



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 11TH NOVEMBER 2025
AT 7.00PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL

PRESENT:

Cllr. J Woodhead (Mayor)
 Cllr. D Albone (Deputy Mayor)
 Cllr. I Agnew
 Cllr. G Barrett
 Cllr. J Jones
 Cllr. M Knight
 Cllr. M North
 Cllr. M Russell
 Cllr. A Skilton
 Cllr. D Strachan
 Cllr. C Thomas

IN ATTENDANCE ONLINE:

Cllr P Guilcher

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
 Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships
 Mr E Bour – Head of Finance & Deputy RFO
 Miss H Calvert – Administration & HR Manager

Members of the Public – 6

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

a. Apologies were received from the following Members:

Cllr M Foster, Cllr S Patel, Cllr S Sajid.

b. The following Members were unable to attend in person but were in attendance remotely:

Cllr P Guilcher.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

a. **Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:**

- Cllr Thomas: Non-pecuniary interest in Item 10A (Planning Application).
- Cllr Albone: Non-pecuniary interest in Item 10A (as lives near the site).
- Town Mayor: Non-pecuniary interest in Item 9E (School Admissions).

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

None.

3. **TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a. The Mayor informed Members that he had recently visited Ivel Valley School, where he met with the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors. The Mayor also visited Stratton School to meet A-Level Politics students and view the new ACE provision.

Last week, the Mayor visited the Biggleswade Community Garden to see the latest produce grown there.

On Sunday, the Mayor attended the Remembrance Sunday Parade, and on Tuesday he attended the Armistice Day Service. The Mayor thanked Town Council staff for their support in arranging these events.

4. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

Mark Tripp (Chair of Governors, Ivel Valley School)

Mr Tripp informed Members that the headteacher of Ivel Valley was unable to attend because Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) advised that the school and its staff cannot publicly express opinions that differ from CBC.

Mr Tripp highlighted several significant facilities issues currently affecting Ivel Valley School. For example, many pupils require hydrotherapy, yet the school does not have a hydrotherapy pool. At present, pupils must be transported to Kempston to access such facilities, which creates cost pressures, and disrupts their education. Additionally, the school faces insufficient parking and drop-off space and lacks a hall large enough to accommodate whole-school activities.

Mr Tripp invited Members to visit the school to see these conditions firsthand.

Mr Tripp then provided an overview of CBC's consultation options and their potential impact on the school and its students:

- Option 1A – Build on the existing site: This would cause significant disruption to pupils, particularly those with sensory needs, and exacerbate traffic congestion on an already crowded site. Ivel Valley has had no input into this design.
- Options 2 & 3 – London Road: These options would split the school across multiple sites, increasing costs and causing further disruption. The proposed two-story building would require lifts for students with mobility issues, raising concerns about emergency evacuation.
- Option 5 – Do nothing: This is not a viable solution.

Ivel Valley's preferred option is Option 4, which has been designed with the school's input. This option keeps all facilities on one secure site, provides adequate space for growth, and ensures the best possible layout. It minimises disruption by eliminating the need to transport pupils between sites and addresses traffic and safety concerns.

Mr Tripp urged Members to support Option 4 in their responses to CBC's consultation, stating that the school has compromised for too long and now CBC should make the necessary compromises for the future of Ivel Valley.

Members thanked Mr Tripp for his excellent and informative presentation and for clearly outlining the current issues. Members also expressed appreciation for the open invitation to visit Ivel Valley School and requested that Mr Tripp email the Council with details of the appropriate contact at the school to arrange visits.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

a. Tom Leeming and Jake Howard, Tritax Big Box

Mr Leeming thanked Members for the invitation to present an update on Symmetry Park, Biggleswade. Mr Leeming also thanked Members who attended Tritax's recent launch event.

Members were informed that the new 66,000 square ft. unit for Warburton's has just been completed.

Members were informed of the future phases for Symmetry Park.

Members thanked Mr Leeming and Mr Howard for the informative presentation.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Cllr Thomas requested further information on the road closures for the Christmas Fair and Light Switch on. The Community & Development Manager, Ian Campbell, informed Members that there will be additional road closures in place for the Christmas Fair and Light Switch On. Businesses have been informed well in advance of this, with notices going up approximately one month ago.

For the first time, business on the High Street will be encouraged to participate in the Christmas Fair by setting up a stall outside their premises.

Members noted that the road closures for Biggleswade's Remembrance Parade & Service were much longer than neighbouring towns and villages, and it was suggested that the duration of road closures is shortened in future.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. The Minutes of the 14th October 2025 were **APPROVED** as an accurate record.

8. MATTERS ARISING

None.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. External Audit Report

Members unanimously **AGREED** to note that the Council have reviewed the personal, financial and professional independence of the internal auditor in accordance with the Financial Regulation and Practitioners Guide 2025 (good practice).

Members thanked Officers who were involved in compiling the report.

b. Corporate Aspirations 2025-2031

Members unanimously **AGREED** to adopting the Corporate Aspirations 2025-2031 document.

c. General Reserves Policy

Members unanimously **AGREED** to adopting the General Reserve Policy.

d. CBC Community Governance Review 2025 – Stage 2

Councillor Russell stated that she was unhappy with outcome of the Community Governance Review by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC).

The Town Council was invited to submit proposals to the Community Governance Review and followed all the guidance. This involved holding meetings with neighbouring parishes and producing a detailed professional report that was submitted to CBC.

CBC dismissed the submission, stating that they won't be making any major changes, without defining what "major changes" means. One proposed change from BTC was agreed by the other parish and required no ward boundary changes, making it straightforward. CBC appear to have ignored detailed submissions despite proper process.

Members unanimously **AGREED** to writing to CBC with the following:

- Expressing concern and dissatisfaction regarding the response to the Community Governance Review.
- To question why the responses to the Governance Review were dismissed.
- To question why CBC began a review if they were unwilling to implement significant changes.
- To question why the review was initiated now, as the Government guidance requires a review every 10-15 years and the last review was undertaken in 2017/18.
- To highlight how much time and money went into this exercise from the Town Council's perspective
- To resubmit BTC's response to the Community Governance Review again, both via the portal and via email.
- To request clarity on CBC's view of the right time for a Community Governance Review.

It was **AGREED** that this letter is addressed to Brian Dunleavy (Democratic Services Manager at CBC) but that Marcel Coffait (Chief Executive at CBC) is also copied in.

e. **CBC Consultation: School Admission Arrangements For 2027 To 2028**

Members questioned the fairness and practicality for parents managing multiple school drop-offs. However, it was noted that the Admissions Policy is outside of the Town Council's direct responsibility and the Town Council has limited influence on CBC decisions.

It was **AGREED** that the Council will remain neutral on these arrangements and therefore not respond to CBC's consultation.

f. **CBC Consultation: Proposed changes to Ivel Valley School**

Members **AGREED** to write to CBC to:

- Seek clarification of the proposed sites for Ivel Valley, particularly regarding Option 4 and London Road.
- Obtain details of the proposed traffic management scheme for London Road.
- Obtain a financial breakdown for each option.
- Confirmation of whether the sale of land from the existing site has been factored into the financial plan.
- Explanation of how the footpath would be managed if CBC adopts the split-site option.
- Information on whether any DFE funding is available.

g. **Parking on Hitchin Street**

Cllr Russell informed Members that some residents in the town have received parking tickets for parking at the north end of Hitchin Street despite there not being markings on the road. There also seems to have been confusion as to whether you can only park there if you have a blue badge.

Members **RESOLVED** to write to Central Bedfordshire Council to seek clarification on whether there is a parking regulations order for Hitchin Street, and if so, what its terms are.

h. **Notice of Confirmation of Public Path Order - Biggleswade: Bridleway Nos. 87 And 88 And Langford: Bridleway No. 20**

Members had **NO OBJECTION** to this public path order.

i. **Public Path Diversion Order - Biggleswade: Part of Footpath No. 24**

Members had **NO OBJECTION** to this public path diversion order.

j. **Local Green Spaces**

Members unanimously **AGREED** to the plan as laid out.

k. **Banking Provision Update**

Members discussed how changes to the towns banking provision will have an impact on local residents and businesses.

It was **AGREED** that the Town Council contact the Post Office to clarify what services will remain.

It was **AGREED** that the Town Clerk, together with two or three Members, prepare a detailed proposal to Cash Access UK advocating for the establishment of a banking hub in the town. The proposal will emphasise Biggleswade's growing population and the increasing number of businesses setting up locally. It was further **AGREED** that a copy of this response be sent to the MP.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/25/02942/FULL - Greenways, Drove Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8HD**

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, provided it complies with two policies in the Neighbourhood Plan: BRD1 and BTM1.

b. **CB/TRE/25/00412 - Brunswick Place, Rose Lane, Biggleswade, SG18 0NQ**

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

c. **CB/25/03091/FULL - 6 Windmill View, Biggleswade, SG18 8WP**

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

11. **PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES**

The Planning Application Outcomes report was **NOTED**.

12. **ACCOUNTS**

Financial Administration

a. **Position & Accounts for September 2025.**

Members **APPROVED** the report.

13. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Quarterly Bank Reconciliations**

Members **NOTED** the reports.

b. **Standing Orders**

Members **NOTED** the Standing Orders.

c. **Symmetry Park, Phase 3, Biggleswade**

Members **NOTED** the information.

d. **Health Hub Funding Update**

Members **NOTED** the update.

e. **Transfer of Rights - Biggleswade Common**

Members **NOTED** the transfer of rights.

14. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No one from the public wished to speak.

15. **EXEMPT**

a. **Exempt Minutes of the Town Council Meeting Tuesday 14th October 2025**

The Exempt Minutes of the 14th October 2025 were **APPROVED** as an accurate record.

b. **Sports Provision Update**

Members were provided with a sports provision update.

It was **AGREED** to provide Lindsell's Bequest with a £5k grant. It was **AGREED** to discuss a repayment plan for the loan provided to Lindell's in 2023 at a future Council meeting.

c. **Bowl's Club Update**

Members were provided with a Bowls Club update. Members **APPROVED** of the recommendation to instruct Wellers law firm to draft a new 25-year lease with all appropriate terms and conditions for the Bowls Club, and Officers to negotiate with the Bowls Club on all aspects of the new proposed lease.

d. **Community Safety and Community Task Force**

Members **APPROVED** the recommendation for officers to work with the Biggleswade Community Safety Group (BCSG) on the actions outlined in the report, further develop the graffiti removal scheme, and ensure BCSG continues collaborating with Biggleswade Town Council (BTC) and engages with Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC), the police, and other partners to advance its action plan.

e. **Annual Review**

Members **NOTED** the HR update.

f. **HR Update**

Members **NOTED** the HR update.

The Mayor closed the meeting at **9.30pm**