



Ref: Agenda/PLOS – 27th January 2026

22nd January 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

All Members of the Public Land & Open Spaces Committee are hereby summoned to the Public Land & Open Spaces Committee Meeting of Biggleswade Town Council that will take place on **Tuesday 27th January 2026** at the **Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade** commencing at **7:00pm**, for the purpose of considering and recommending the business to be transacted as specified below.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Tarrant", written over a horizontal line.

Peter Tarrant
Town Clerk & Chief Executive

Distribution: All Town Councillors
Notice Boards
The Press

Committee Members:
Cllr. M Foster (Chairman)
Cllr. M Knight (Deputy Chairman)
Cllr. I Agnew
Cllr J. Jones
Cllr. M North
Cllr. C Thomas
Cllr A. Skilton
Cllr. D. Strachan
Cllr. J. Woodhead (ex-officio Member)
Cllr. D. Albone (ex-officio Member)

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a record be kept of the Members present and that this record form part of the minutes of the meeting. Members who cannot attend a meeting should tender apologies to the Town Clerk and the Committee Clerk.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

- a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item.

If a Member has declared a Disclosable Pecuniary interest, they must withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the item to which the interest relates. If the Member has been granted a dispensation by the Council, they must still declare the interest but may take part in the discussion and vote.

- b. Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item.

This is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest. Upon identification Members can take part in any vote.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, pertaining to matters listed on the Agenda.

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_DA-crhTYRmisAN923l8yig

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman, prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **(one) three-minute slot**.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

None.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. The Minutes of the Public Land & Open Spaces Committee Meeting held on **Tuesday 21st October 2025** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

8. MATTERS ARISING

- a. The Minutes of the Public Land & Open Spaces Committee Meeting held on **Tuesday 21st October 2025**.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. PLOS Presentation and Status Report

For Members to receive and consider a written report from the Head of Governance and the Public Realm Manager. This will be supplemented by an on-screen presentation of ongoing Public Realm work.

10. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Allotments Update Report

For Members to receive and consider a written report from the Public Realm Manager and the Head of Governance.

b. PWLB Drawdown

At the 12th of September 2025 Town Council meeting, on the Play Areas Improvements Project, Members RESOLVED to proceed with options A and B as proposed by Officers, and to draw down £75,620 of the £79,528 PWLB allocation set out in the Town Council's proposed 2026-27 budget.

Officers actioned the Members' resolution and drew down the £75,620 PWLB allocation in early January 2026. The Play Areas improvement project is underway, with the play equipment manufacturing process likely to take until the 1st March. Once the equipment is received, the company will install both the ground surface matting, the play equipment and associated items in the five play areas, which will be completed by early May 2026. An independent play areas inspector will then provide a full H&S report approving the regenerated play areas for public use by the 11th of May. A BTC opening ceremony is being anticipated for early May 2026 subject to no delays.'

11. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, in respect of any other business of the Town Council.

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_DA-crhTYRmisAN92318yig

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **(one) three-minute slot**.

12. EXEMPT ITEMS

The following resolution will be **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

(Exempt minutes of the Public Land & Open Spaces Committee Meeting Tuesday 21st October 2025).

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolve** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.



**MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE PUBLIC LAND AND OPEN SPACES MEETING
HELD TUESDAY 21ST OCTOBER 2025 AT 7.00PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN
COUNCIL OFFICES THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE,
SG18 8DL**

PRESENT:

Cllr. M Foster (Chairman)
Cllr. M Knight (Deputy Chairman)
Cllr. I Agnew
Cllr. J Jones
Cllr. M North
Cllr. C Thomas
Cllr. A Skilton
Cllr. D Strachan
Cllr. D Albone (ex-officio voting Member)

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships
Mr H Henderson - Public Realm Manager
Miss A Green – Committee Clerk

Members of the Public – 0

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees that this is a formal meeting, the Chairman 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 Chairman 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

a. 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. Thomas declared a non-pecuniary interest in Biggleswade Allotments in relation to Item 9b.

Cllr. Strachan declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 13b.

3. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were made by the Chairman.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No members of the public were present, either online or in person.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

No guest speaker was invited.

6. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

- a. Members queried the rationale behind placing items 13b and 13c under exempt.

The Clerk explained that both items pertain to sensitive negotiations and business matters which are not appropriate for discussion in a public forum at this stage.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

No amendments were made to the minutes.

The Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Public Land And Open Spaces Meeting held **Tuesday 17th June 2025** and the Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

9. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- a. **Prioritisation of Road Works 2026/27**

Members discussed which areas within Biggleswade should be prioritised for the 2026 Highways Improvements Plan.

Members raised the following areas for consideration:

- Hitchin Street Road Surface: Raised due to poor condition of Hitchin Street's road surface due to repeated water leaks, posing risks to cyclists. Members emphasised the concerns particularly related to Blondham Road and South View.
- Hitchin Street between Bonds Lane and Market Square: Raised due to sections of the road beginning to collapse. Sunken drains have created hazardous dips.
- Potton Road Railway Bridge and Embankment - Raised due to overgrown vegetation and narrow footpaths forcing pedestrians into fast-moving traffic near a blind corner.
- London Road - Raised due to poor road surface and abundance of potholes.
- Potton Road Railway Bridge – Raised due to lack of visibility and sequencing of the traffic lights at the bridge.

In addition to the concerns raised regarding road and pathway maintenance, Members proposed improvements to cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, including:

- Enhanced cycle provision on London Road and Potton Road.
- Improved pedestrian access on Potton Road, particularly at the bridge and the crossing at St. John Street.
- Introduction of a contraflow cycle route on Rose Lane between Sun Street and St. John's Road.

- A new cycle route from the junction of Rose Lane and St. John's Road to the Dan Albone Car Park. Currently, cyclists are forced to follow one-way traffic, leading to pavement use and safety concerns.
- A segregated cycle route from Jordan's Mill to Langford Garden Centre.

Members stated that, of the suggestions discussed, priority should be given to those with clear safety implications. It was agreed that safety-related concerns should be addressed first.

Members **AGREED** the Chairman and Deputy Chairman would compile and submit the final list of priorities to the Joint Committee on behalf of the Council.

b. **2026/27 PLOS Budget**

The Town Clerk gave Members a summary of the report, emphasising that each committee will have the opportunity to review and consider its own budget, which will then inform the overall Town Council budget.

The Clerk explained that Officers are proposing that Members approve a standstill budget in light of the precept increases in previous years.

The Clerk confirmed that once all Committee budget submissions are received, they will be reported to the Finance & General Purposes Committee, followed by a full Council discussion.

Several appendices reflect an inflation rate of 3%, derived from the latest available data as of August 2025.

The Clerk noted that Officers are committed to identifying cost efficiencies and reductions, having already achieved savings of approximately £150,000 over the past four to five years. The next major procurement focus will be the Town Council's ICT contract.

Members thank Officers for the detailed report, and initially raised the following queries listed as follows:

- How do the provided figures for burial damage and vandalism compare to previous years?
- Why known servicing requirements—such as the roller door or vehicle maintenance—are not automatically included in the budget?

The Clerk explained that costs for burial damage and vandalism are typically absorbed within existing budget, and in some cases, contributions are sought from third parties, such as families.

Members **SUGGESTED** that the Council adopt a formal policy on damage to headstones and burial monuments to ensure a consistent and fair approach to cost recovery.

In response to the query regarding servicing, the Clerk clarified that the figures provided are indicative and subject to Member discretion. The Head of Finance added that the proposed increase is in addition to existing maintenance provisions, which are already incorporated into the budget.

Additionally, the Public Realm Manager further explained that the current maintenance contract covers only basic services and excludes items such as tyres. The proposed increase would allow the Council to move from a basic to a more comprehensive level of cover.

Several Members noted that the overall budget appeared reasonable and commended officers for their efforts in ensuring responsible spending. However, concern was raised about the proposed 3.5% increase, with some Members warning that if all committees submit similar figures, the Council may struggle to meet its financial targets.

Members noted a projected £1,800 increase in electricity costs at Drove Road Cemetery, as outlined in the appendices provided, querying whether lighting systems could be reviewed for efficiency. The Head of Finance responded that the invoice is issued quarterly and has not yet been received but confirmed that officers would explore the use of more energy-efficient bulbs.

Members raised concerns about the costings for allotments, suggesting they may be disproportionately high and should be reviewed in future budgets. Burial fees were also questioned, with Members noting inconsistencies and high charges.

The Head of Finance explained that the fees were adjusted following a resolution to benchmark against other councils and apply CPI.

The Chairman confirmed that there would be no increase in junior football pitch fees. Some Members cautioned that freezing fees now could lead to larger increases in future years and proposed smaller, incremental adjustments. Others disagreed, arguing that keeping fees low is a way to give back to the community and that alternative funding sources should be explored.

A balanced approach was proposed, with Members agreeing that while junior pitch fees should remain unchanged, a modest increase for adult full-size pitches would be appropriate.

Members **RESOLVED** to maintain junior pitch fees and increase adult pitch fees by £2.

c. **PLOS Presentation and Status Report**

A presentation was shared on screen reflecting the work and initiatives being carried out by the Public Realm team.

The Public Realm Manager shared the excellent work being conducted by the PR team.

Members commended the Public Realm Manager, the Chargehand and the Public Realm team for their hard work and in maintaining and improving the town.

d. **Play Areas PWLB Improvements Update Report**

The Head of Governance thanked Members for their contributions and noted that feedback from previous discussions had been incorporated into the current report.

Members sought clarification regarding Watkins Walk, specifically what action they were being asked to take.

The Chairman explained that during the site visit, Members acknowledged the area is not well-used or well-regarded. He emphasised that this is not a reflection on the Public Realm Team, whose work has improved the site, but suggested that relocating the play equipment to a more frequented area might be more beneficial.

Members stressed that any significant changes to Watkins Walk should be subject to public consultation.

Members **RECOMMENDED** that for future PLOS meetings when Officers plan to present reports to the Committee regarding BTC play areas or other green spaces, site visits should be arranged to enable Members to assess the locations prior to the meeting.

Members suggested revising the wording of the proposal for Stratton, expressing doubt that a wooden adventure trail would appeal to teenagers. Concerns were raised about older children misusing equipment intended for younger age groups.

Officers acknowledged that alternative options may exist and agreed that further exploration is needed.

Members proposed monitoring usage at Watkins Walk following recent improvements before making any decisions.

A Tuesday evening site visit in June next year was **REQUESTED** to review play areas.

It was also noted that no timeline had been provided for the PLWB. The Head of Finance confirmed that the Council has a full year to consider options.

Members requested that a deadline be included in the report to ensure progress is tracked. They welcomed the idea of sponsorship and encouraged Officers to explore external funding opportunities before relying on PLWB, which should be considered a last resort.

It was also suggested that any proposal for Stratton should avoid wooden structures.

Members **RESOLVED** that Officers would provide the final specification to the supplier and request an updated quotation based on the revised option outlined in *Figure One*. This updated quote will reflect a reduction in play equipment, include new installations at Stratton Way, and cover reversion works at Watkins Walk. In addition, Officers will explore alternative, non-wooden options for teen-focused equipment at Stratton Way that better meet the needs and preferences of teenagers. A further report will be presented to the PLOS Committee at its meeting on 27 January 2026.

10. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

- a. There were no items for information.

11. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No members of the public were present, either online or in person.

It was **RESOLVED** to go into the exempt session in view of the nature of the business to be discussed.

12. **EXEMPT**

- a. **Exempt minutes of the Public Land & Open Spaces Committee Meeting Tuesday 17th June 2025**

No amendments were made to the minutes.

The exempt minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Public Land And Open Spaces Meeting held **Tuesday 17th June 2025** and the Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes.

b. **Sports Provision Update**

Members discussed and **AGREED** for Officers to bring a further report to Council.

c. **Outdoor Sport Update**

Members **RESOLVED** to recommend a licence to Full Council

The Chairman closed the meeting at **8:34pm**.

DRAFT

Item 9a: PLOS Status Report – 27th January

Key Milestones	Lead	Actual/ Forecasted Date	Comments	RAG
Franklins Recreation Ground	Peter & Karim	BAU	Routine maintenance taking place. Town centre benches refurbishment completed.	Green
Adoption of green spaces Kings Reach	Peter & Karim	December 2024	Phase 1 Football pitches condition experts' assurance received. Members' resolution to adopt. Officers are awaiting a solicitors' pack. Phase 2 drawing for remaining areas and inspection reports requested.	Yellow
Brunel Play Area	Peter & Karim	October 2024 BAU	All equipment now installed, new bin and bench installed, and play area opened to public.	Green
Adoption of Linear Wood/Pocket Park	Peter & Karim	December 2024 BAU	Both leases co-signed and legally sealed. The PR Team commenced maintenance 1 st April, funds received.	Green
Transformation of Stratton Cemetery	Karim & Harry	July 2025	Phase 1 landscaping work completed. Bins and benches installed. Phase two to commence post April 2026.	Green
Purchase of additional Cemetery land	Karim & Harry	2032	Current cemetery provision likely to be exhausted by 2042. Scoping project to begin 2030, including internal options, S106 priorities to be shared with partners.	Grey
Maintenance and/or transformation of all play areas	Karim & Harry	April 2025	Enhanced maintenance work underway across multiple play areas. Officers have commenced project after Members' resolution to draw down PWLB and project will complete by summer 2026 across five play areas.	Yellow
Maintenance and transformation of Drove Road (Bowls Club/Tennis/Old Depot)	Peter & Karim	October 2025/August 2026	Due to consultant's unbudgeted £4,000 estimate, Officers have moved the floodlighting technical work to align with the 2026 tennis courts resurfacing project. External funding including from the LTA will be sought post April 2026.	Green
Biggleswade Community Benefit Fund – Kitelands specification & funding	Karim & Harry	Phase 1 August 2024 Phase 2 August 2026	Phase One- Project completed and area reopened to public. Additional benches installed. Phase Two- Undetermined funding may be available from late January 2026, Tritax to provide an update.	Green
Jubilee Recreation Ground	Karim & Harry	July 2024 BAU	Project completed, benches concreted in, fencing section removed and bicycle barriers and signs installed in September to slow down moving traffic. Tiny forest in place, with BTC ownership from April 2026.	Green
Football pitches	Harry	July 2024	Council Investment agreed and pitches improved. New online booking link placed on website for public use. New goalposts installed in June, pitches condition improvement works over summer. The Lakes lease work underway.	Green
Fairfield Road- Football & Cricket	Karim, Harry & Ian	December 2025	Sport England Lindsell's Bequest grant spent on cricket pavilion new drainage, electrical safety, internal rendering and decoration, improvement works completed in November. New surveyor reports operationalised. Two leases work underway.	Yellow
UKSPF – Signage at Capital Assets	Ian	March 2024	CBC approved £15k to procure signage, 22 green metal signs installed at all green spaces, boundary signs and planters installed at entries to town.	Green

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL
PLOS Committee Meeting 27th January 2026
Item 10a: Allotments Update Report

Implications of Recommendations

Corporate Strategy: GOOD GOVERNANCE: Ensure that the Town Council continues to operate within legislation, regulation, ethical guidelines and best practice.

Finance: Not applicable.

Equality: Not applicable.

Environment: Not applicable.

Community Safety: Not applicable.

Background

During the Town Council meeting on 13th January 2026 Members requested an allotments update report.

Summary

In the last two to three years, Officers have been proactively managing the allotments to excellent effect. In December 2021, there were 78 people requesting an allotment on the allotments waiting list. The waiting list reached zero in September 2025 due to Officers' efforts, which is a huge achievement.

Strong monitoring, evidence taken from all plots including via visits with photographic evidence shared with plot holders has been the main reason for the waiting list improvement, as plot holders have handed back plots they consider to no longer be able to manage themselves to a good standard. All this has been in accordance with the stated policy.

There are currently six plots available, which will reduce to five plots next week. Winter is normally a quiet time of year for enquiries to join the allotments waiting list. It is likely that all plots will be rented out to new plot holders by the 1st of March. As a general principle, approximately 75% of plot tenants chose to relinquish their plot due to not being able to keep them in a good condition, the remaining 25% of plots were due to them being overgrown and hence, where Officer efforts to reach a positive outcome for the council and plot holders were not successful.

Another relevant point on plot holder demand is that over the last few years, records show that there is a pattern of new tenants taking on a plot and not realising the level of work that is required. Hence some new plot holders rented a plot and then left the plot to quickly become overgrown. When issued with an improvement or eviction notice, they would not reply, or reply much later, and finally relinquish. The council website now holds information advising on the realities of becoming an allotment plot holder. A leaflet with similar information is sent out with the tenancy agreement and terms & conditions to all plot holders. Since the introduction of these measures, the vast majority of new tenants have looked after and applied a high level of work on their plots from the start of their tenancy.

In summary, the overall level of quality of plots, and the culture of maintaining plots, have improved dramatically at the allotments. This has been achieved in conjunction with the Biggleswade Allotments Association (BAA). The improvement is demonstrated by the photographic evidence of plots' condition taken across the entire allotment site.

Recommendation

That PLOS Members note the huge, positive achievements made by Officers at the allotments.

Harry Henderson
Public Realm Manager

Karim Hosseini
Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships

