolition of 2 existing buildings and removal of pre-existing mobile home. Erection of a acoustic sound barrier fence, change of use of land for the creation of 4 Gypsy/Traveller Pitches, comprising the siting of 4 static caravans and 4 touring caravans alongside the erection of 1 combined dayroom for use by family members (Part Retrospective).

Previous Objection at Town Council 12th November 2024:

The Town Council previously objected to this planning application on the basis of highways safety concerns.

The Town Council renews their **OBJECTION** to this application, on the basis of highways safety concerns.

g. **CB/25/00502/FULL - 2 Maple Close, Biggleswade, SG18 0EE**

Two storey side and single storey lean to front extension.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

h. **CB/25/00476/FULL - 16 Turing Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8GB**

Erection of a rear conservatory.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

i. **CB/25/00473/FULL - 79 Daffodil Drive, Biggleswade, SG18 8YU**

Single storey rear extension and garage conversion.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

j. **CB/TCA/25/00111 - The Vicarage, 3 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0AT**

Works to trees within a Conservation Area: Fell Holly (T2), Elder (T4) and dead Cherry (T5). Reduce in height approx. 2m and remove any dead wood to Lawson Cypress (T1). Remove dead top and adventitious side branch to Holly (T3). Trim back from highway up to 5m to Conifer (T6). Reduce crown 0.5-1m back to above old pruning points to Silver Birch (T7).

Members **NOTED** the application as it was currently in appeals.

11. PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES

This report was **NOTED**.

12. ACCOUNTS

Financial Administration

a. Position & Accounts for January 2025

The Head of Finance & Deputy RFO presented the January accounts, explaining that the projected outturn after ten months indicated a deficit of £25,789 by the end of the 2024-2025 financial year.

He clarified that this deficit accounted for committed expenditures, including pitch maintenance and professional and legal costs previously approved by the Council. He also reassured Members that the final deficit would be offset by the general reserve, ensuring a balanced year-end position.

13. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- a. None.

14. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No one from the public wished to speak.

15. EXEMPT

a. Community Agent Service Level Agreement (SLA) Report

Members discussed the report by the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships and the Head of Finance & Deputy RFO and **AGREED** to the proposals as laid out.

The Mayor closed the meeting at **8.40pm**