



BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL

**ANNUAL REPORT
2016-2017**

CONTENTS

- AGENDA Page 1

 - MINUTES – 24TH MAY 2016 Page 2

 - SUMMARY OF MEETINGS - APRIL 2017 Page 16

 - ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017 Page 19
-
- Town Councillors' Details

 - Town Councillors' Attendance Records

 - Town Councillors' Committee Membership

 - Meeting Dates 2016/2017

 - Council Staff, Contact Details and Forthcoming Events

Biggleswade Town Annual Assembly **will take place on** Tuesday 9 May 2017 **at the** Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, Saffron Road, Biggleswade **commencing at** 7.30 p.m.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

2. MINUTES OF MEETING

To receive and adopt the Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on Tuesday 24 May 2016.

3. MATTERS ARISING

4. ANNUAL REPORT OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL

The Annual Report will be presented by Cllr D Albone.

5. REPORTS – 2016/2017

- a. Public Land and Open Spaces – Cllr B Briars
- b. Town Centre Management – Cllr Mrs M Russell
- c. Finance & General Purpose – Cllr M North
- d. Personnel – Cllr I Bond

6. RESOLUTION AND QUESTIONS

For the meeting to consider subjects and resolutions affecting the Town, from Local Government Electors.

7. OPEN FORUM

MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN ANNUAL ASSEMBLY
HELD ON TUESDAY 24 MAY 2016
AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE

PRESENT:

Cllr D Albone (Chair)
Cllr P Biernis
Cllr I Bond
Cllr B Briars
Cllr F Foster
Cllr M Foster
Cllr M North
Cllr Mrs H Ramsay
Cllr Mrs M Russell – left the meeting at 8.05pm
Cllr D Strachan

Mr R McGregor, Biggleswade Town Clerk
Mrs J Durn, BTC Meeting Administrator

Members of Public - 7

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr Ms R Kerfoot, Cllr S Watkins

2. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

The meeting received and adopted the Minutes of the Town Assembly held on Tuesday 5 May 2015.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising

4. ANNUAL REPORT OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL

Prior to the reading of the Annual Report, Cllr Mrs H Ramsay would like to record the following words:

“A few years ago I was involved in a motor accident which resulted in my having a ‘wonky knee’ which can be painful at times but can also ‘give way’ without warning.

When I was appointed as Mayor, Cllr Mrs M Russell offered to act as my chauffeur for the Civic occasions. Without her help, I would not have been able to travel the highways and byways of Bedfordshire promoting Biggleswade at every opportunity and I would like to thank her for her support during my terms as Mayor.

You will have noticed that Cllr Wilson's Council meetings attendance record is listed together with all our Councillors in this report. I think this is only right. His attendance figures show that despite his health problems he continued to attend as many meetings as he could. He worked hard for Biggleswade, not only on Biggleswade Council but also in the community as a whole. He will be fondly remembered and greatly missed."

The Annual Report was presented by Cllr Mrs Hazel Ramsay

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve once again as your Town Mayor. During the year, as well as my duties as Chair of the Council, with the assistance of Cllr Madeline Russell and Cllrs M North and D Albone I have attended many varied events acting as an ambassador for Biggleswade at Civic events throughout the Central Bedfordshire area. Representing Biggleswade Council I have also enjoyed visiting our schools, voluntary support groups, clubs, and organisations and meeting so many people at various events and sharing their celebrations throughout the year. The commitment that the leaders and members show to our groups and organisation is often taken for granted but it is these organisations that form a vital part of our Biggleswade community.

On September 25th, we held our third successful Macmillan Coffee morning in the Council Chamber which due to your generous support raised over £250 for a really worthwhile cause.

Following the success of last year, we held our Xmas Fair starting at mid-day. The stage was used throughout the Fair by local school and adult choirs and presentations were made in the evening for the best Xmas window before the 'switching on' of the lights. Our thanks to Biggles FM for their support. There was a good variety of stalls selling a variety of gifts, confectionery, cakes with a selection of hot food and drinks available to keep out the cold!

The Biggleswade Civic Service was held on February 28th at the Trinity Methodist Church. The theme of the service this (leap) year was 'Time and Space'. At this service H.M. The Deputy Lord Lt. Major Simon Sadler presented the Legion d'Honneur to 3 of our Biggleswade war veterans who took part in the Normandy D Day Landings. It was a proud moment for all of us as the citations were read out by Major Sadler and I am pleased that so many of their family members were able to attend the service.

Although the new London Road Retail Park is now open for business we are continuing to monitor the planning conditions and development of the two retail parks. The landscaping is well under way and I look forward to the time when the trees that have been planted will have grown sufficiently to become the 'avenue of trees' as shown on the plans, to provide a gateway to our Town.

I am pleased to say that the Biggleswade/Central Beds Council Joint Committee continues to meet on a regular basis enabling both Councils together with representatives from the Biggleswade Chamber of Trade and Central Beds Council Officers to discuss local issues and their impact on our town.

I thank all our Councillors for their voluntary commitment to the Council and to Biggleswade, in attending the fortnightly Council meetings as well as the various extra committee meetings. The Council have continued to work on your behalf to progress the issues that affect our town and can be seen in action at our Council meetings that are held on alternate Tuesdays and are open to the public so please do come along to a meeting and see the Council in action!

Our Councillors and staff work very much as a team and I am sure that without the support of our administration staff, ground staff, and the advice and guidance of our Town Clerk and his Deputy we would not be able to accomplish as much as we do.

I am proud to have been able to serve Biggleswade again as Town Mayor. There have been many changes in recent years and no doubt there are more to come in the future and I feel sure that Biggleswade will be able to embrace these changes while retaining its identity and continuing to flourish as a thriving and caring community.

Cllr. Mrs H. Ramsay
Town Mayor, Biggleswade 2013-2016

5. **REPORTS**

a. **PUBLIC LAND AND OPEN SPACES**

The Public Land and Open Spaces Report was presented by Cllr B Briars, Chairman, Public Land and Open Spaces Committee

The Town Council continues its ongoing maintenance of recreational and sports facilities, allotments and cemeteries. Ongoing work includes refurbishment of play areas, ground works, litter picking, line marking, grass cutting, strimming, chemical weeding, hedge cutting and fence repairs. Our thanks are due to the Town Council's Grounds Staff who continue their good work with the day to day maintenance of our public open spaces.

The Town Council has worked closely with developers on Land East of Biggleswade to ensure that new public open spaces, play areas and sports facilities are designed appropriately with a view to being adopted by the Town Council. However, at the time of this report the Town Council awaits news on the extent of the areas that are now likely to be available for adoption. Once this is known it is likely that there will have to be expansion of the workforce and facilities to support these areas, to be funded by developers' contributions commuted at the time of adoption.

Dog fouling continues to be a concern throughout Biggleswade. The Town Council has been working closely with the CBC dog warden service to advise and educate members of the public to help keep areas clean and safe. A number of fixed penalty notices have also been issued in Biggleswade by the CBC dog warden service.

River Ivel

The Town Council has worked with the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service to increase awareness of water safety along Town Council owned stretches of the River Ivel, with safety messages displayed at key points along the river and we have installed an additional life buoy south of Franklin Recreation Ground.

The Town Council has also collaborated with the Ivel Protection Association (IPA) for the management of fishing activities along the River Ivel. Biggleswade residents in possession of a free Biggleswade Town Council Fishing Permit along with an Environment Agency rod license are able to fish the Town Council owned stretches of the river, whilst the IPA operates a Bailiff service.

Play Areas

The Town Council has continued a programme of refurbishing and enhancing play areas in Biggleswade to improve facilities and maintain safe play areas. Works have been completed at a number of sites and further enhancements are programmed.

Football Pitches

The Town Council's football pitches support a busy schedule of training and matches for youth teams as well as a number of adult teams. There is a constant demand for facilities with bookings throughout the season. During the summer months, we refrain from taking bookings for football pitches to enable recovery and grounds maintenance work, which has resulted in better playing conditions throughout the season.

Funding

Ongoing minor maintenance work is generally funded from annual budgets. Larger projects have been funded from Town Council Reserves. However, the availability of S106 money from Developers Contributions is regularly monitored and continues to be drawn upon when appropriate to minimise the impact on Town Council reserves.

Completed works

In addition to general day to day maintenance costs, this past year we have spent £35,000 on specific works to play areas, recreation grounds and allotments including the following:

Allotments:	Repairs to allotment access road and the installation of dip tanks to improve water supply.
Bowls Club:	Repairs to the bowls green edge and the irrigation system.
Eagle Farm Road Area:	New goal posts and the replacement of the vandalised shelter roof.
Foxglove Play Area:	Two new springers and new safety surfaces under swings and slide.
Franklin Recreation Ground:	New safety surfaces under toddler swings and multiplay area and works to trees.
Kayser Court Play Area:	New Safety Surfaces and refurbishment of fence and slide.
Kitelands Recreation Ground:	Installation of two Zig Zag Twisters and safety surfaces.
Poppyfields Play Area 1:	Installation of new springer.
Poppyfields Play Area 2:	Complete overhaul of site including installation of swings, springer and turnstile, new safety surfaces and the refurbishment of the furniture.
Stratton Way Pitch:	New shower fittings in changing rooms. Ongoing repairs to roof and gutters following vandalism. Regeneration of goal mouths. Replacement flood lights for training area.
Tennis Courts:	Repainting the white lines.
Litter Bins:	Additional bins installed at various locations.

Ongoing and Planned Works

A further £36,000 is already committed to ongoing and planned works as follows:

Berkeley Close Play Area:	Repairs to Safety Surfaces and replacement gate.
Eagle Farm Road Pitches:	Removal of concrete rings.
Franklin Recreation Ground:	Replacement senior swing frame scheduled for May 2016.
Heather Drive Play Area:	Programme of works scheduled for May/June 2016 to include replacement multiplay unit and additional springer. New swing seats, play panels, safety surfaces, play graphics and gates.
Kitelands:	Installation of MUGA panels.
Lilac Grove:	Replacement springers and surfaces. New knee rails and box hedge.
Stratton Way Play Area:	New safety surfaces.

b. TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT 2015 - 2016

The Town Centre Management Report 2015-2016 was presented by Cllr Mrs M Russell, Chairman, Town Centre Management

Following on from the TCM report to last year's Town Assembly, it is disappointing to note how many things are still outstanding alongside the real progress that has been made.

Parking

Parking is still the most difficult issue for TCM, both on and off street. The good news is that we have successfully re-surfaced, drained and marked out three of our main car parks – Rose Lane, St. Andrew's Street and Mill Lane – resulting in a few extra spaces and a much nicer feel to all three.

Rose Lane was also equipped with a disabled ramp and a bar to stop commercial vehicles using it. The items outstanding are to replace the perimeter fence and improve the landscaping but this is in hand.

With regard to managing our car parks, we have had two setbacks. First, just as we were ready to implement last summer, the Government brought in new legislation which meant that there were technical reasons why we could not implement the scheme in the way that we had discussed with the company that we had appointed. The company, having initially come up with an alternative, have now walked away.

The overall scheme that we want to implement, with both medium and longer term parking and permits for some residents and people who work in the town, is still valid but we are having to look for another partner to help us implement our proposals. We also want to explore the possibility of working with Central Bedfordshire Council to enforce both on-street and off-street parking, particularly so that parking on pavements can be controlled.

We continue to look for opportunities to create more parking and have asked CBC to remodel the area on the corner of Mill Lane and St. Andrew's Street to introduce chevron parking, which will slightly increase the number of spaces.

Central Bedfordshire Council have now completed the process of consultation on schemes to restrict parking in residential areas where commuters leave their cars all day and often park inconsiderately. The implementation of the approved schemes is in process and we are assured that finance for both this and the chevron scheme above are in this year's CBC budget.

Finally, with regard to parking, there is an issue about the number of planning applications for flats around the town centre which are approved in spite of there being insufficient or no parking. This just adds to the problem of lack of parking in the town centre. A letter of concern was sent to Central Bedfordshire Council.

Market and Town Centre

The closure of the High Street bridge for seven months is having a huge impact on the town both in terms of trade and traffic circulation.

To try to boost trade in the aftermath of the bridge closure, the Town Council submitted a bid to CBC's Market Town Regeneration Fund. The bid was first discussed at TCM and involved an upgrade of the Market Square with the demolition of Century House, replacement bus waiting and toilet facilities, de-cluttering, repairs to the block paving, the introduction of free Wi-Fi and setting up a Business Improvement District where Council and businesses would work more closely together to improve the town. The Town Council was prepared to invest over £800,000 over the next 2/3 years as match funding. Our bid was rejected out of hand because we asked that, if we were to invest that amount of money, our Market Square should be handed back to us. (It currently belongs to CBC.) We also understand that CBC has its own plans for Century House and that end of the Market Square but these have not yet been shared with us.

Because of the bridge closure, three one-way systems have been introduced in the narrow streets around the town centre – Sun Street and St. John's Street; Back Street; and The Baulk. It has been agreed with CBC that these one-way systems will remain in place for six months after the re-opening of the bridge so that their effects can be assessed under normal circumstances and there can be a consultation on whether they should be made permanent.

We still have an outstanding request to Central Bedfordshire Council for the **reversal of Hitchin Street** with the pedestrianisation of the top section from Bonds Lane to the Market Square. This would also require the reversal of Bonds Lane.

Our Charter Market has also been hit by the closure of the bridge and we have been monitoring closely the number of traders who attend. We have fewer regular traders at present but more casuals. The Town Council organised a super four-page spread in the trade magazine *Market Trader*, and also agreed to halve the pitch fees, to limit the damage to the Market.

There was a proposal to alter the layout of the Market to allow the opening up of Market Street and the parking on one side, to encourage people to visit the town centre on a Saturday but the new layout could not be agreed with the traders so Council decided not to go ahead.

The Market Rules were reviewed by a Working Group which included the Market Superintendent, to ensure that they are up-to-date and appropriate.

Quotations were received during the year to refurbish the Drum Clock, which belongs to the town although it is fixed to the Pizza Express building (which used to be the Town Hall). The work has been commissioned and will start on the 8th June 2016.

Having been approached with his ideas, the Town Council has been working with Adam Turney to develop wayfinding boards for the town centre and the retail park. This has rather gone into abeyance with the upheaval in the town centre but we hope to take these ideas forward when the bridge work is concluded.

Christmas Fair

We had another very successful Christmas Fair and Lights Switch-On in December. A TCM working party was again helped by Hayley Down and all the Council staff worked mightily both before and after the day. There were some adjustments to how things were organised, building on the experiences of the previous year.

We again had an abundance of market stalls, street food and a fairground, with Santa and stars for the Christmas tree. A succession of choirs graced the stage and we also enjoyed Edward Peake Steel Band and the Stotfold Salvation Army Band, culminating in the Community Carol Service and the switch-on by the Carnival Court.

We were also well-supported by businesses through the Best Dressed Window Award and those who stayed open late and it was lovely to receive plaudits from townsfolk who enjoyed the event.

The Christmas lights themselves continue to grow in scope. The Council has been steadily investing in the infrastructure necessary and, through hiring the lights rather than purchasing them, we can also tweak the display to add interest year-on-year. We were particularly pleased this year with the cascading effect of the decorations on the lampposts.

In spite of the frustrations, TCM will continue to work to improve the environment of the town centre, the parking, the traffic circulation and the use of the Market Square for markets and other events.

c. FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSE

The Finance & General Purpose Report was presented by Cllr M North, Chairman, Finance & General Purpose Committee

Summary of Results for the Year

The Council achieved a surplus £32,008 for the year, far in excess of the positions anticipated at the time of Budget and Precept Setting in January 2016 where Income & Expenditure were forecast to be roughly the same. Significant contributions to this were as a result of increased rent income at the Court House, an increase in cemetery income, and an underspend on Cost Centre 105 – Car Parks of £22,000.

Interest earned on Council funds decreased from £1,741 in the year ended 31st March 2015 to £1,200 in the year just ended. The balance of the surplus was achieved by various cost savings where possible.

Major Activities

During the year, the Council also undertook the following projects during the year (all funded from previously earmarked reserves or the Rolling Capital Project Fund):

1. Play Equipment

New play equipment and surfacing was purchased for at a cost of £26,636, all funded from "developers" contributions.

2. Car Parks

Rose Lane, St Andrew and Mill Lane car parks were resurfaced at a total cost of £125,635.

3. Courtroom Equipment

A new courtroom microphone system was purchased at a cost of £4,220. Biggleswade Town Council's finances remain in an excellent position with over £575,000 in Bank Accounts which is used to finance a healthy General Reserve of £350,000 and Earmarked Reserves of £203,000.

Please note that the accounts have not been finalized for 2015-16 and as such the above figures may be subject to change but are fairly indicative of the council's performance this year.

d. **PERSONNEL REPORT 2015-16**

The Personnel Report was presented by Cllr I Bond, Chairman, Personnel Committee

Staffing

The Town Council employs a Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk, an administration team of four members of staff (three full time equivalents) lead by an Office Manager, an outside workforce team of six full time members of staff lead by a Works Foreman, and a part time Market Superintendent.

These staffing levels reflect an increase in the Town Council's workforce from the previous year with the addition of an Office Manager and a Property & Grounds Maintenance Person.

Training

In addition to ongoing 'on the job' training and sharing good working practices, in the last year the Town Council has invested in professional development and training courses as follows:

- Certificate in Local Council Administration
- Agendas and Minute Taking
- Organising Community Events
- Dog Control Orders
- Chainsaw Maintenance & Crosscutting NPTC Level 2 Award (CS30)
- Pesticide Application (PA1): Safe Use of Pesticides NPTC Level 2 Award
- Pesticide Application (PA6A): Hand Held Applicators NPTC Level 2 Award
- First Aid at Work

Work Experience Placements

The Town Council regularly supports work experience placements for individuals to experience the world of work, gain new skills and build confidence. Each year the Town Council offers places for 2-week work experience placements to local schools for both grounds staff and administrative roles. In the last year, the Town Council has also offered an ongoing placement to a student of Ivel Valley School as well as an extended placement under the government's Community Work Placement scheme.

e. CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Biggleswade Town Council – Central Bedfordshire Council Report 2015-2016

REGENERATION AND BUSINESS

Looking back over the past 12 months:

CBC's Business Investment and Support Team managed 167 new inward investment enquiries over the last year in Central Bedfordshire, including 20 for property or land in the Biggleswade area. This brought 1,457 new jobs to the area, 60 of which were in Biggleswade with the arrival of Jas Bowmans, on Stratton Business Park.

An inward investment portal www.becentralbedfordshire.co.uk was launched in March 2015, receiving 10,500 online visits and 19,100 page views so far. The site has facilitated 800 online property searches and 109 registrations.

Ongoing support was provided to five new businesses setting up in the area and offered them start-up support and advice. Four businesses were referred for specialist support relating to health and safety, business retail relief, food hygiene training and funding. We have worked with more established businesses with regards to diversification and franchising and this includes providing Business TimeBank support.

The Council funds the Creative Bedfordshire network with the aims of supporting enterprise, employment, skills development and growing the number of jobs in the creative sector. Two out of the five networking meetings were held in Biggleswade in November 2015 and March 2016. Between the two events 34 delegates attended.

A business breakfast was held at Jordans Mill in August 2015. 17 business delegates attended to hear about plans for the Stratton Local Development Order which was adopted in October 2016, the Food Enterprise Zone and outline applications for Phases 5 and 6.

A new Business Grants and Support Scheme for SMEs was launched in January 2016 to encourage growth and bring forward new jobs and training for local people. The Fund has supported seven Biggleswade businesses to date. This included providing £3,000 in Business Rate Relief to safeguard two jobs, planning advice that has resulted in a relocation to Biggleswade, which will create at least four new jobs, and five businesses benefitting from Food Hygiene Training.

In March 2015, we secured £50,000 of government funding which will help food, drink and farming businesses to set up and expand in the Biggleswade and Ivel Valley area. Agri-food is one of the key sectors in Central Bedfordshire and the money will be used to develop a Food Enterprise Zone (FEZ) which enables faster growth for businesses in the sector. The FEZ, working with Cranfield University, will support the creation of 2,000 jobs and up to 30 new businesses by 2020 in a new food and drink cluster.

Our Employment and Skills Service continues to support local residents in the Biggleswade area through providing Work Clubs and short courses to help improve employability. Within the SG18 postcode this includes residents from Ickwell, Broom, Upper Caldecote and Langford. The Work Club in Biggleswade has supported a total of 93 local residents from September 2015 to March 2016 and facilitates CV writing, job searches, advice from the National Careers Service and act as a stepping stone to a variety of courses.

Town Centre Retail Vacancies

Town	February 2015	May 2015	August 2015	November 2015	February 2016	% of all A class premises
Amphill	2	1	0	2	2	2.2
Arlesey	1	1	1	1	1	6.7
Biggleswade	11	7	4	5	10	6.9
Dunstable	52	47	50	47	47	17.7
Flitwick	1	1	1	1	1	2.6
Houghton Regis	1	2	2	1	1	3.4
Leighton Buzzard	7	7	4	7	11	5.4%
Sandy	4	4	4	3	3	4.5
Shefford	1	0	0	1	1	2.5
Stotfold	0	0	0	1	1	5.6
Total	80	70	66	69	78	8.6%

Looking forward:

- Subject to funding, an ERDF business support programme called Innovation Bridge will be launched.
- Implementation of the Velocity Growth Hub – the SEMLEP business support programme to promote the offer to businesses in Biggleswade.
- There has been considerable interest in the new phases on Stratton Business Park and more recently the Woodlands Nurseries site, which came to the market in the last few months and we will monitor this.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Leisure and libraries

Looking back over the past 12 months:

- New CBC Public/Staff Wi-Fi has been rolled out on the 100MB Fibre Connection at Biggleswade Library.
- New CBC Public/Staff Wi-Fi has been rolled out at Saxon Leisure Centre.
- Solar PV panels were installed on the library roof in March 2016 to make the building more efficient and reduce our carbon foot print.
- Wet Side Changing Room facilities (male/female) have been refurbished to provide new showers at Saxon Leisure Centre.

- £19,080 of s106 contributions has been released to the town council from new developments to create new or improve existing play and outdoor sport facilities to make provision for the new and existing residents. The town council has identified the projects which it felt would have the greatest impact and benefit for residents.
- The Leisure team is working with the town council to agree designs for the children's play areas on the Kings Reach development.

Looking forward:

- Biggleswade Library: Roll-out of new PCs on our new 100MB Public Network.
- Biggleswade Library: S106 spend on refurbishing the meeting room - involving a complete redecoration programme and new furniture - toilets and lobby all on the first floor.
- Saxon Leisure Centre: New flooring in Studio 2 (for spinning classes).
- Saxon Leisure Centre: New desk in the Gym reception.
- We will work closely with the town council to support Bedfordshire Football Association's proposal to adopt and manage the playing pitch sites on the Kings Reach site, including plans for a 3G facility.
- Facilitate the transfer of the Orchard Community Building and related s106 funding to the Town Council.
- Work closely with the town council on any other S106 funding for community facilities.

Waste

Looking back over the past 12 months:

- The redeveloped Household Waste Recycling Centre was reopened in February 2016.
- A new grounds maintenance contract commenced in 2015 with MJ Grounds Maintenance.
- There have been a number of Dog Warden patrol requests, in particular for The Common, Back Street and Eagle Farm Road. These will continue as required.
- The Biffa Area Support Team has undertaken a number of deep cleanse activities in the Town Centre.
- There has been a significant increase in abandoned vehicle reports, due to the current low scrap value.

Looking forward:

- Lane closures on the A1 from Biggleswade to Tempsford are planned for overnight litter clearance and road sweeping. The contractor has indicated they will be working on the central reservation from 6th to 10th June, then the side verges on both sides of the road from 13th to 17th June, 8.00pm – 6.00am.
- We are undertaking a contamination project with Biffa's recycling crews and our Waste/Technical Officers. They will be targeting contaminated bins with the incorrect items that impact on our recycling performance, as these materials are not accepted. A red tag will be placed on the bin and it will be recorded on the drivers' report sheets. No return will be made for a tagged bin until the next collection – and if it has been corrected. Orange sacks can be supplied for any excess waste until the next collection.
- Three urban weed sprays are planned for the Biggleswade area over the summer season.
- Grass cutting will continue every two weeks throughout April to October, depending upon the weather.

Countryside Access and Rights of Way

Looking back over the past 12 months:

- We have been investigating unrecorded public rights along paths and alleyways in central Biggleswade. This area is currently excluded from the Council's Definitive Map of public rights of way. Some 37 footpaths and bridleways have so far been identified following initial research, public consultation and local drop-in clinics and further surveys. Currently we are drafting orders to record these routes on a new Definitive Map for central Biggleswade with orders likely to be made in June.
- We have received and processed an application to add a footpath through the Crown Hotel between High Street and Church Street. A legal order to add this to the Definitive Map was made on 15th April with the objection period lasting until 10th June.
- The Stratton Business Park Footpath diversion scheme related to the expansion of the site continues at present. The legal orders changing the network will soon be made and advertised in local papers and on site.
- We are consulting with a number of landowners about providing cycle access over certain sections of the Biggleswade Green Wheel that currently doesn't have cycle access. This will extend the cycle access of the Wheel. As we are presently in sensitive consultations with landowners we can't go into further detail.
- As the Kings Reach development expands, we are returning some of the previously closed footpaths to public use. The re-opened paths are mostly in the north of Kings Reach at present. The footpath running past the Cemetery is also now also open for public use.
- Biggleswade P3 is now incorporated into the Friends of Biggleswade Green Wheel and the BGW group are now listed as a P3 group so volunteers benefit from equipment, training, workshops, advice etc. Volunteers have been trained on tree pruning techniques (mainly fruit/orchard trees) and training on river issues (safety and habitat management).

Looking forward:

- We are finalising 5 bench-seat locations on the Green Wheel between Mill Lane and Jordans Mill to help the less able to make their way between the two locations. Minor details are still to be settled but we hope to install the benches in 2016.
- Enhancements to the surfaces, bridges and gates on some rights of way in the Biggleswade Common eastern area will take place in 2016/17 as BRCC has been successful in bidding for monies for such enhancements on CBC's behalf. The main area of work will be Stratford Rd, Sandy and the route south across the Common from the RSPB southern gates.
- Works to improve track surfaces that are part of the National Cycle Route No. 12 including a new permissive Bridleway related to the Biggleswade Wind Farm should be put in place in 2016. Farm tenant negotiations are still underway as part of these works.
- The Biggleswade Common boardwalk replacement project is soon to be finalised once the specifications are settled.
- On Central Bedfordshire's farmland, east of the allotments/ Kennel Farm area, a series of enhancements and upgrades to the present rights of way footpath network will result in increased cycle usage in the area.
- The replacement planting of trees in Jubilee Wood will continue in 2016 and walking areas will continue to be cut. It is planned that the grassland area will be used grazing of sheep.

HIGHWAYS

Looking back over the past 12 months:

- The Parking Strategy has been consulted upon and agreed and is now moving forward towards implementation in 5 zones.
- The parking enforcement team issued 396 Penalty Charge Notices in the last 12 months to improve congestion across Biggleswade and ensure that the turnover of vehicles using limited waiting bays is efficient; meaning more people can use these bays to go shopping etc.
- Stratton Street Bridge is being replaced to prevent further deterioration and damage to the track below. The replacement will mean that the structure will have a further 120 years of life and will protect the interests of the High Street for the foreseeable future. The replacement was delayed due to adverse weather at a critical time of the programme, but Central Bedfordshire Council and Network Rail have worked hard to ensure the bridge is reopened in the shortest time possible. The bridge is due to open by the end of June 2016.
- Experimental orders have been implemented to allow the temporary traffic management arrangements in The Baulk and Back Street to remain as part of a six-month trial to see how they operate under “normal” traffic conditions. The creation of additional parking on Back Street will be included as part of the trial. Thereafter, local feedback will be considered before deciding whether to make the changes permanent.
- A ban on HGVs was introduced as part of the new one-way gyratory system at St Johns Street, Sun Street and Rose lane. The ban has been operational for a few months and CBC has paid the Police to enforce this on a number of occasions to support the ban. We are also actively working with the developers along Potton Road/Drove Road as some complaints have been received regarding their lorries from the housing sites.

Looking forward:

- New parking restrictions will be introduced in various parts of the town in the coming months. These include the Dells Lane area, London Road/The Baulk area, Hitchin Street/Saffron Road/Teal Road area and Ivel Gardens. Residents have been consulted on these and wherever possible we are introducing the type of restrictions favoured by residents in each area. We are currently designing the signs and lines and will programme their phased implementation throughout 2016/17.
- Discussions are ongoing with the town council regarding enforcement of private car parks and all off-street car parks in Biggleswade.
- New signage will be put in place once the works to the bridge is completed and the road layouts confirmed, including any requirements for car park signage.

6. RESOLUTION AND QUESTIONS

There were no subjects & resolutions affecting the Town, from Local Government Electors.

7. OPEN FORUM

The Chairman asked for questions to be taken at this point:

- Public Land and Open Spaces – no questions
- Town Council Management – no questions
- Finance & General Purpose – no questions
- Personnel – no questions
- Central Bedfordshire Council – no questions

Mr Reynolds raised a question regarding the lack of car parking facilities in Biggleswade and asked if there was any news on developing the Mill Street area for shops and multi storey car park which had previously been put forward. The Chairman said that unfortunately these plans had fallen into abeyance and he had no further news.

Mr Bacon raised concerns over traffic using Palace Street as a short cut.

Mrs Forbes raised concerns over traffic queuing to get out from the Asda car park, which she felt was dangerous. The Chairman said that this will continue to be monitored by CBC for the next 6 months.

Mr Reynolds asked if there were any penalty clauses in place covering contractor's completion dates. The Chairman said that unfortunately a lot of the work is weather dependent, but we still have a completion for the end of June.

The Meeting Closed at 8.35 pm

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS SUMMARY – APRIL 2017

COUNCIL MEETING – 11 APRIL 2017

- Members received and approved Minutes of the last Council Meeting as well as the Statement and Organisation sections of a revised Health and Safety Policy and a Business Plan for 2017-18.
- Members resolved to adopt the General Power of Competence provisions of section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.
- Members resolved to accept and agreed the following recommendations from the Local Council Award Scheme: Adoption of an Annual Report for 2015/16 and an approach for future annual reports; Ensuring that the Council provides value for money; Provide leadership in planning for the future of the community; managing the performance of the Council as a corporate body; A revised Community Engagement Policy.
- Members considered a proposed Community Plan for Biggleswade, Edworth and Langford, and were pleased with many of the issues raised; however, they wished to raise several matters which were included within the plan which appear to reflect the opposite of CBC's actions. These matters include: Protecting open countryside, agricultural land and allotments; improvements to bus services; Investment in BTC to revitalise the High Street; Protecting Wildlife and addressing flood risk areas; Providing affordable housing; Improving leisure facilities and healthcare within the town.
- It was agreed that the parking strategy consultation be referred to the working group at the earliest opportunity.
- Matters regarding wayleave agreements were referred to The Fen Reeves for consideration; The No Cold Calling Signs scheme was referred to Central Beds Council for funding.
- Members requested that the Town Clerk write a letter of complaint to CBC regarding the communication error in receiving planning application CB/17/01277/OUT.
- Members were informed of closures to Biggleswade footpaths 39 and 63 until 9 October 2017 and road closures on Shortmead Street, High Street, Dells Lane and Mead End for the St George's Day Parade on 24 April 2017.

COUNCIL MEETING – 25 APRIL 2017

- The Mayor informed members that he attended a very enjoyable and successful St Georges Service on Sunday 23 April at St Andrews Church, organised by the Biggleswade & District Scout Association.
- Members received and approved the Minutes of the last Council meeting on 11 April 2017.
- The invited speaker Gill Reeves gave a presentation to members on her work as Biggleswade Community Agent during 2016/17, including examples of some of the case studies, referrals and visits undertaken.
- Members resolved to provide a Grant of £7,500 to support the service provided by the Biggleswade Community Agent.
- Members agreed to support requests for additional street lighting on Footpath 44 and the footpath between Lawnside and The Baulk.
- Members received information regarding works to a tree at Stratton House Hotel, and an Appeal regarding Planning Application CB/16/05176/FULL – Site of Land rear of 49-51 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade.
- Members received notifications of proposed road closures on Potton Road during April and Ickwell Road, Hill Lane and B658 during August.

- Members received information regarding the latest Planning Application Outcomes from Central Bedfordshire Council, as well as information from Bedfordshire Police and the Biggleswade Good Neighbours group.

BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE – 26 April 2017

- Members were informed that a “walk-around” has taken place to identify areas within Biggleswade Town Centre for de-cluttering. A road safety report has also been undertaken and the issue of loading on both the High Street and Saffron Road will be reviewed by the Traffic Management Committee. Members also requested that a representative for partially sighted residents be consulted and this was agreed by the Committee.
- Members were informed that a zebra crossing will be proposed for London Road and Stratton Street, following observations of the locations where people frequently cross. Members raised concerns regarding the width of this road, as well as the blind corner on the High Street close to the Londis shop. It was agreed that consideration will be given to traffic calming measures as well as a possible extension of the 20mph speed restriction.
- It was agreed that a meeting should be set up between Biggleswade Town Council and Jeanette Keyte, to discuss the possibility of an enforcement officer to be funded by Biggleswade Town Council.
- Members received an overview of school places in Biggleswade and the forecast for this going forward. Members felt that decisions needed to be made now about future investment in schools.
- The Biggleswade Town Clerk asked that CBC enforce by-laws and provide signage to prevent people from parking on grass-verges. It was suggested that advisory notes be placed on parked cars, as well as the placing of wooden posts. The Town Clerk was asked to write an official request to CBC for this.
- The Biggleswade Town Clerk also agreed to write to the Traffic Management Committee regarding additional Yellow Lines on Sun Street, and for the inclusion of the full implementation of the one-way System on the next Traffic Management Committee Agenda.
- Members also discussed the traffic lights at Rose Lane junction which are out of sync. This has been reported to CBC by BTC who are still awaiting a response.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Biggleswade Town Council raised **no objection** to the following planning applications in April:

- **CB/17/00162/RM – Stratton Business Park, Pegasus Drive, Biggleswade**
- **CB/17/00909/FULL – 15B Shortmead Street, Biggleswade**
- **CB/17/01159/ADV – Unit 3, Biggleswade Retail Park, London Road, Biggleswade**
- **CB/16/05652/FULL – 130 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade**
- **CB/17/01435/ADV – Saxon Pool and Leisure Centre, Saxon Drive, Biggleswade**
- **CB/17/00421/FULL – 36 Mead End, Biggleswade**
- **CB/17/01371/FULL – 68 Holme Court Avenue, Biggleswade**
- **CB/17/00909/FULL – 14 Blunham Road, Biggleswade**
- **CB/17/01609/FULL – 186 London Road, Biggleswade**
- **CB/17/01640/FULL – 36 Coltsfoot, Biggleswade**

Biggleswade Town Council **objected** to the following planning applications in April:

- **CB/17/01277/OUT – Land at Saxon Drive, Biggleswade**

On the following Grounds:

- Strong objections to the development of that area;
- It is the other side of a dangerous/fast road;
- It is separate to the existing community;
- Development will cause precedent;
- Part of the site is a flood plain/subject to flooding;
- Local plan not in place, therefore this is premature;
- Outside development envelope as it currently exists;
- There may be a covenant;
- Lack of infrastructure for the town to cope.

- **CB/17/01236/OUT – Land at Sorrell Way, Biggleswade**

On the Following Grounds:

- That the access is not clear;
- That the application is linked to the Saxon Drive development with a view to offset the provision for social housing on the Saxon Drive site.

The final decision on the above planning applications rests with Central Bedfordshire Council.

ANNUAL REPORT

2016-2017

The role of the Mayor presented by Cllr David Albone

It has been an honour to serve as Town Mayor this year. I would like to thank all Councillors, Staff and members of our community for the help and support I've received during my term. I'm very grateful.

I have represented the town at a number of events and services and Councillor North has deputised for me when I haven't been available.

From store openings to community bus events, school extension openings to St Georges day celebrations ... and all the others. It has been a privilege to represent the town on all these occasions and have the opportunity to meet so many people who put so much into our community.

The annual Remembrance Day Service was organised and overseen by the Council as well as the now established Christmas Fair and light switch-on. Both events went well and were well received.

A MacMillan Coffee Morning was held, raising much needed funding for MacMillan Cancer Support.

This (civic) year we got our railway bridge back! The bridge had been out for a long time, much longer than Central Beds had envisaged. This caused huge problems for the town, especially for traders. We were very pleased that it was eventually restored to use but not at all happy with how the bridge replacement project turned out.

We also saw a number of major store openings on the A1 retail park. Most of the units are now occupied and we all know how busy the retail park has become. We are still unsure what the effect of all this is having on the town and are concerned that as much as possible must be done to ensure the vibrancy of the Town Centre shops.

The Town Council has approved a request for the addition of a Splash Park at Franklin Recreation Ground and we await developments in this enterprise.

Some controversial planning applications have been considered by the Council including two major developments, one north of Potton Road and one East of Saxon Drive – both for more than 200 dwellings. The Town Council is not happy with either of these and objected to each of them – in the view of the Council they would put an unacceptable strain on the town's infrastructure as well as set an unwelcome precedent for even more development. Much to the Town Council's disappointment the development north of Potton Road was given the go-ahead by Central Beds. We are still waiting to hear about the development to the east of Saxon Drive.

The Town Council has been busy revamping the committee structure and putting into place a number of changes:

- The committees now have various delegated powers which means that decisions can be made and carried out in a more efficient manner.
- A constitution for the council has been adopted.
- A number of major policies have been devised and adopted

Also, the Town Clerk has been awarded a CiLCA and the Town Council has obtained a Local Council Award Scheme. These both show that the Council and staff are working hard to ensure that we are demonstrating best practice and striving to be efficient and effective in the services we offer our community.

Finally, we have welcomed some new Councillors over the year. Councillor J Medlock was elected following the death of Councillor George Wilson (much missed) and more recently Councillors G Fage and S Patel have been co-opted.

Once again, I have felt very privileged to serve as Mayor this year and would like to thank everyone for their very generous support.

David Albone
Biggleswade Town Mayor 2016-2017

PUBLIC LANDS AND OPEN SPACES 2016-2017

The Town Council's dedicated team of Public Realm Operatives work hard to maintain cemeteries, play areas, recreation grounds, sports facilities, allotments and green infrastructure. In addition to their programmed seasonal maintenance work, every week the team spend a significant proportion of their time clearing litter and dog foul from across all parts of the Town Council's estate. The team responds quickly to deal with safety issues that arise from antisocial behaviour including vandalism, graffiti, broken glass and other urgent concerns to ensure that our public amenities continue to be safe places to enjoy, relax and play.

The Town Council continues to provide and maintain sports facilities within the town for cricket, bowls, tennis and football. There is a high demand for football training and match facilities within Biggleswade and the Town Council's football pitches are in regular use by a number of clubs including youth football training.

A significant amount of work has been carried out through the year to enhance Play Areas and Recreation Grounds. Continuing a programme of works that began in 2015/16, priority has been given to ensuring that safety surfaces and individual play items are maintained to a high standard with repairs or replacements being made as appropriate. A list of projects completed within the year is attached.

Whilst the majority of the costs of maintaining Public Lands and Open Spaces has been funded through the year from current budgets and reserves, the Town Council has also secured £27,800 from S106 developers contributions to increase spending power on important local projects.

Looking to the future, proposals are in development for enhancements to Franklin Recreation Ground to include a splash park feature in collaboration with the Biggleswade Splash Committee.

As Biggleswade continues to grow it is expected that the Town Council will adopt many more green spaces including play areas and recreation grounds on Kings Reach and land north of Potton Road. This will significantly increase the size of the Town Council's estate. To service and maintain these areas will require investment in staff, vehicles and machinery as well as an urgent need for expansion of works premises.

Play Areas and Recreation Grounds

The following list is for projects over £1,000 and does not include general ongoing maintenance costs.

Berkeley Close Play Area	New Safety Surfaces	£1,160
	New Easy-Gate	£1,395
Dan Albone Picnic Area	New Knee Rail and Bollards	£1,265
Foxglove Drive Play Area	New Safety Surfaces	£2,850
Fairfield Road Play Area	New Gates and Bow Top Fencing	£6,514
Franklin Recreation Ground	New Safety Surfaces	£5,560
	New Easy-Gate	£1,450
	Replacement Swing Frame	£3,609
	Tree Works	£2,000
Heather Drive Play Area	New safety surfaces, springer, multiplay, play panels, surface graphics.	£26,000
Kayser Court Play Area	New Safety Surfaces	£3,375
Kitelands Recreation Ground	Installation of MUGA panels	£1,825
Lilac Grove Play Area	Install springers and repair surfaces	£1,650
Stratton Way Recreation Ground	New Safety Surfaces	£4,140

Vehicle and Plant

New items purchased at over £1,000 as follows:

New Leaf Vacuum	£1,121
Replacement 3.5t dropside truck	On Contract Hire
Replacement 5 Cylinder Mowing Machine	£49,908

Bernard Briars (Cllr)
Chairman, Public Lands & Open Spaces

TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

2016-2017

Once again, TCM has had some difficult problems to deal with during the year, with only partial success, but we must not forget the progress which has been made.

Parking

Parking is still the most intractable issue for TCM, both on and off street. Following on from the re-surfacing last year, we have installed a galvanised steel perimeter fence and disabled access to Rose Lane car park and it is now a pleasant place to use, far different from two years' ago.

The car park within the station yard, which we have leased and successfully used for several years, is now no longer available. EMR were unable to renew our licence at the end of April although their plans for the site are not yet known. The loss of this car park, together with the implementation by Central Beds Council of restrictions to on-street parking in residential streets, has caused commuters and those who work in the town to search for other places to park. We are not seeing the turnover in the car parks, making it very difficult for shoppers and other visitors to the town.

We are still looking to bring in management of our car parks – Chestnut Avenue, St. Andrew's Street, Mill Lane, Rose Lane and Dan Albone – but this will not solve the real problem, which is a lack of parking in reasonable proximity to the town centre and railway station. We are constantly looking for opportunities to create more parking. We are still waiting for CBC to re-model the area on the corner of Mill Lane and St. Andrew's Street to introduce chevron parking, which will slightly increase the number of spaces. We would also like to see some limited parking introduced in Church Street - which would have the advantage of slowing the traffic which turns off of Shortmead Street and speeds towards the Asda roundabout.

We still have our parking strategy setting out the overall scheme which we want to implement, with both medium and longer term parking and permits for some residents and people who work in the town but we are still looking for a partner to help us implement our proposals. We have been unable to move forward with the possibility of working with Central Bedfordshire Council to enforce both on-street and off-street parking and we are now approaching other organisations.

Biggleswade continues to suffer from the approach of CBC planners to development in the town centre. The Town Council has often objected to plans for residential units with no or insufficient parking but our objections are ignored. It is fatuous to say that if you live in the town centre, you don't need a car, particularly with the recent reduction in bus services. With the town growing as it is, it is a long walk even to other parts of Biggleswade, such as the new Retail Park!

Town Centre and Market

The town centre has not fully recovered from the closure of the High Street bridge and has been further challenged by the opening of the Retail Park and the obvious lack of parking.

Because of the bridge closure, three one-way systems were introduced in the narrow streets around the town centre – Sun Street and St. John’s Street; Back Street; and The Baulk. These systems remained in place for six months after the re-opening of the bridge so that their effects could be assessed under normal circumstances and a consultation was held on whether they should be made permanent. The Traffic Management Meeting at CBC has just decided that Sun Street/St. John’s Street and Back Street will become permanent. The decision on The Baulk has been deferred for six months. We are told that a handful of extra parking spaces may become available in Back Street as a result of making the one-way permanent.

We **still** have an outstanding request to Central Bedfordshire Council for the **reversal of Hitchin Street** with the pedestrianisation of the top section from Bonds Lane to the Market Square. This would also require the reversal of Bonds Lane.

The Town Clerk and I spent much of a cold day in November walking the High Street and Market Square with highways officers from CBC to look at decluttering, that is, removing unnecessary signage and street furniture and replacing signage if appropriate. The existing street furniture limits the way events can be held on the Market Square, including the Remembrance Sunday service and the Christmas Fair. We are still waiting for CBC Highways to prepare the report about what can be done and how much it would cost. Obviously, safety and the impact on those with disabilities is a major consideration.

A further issue is the existing paving on the Square with the various different levels, both intentional and unintentional. We recently received a humbling letter from a man who is quadriplegic about the difficulties of using Biggleswade as opposed to other surrounding towns.

CBC have commissioned a consultancy firm whose brief is to ‘provide an evidence and market informed strategy for ensuring the long-term health and financial viability of Biggleswade town centre’. We await the report and recommendations but we do know that CBC would like to ‘sweat their assets’ in the town by extending Century House and moving the library into the town centre. They have also considered moving the Registry Office to Century House as well. The reasoning is that it would bring extra footfall into the town centre. However, it is hard to imagine a Saturday morning with the Market, several weddings and people trying to use the library. It is an idea that would be hard to support and it is to be hoped that the consultancy firm will produce some more viable, alternative ideas.

The work to refurbish the Drum Clock, which belongs to the town although it is fixed to the Pizza Express building (which used to be the Town Hall), went ahead in the summer. The clock is now pristine and is controlled electronically.

CCTV is employed for security in the town centre and a camera was upgraded in June.

We continue to monitor the health of our Charter Market. We have fewer regular traders but more casuals. The Town Council has now agreed to halve the pitch fees permanently to limit the damage to the Market. We were sad to lose Les Ward’s vegetable stall from the market after several decades, this due to the retirement of key members of the team.

In July, the Farmers’ Market was extended to include Crafts and rebranded as the Farmers’ and Crafts Market. The idea for this came from some of the stallholders at the Christmas Fair.

The Council has recently purchased a three-year licence to deliver a Teenage Market in Biggleswade. This is a concept that has been introduced successfully in several towns across the country to encourage entrepreneurship in young people, some of whom have gone on to set up retail businesses.

Christmas Fair

The Christmas Fair (and Lights Switch-On) has become an established part of the town calendar and will now always be on the last Friday of November. The Council has received many plaudits for the Christmas Fair, which is really appreciated by people in the town.

We are still learning and tweaking and a TCM working party was again helped by the energy and enthusiasm of Hayley Down. Much appreciation should also be recorded to all the Council staff, who worked mightily both before and on the day.

The contractor who supplies the Christmas lights was re-appointed for a further three-year term. We continue to improve the infrastructure for the lights and the actual decorations can be adapted as needed. The contractor also supplies lighting for the Fair stalls and is very efficient in installing and taking down the lights.

A further improvement this year was in the sound system, which could be heard over a wide area with no distortion.

Administration

Underlying all the work we do are TCM's terms of reference and various policies. During the last year, the Town Council adopted a delegation agreement and new terms of reference for TCM. The Council also adopted a Markets Policy, Banners Policy and a Code of Conduct for Buskers. These can all be found on the Town Council website.

Town Centre Management will continue to work to improve the environment of the town centre, the parking, the traffic circulation and the use of the Market Square for markets and other events.

Madeline Russell (Cllr)
Chairman, Town Centre Management

REPORT ON FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

Year Ended 31st March 2017

Summary of Results for the Year

The Council recorded a deficit on the budget of £78,666 for the year, this is not as bad as the forecast position anticipated at the time of budget and precept setting in December 2016 where expenditure was forecast to be £107,548 higher than the council's total income.

Significant contributions to this were as follows:-

- A result of rent income at the Court House falling short of budget by £6k
- Market Income was short of budget by £18k
- The Council awarded grants totaling £33k on a budget of £8.5k this includes a community minibus at a cost of £10k
- There were unbudgeted legal fees
- Election costs were £10k on a budget of £4k

Interest earned on Council funds decreased from £1,200 in the year ended 31st March 2016 to £827 in the year just ended.

Major Activities

During the year, the Council also undertook the following projects during the year (all funded from previously earmarked reserves or the Rolling Capital Project Fund):-

1. Play Equipment

New play equipment and surfacing was purchased for at a cost of £48,113, all funded from develops contributions or rolling capital reserves.

2. New Vehicles

A five-gang mower was purchased at a cost of £49,905. The previous mower was sold for £8,000.

3. Councillor Tablets

Tablets for Councillors were purchased and setup at a cost of £11,157.

4. Magistrates Court Renovation

The first floor of the Magistrates Court was renovated at a cost of £15,355 so that it could be in a fit state to be rented out.

5. Rose Lane Car Park

Fencing was installed at Rose Lane Car Park at a cost of £7,545.

6. CCTV

A new multicam was purchased at a cost of £5,710.

Biggleswade Town Council's finances remain in a good position with over £466,184 in Bank Accounts which is used to finance a healthy General Reserve of £91,619 and Earmarked Reserves of £366,720.

Note that the recommended *minimum* balance of the General Reserve is £187,458 representing a shortfall of £95,839. The 2017-18 budget includes a surplus of £13,000 to top up the General Reserve but the council may wish to allocate some of their earmarked reserves to flow back to the General Reserve in addition to this.

Please note that the accounts have not been finalised for 2016-17 and as such the above figures may be subject to change but are fairly indicative of the Council's performance this year.

Michael North (Cllr)
Chairman, Finance & General Purpose

PERSONNEL REPORT

2016-2017

Staffing

The Council currently employs 17 members of staff. The administration of the Town Council is carried out by the Town Clerk who is appointed by the Council and who is also the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). The Town Clerk must carry out all the functions required by law as the Town Council's Proper Officer and issue all statutory notifications and documentation. There are procedural documents in place for operations undertaken by officers.

The Town Clerk has an annual Employee Development Review by Personnel Committee where individual performance against pre-determined criteria and targets cascaded from the Business Plan are discussed.

All other members of staff have similar appraisals by their line manager.

The Council has a Public Realm Team but also contracts out some maintenance work. There are specifications and maintenance schedules in place for these services. The Deputy Town Clerk monitors performance and reports regularly to Councillors.

The Council has an administration team of four members of staff lead by an Office Manager, an outside workforce team of six lead by the Public Realms Supervisor, and a part time Market Superintendent.

The Town Council is currently advertising for a caretaker for the Orchard community building and has agreed to the addition of two further trainee operatives when further lands and assets are adopted from the housing developments around Biggleswade.

Training

In addition to ongoing 'on the job' training and sharing good working practices, in the last year the Town Council adopted a Training and Development Policy, this forms a rolling programme of training over the last and coming years, priorities for the coming year are indicated.

Programme for Staff Training 2016-2020

Year	Training	Observations/Provider
Rob McGregor		
2016/17	Mentoring prior to taking CiLCA	LCS - Completed
2016/17	CiLCA	SLCC - Complete
2016/17	Equality responsibilities	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Strategic Planning	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Etiquette at Meetings	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Localism Act & Public Services White Paper	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Medium Term Financial Planning & Concurrent Functions	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Delivering through a Quality approach	LCS - Completed
2016/17	The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Local Government-where local councils fit in.	LCS - Completed


2016/17	Law of Allotments	SLCC - Completed
2016/17	Safeguarding	BBC - Completed
2016/17	Emergency First Aid at work	BBC - Completed
2016/17	Mental Capacity Act	BBC - Completed
2016/17	Developing Treasury Management	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Understanding VAT & its application to local councils	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Common Land & Village Greens	SLCC - Completed
2017/18	Getting ready for the changes to the General Data Protection Regulations	LCPAS
2017/18	Data Protection	
2017/18	Freedom of Information	
2017/18	Environmental responsibilities of a local council	
2017/18	Entertainment & Alcohol Licensing	
2018/19	Audit Regulations	
Mike Thorn		
2016/17	Strategic Planning	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Etiquette at Meetings	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Localism Act & Public Services White Paper	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Medium Term Financial Planning & Concurrent Functions	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Delivering through a Quality approach	LCS - Completed
2016/17	The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Equality Responsibilities	
2016/17	Practicalities of Environmental Auditing	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Managing a Cemetery effectively	SLCC - Completed
2016/17	Events Management	SLCC - Completed
2016/17	Agendas and minutes	BATPC - Completed
2016/17	First Aid Course	St John's - Completed
2016/17	Dog Control Orders	CBC
2016/17	Planning training	SLCC - Completed
2017/18	Data Protection	
2017/18	Freedom of Information	
2017/18	Environmental responsibilities of a local council	
2018/19	Audit Regulations	
Kay Croft		
2016/17	Managing a Cemetery effectively	SLCC - Completed
2016/17	Local Government-where local councils fit in.	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Delivering through a Quality approach	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Equality Responsibilities	
2016/17	Website Awareness	Vision ICT
2017/18	Data Protection	
2017/18	Freedom of Information	
2017/18	Environmental responsibilities of a local council	
2018/19	Audit Regulations	

Mike Dean		
2016/17	First Aid Course (3 days)	St John' s- Completed
2016/17	Dog Control Orders	CBC
2016/17	Local Government-where local councils fit in.	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Delivering through a Quality approach	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Equality Responsibilities	
2017/18	Data Protection	
2017/18	Freedom of Information	
2017/18	Environmental responsibilities of a local council	
2017/18	Chapter 8, Working on Highways	
Angela Thomas		
2016/17	Local Government-where local councils fit in.	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Delivering through a Quality approach	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Equality Responsibilities	
2016/17	Minute taking	BATPC - Completed
2016/17	Website Awareness Update	Vision ICT
2017/18	Data Protection	
2017/18	Freedom of Information	
2017/18	Environmental responsibilities of a local council	
2017/18	Operating a Reception & Customer Care	
2017/18	Entertainment & Alcohol Licensing	
Jan Durn		
2016/17	Local Government-where local councils fit in.	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Delivering through a Quality approach	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Equality Responsibilities	
2016/17	Minute taking	BATPC - Completed
2016/17	Website Awareness	Vision ICT
2017/18	Data Protection	
2017/18	Freedom of Information	
2017/18	Environmental responsibilities of a local council	
2017/18	Operating a Reception & Customer Care	
Heather Hammond		
2016/17	Local Government-where local councils fit in.	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Delivering through a Quality approach	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Equality Responsibilities	
2016/17	Website Awareness	Vision ICT
2016/17	Microsoft Excel Advanced	Bedford College
2016/17	Minute Taking	Bedford College
2017/18	Modern Business & Report Writing	Bedford College
2017/18	Data Protection	
2017/18	Freedom of Information	
2017/18	Environmental responsibilities of a local council	
2017/18	Operating a Reception & Customer Care	

Corey Albone		
2016/17	Local Government-where local councils fit in.	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Delivering through a Quality approach	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Equality Responsibilities	
2016/17	Social Media	
2016/17	Induction-Basics of Health and Safety	
2016/17	Website Awareness Update	Vision ICT
2016/17	Digital Councils Conference	NALC
2017/18	Data Protection	
2017/18	Freedom of Information	
2017/18	Environmental responsibilities of a local council	
2017/18	Operating a Reception & Customer Care	
2017/18	Getting ready for the changes to the General Data Protection Regulations	LCPAS
Tom Rowlett		
2016/17	First Aid Course	St John's - Completed
2016/17	Manually Fed Wood chippers L2	Shut Col - Completed
2016/17	Local Government-where local councils fit in.	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Delivering through a Quality approach	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Equality Responsibilities	
2017/18	Environmental responsibilities of a local council	
2017/18	Chapter 8, Working on Highways	
Ryan Chambers		
2016/17	Chemical Weeding PA1-PA6	Shut Col - Completed
2016/17	Basic Chainsaw-Maintenance & crosscutting (CS30)	Shut Col - Completed
2016/17	First Aid Course-Requalification	St Johns-Completed
2016/17	Local Government-where local councils fit in.	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Delivering through a Quality approach	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Equality Responsibilities	
2017/18	Environmental responsibilities of a local council	
Carl Rummy		
2016/17	Chemical Weeding PA1-PA6	Shut Col - Completed
2016/17	First Aid Course-Requalification	St Johns - Completed
2016/17	Local Government-where local councils fit in.	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Delivering through a Quality approach	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Equality Responsibilities	
2017/18	Environmental responsibilities of a local council	
Andrew King		
2016/17	Chainsaw Maintenance & crosscutting	Shut Col - Completed
2016/17	First Aid Course-Requalification	St Johns - Completed
2016/17	Local Government-where local councils fit in.	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Delivering through a Quality approach	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Equality Responsibilities	
2017/18	Environmental responsibilities of a local council	

Simon King		
2016/17	First Aid Course-Requalification	St John's - Completed
2016/17	Local Government-where local councils fit in.	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Delivering through a Quality approach	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Equality Responsibilities	
2017/18	Environmental responsibilities of a local council	
Tony Tyrell		
2016/17	Local Government-where local councils fit in.	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Delivering through a Quality approach	LCS - Completed
2016/17	Equality Responsibilities	
2016/17	Induction-Basics of Health and Safety	
2017/18	Environmental responsibilities of a local council	
Colin Keeble		
2017/18	Induction-Basics of Health and Safety	
Caretaker		
2017/18	Local Government-where local councils fit in.	
2017/18	Delivering through a Quality approach	
2017/18	Equality Responsibilities	
2017/18	Induction-Basics of Health and Safety	
2017/18	Caretaking & Cleaning	
Trainee/Operative BTC16		
2018/19	Induction-Basics of Health and Safety	
Trainee/Operative BTC16		
2018/19	Induction-Basics of Health and Safety	

In 2016, the Town Council approved a scheme of delegation for the Personnel Committee as listed below, the scheme of delegations allows the committee to make certain decisions, all delegated decisions are notified to the next meeting of the Town Council.

 TERMS OF REFERENCE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE Approved by Council: August 2016	
10 Members of the Authority Quorum = 3	
Meetings: Meetings will take place at least quarterly in February, May, August and November.	
All non-committee members may attend meetings of the Committee except for confidential items or matters relating to grievance or discipline and speak at the Chairman's discretion, but are unable to vote.	
Function of Committee Column 1	Delegation of Functions Column 2
1. All delegated functions as set out in the Terms of Reference and Delegation of Council	Committee
2. To recommend to Council the overall Staffing structure and approval of additional posts	None-Final approval remains with Council
3. To agree the pay and conditions of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk reserved for Council • All other staff to Committee including payment of honoraria providing within agreed budget.
4. Approval of personnel policies & Employee Handbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee, including discretionary provisions of National Joint Agreement.
5. Appointment of Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend appointment of new <u>Town Clerk</u> to be endorsed by Council <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Selection of long list by Town Clerk with personnel assistance if appropriate</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Selection of final short List-Chairman & V Chairman + Mayor & Deputy Mayor</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Final Interview-Committee + Mayor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of other Staff Scale Point 28 and above to Town Clerk in consultation with 2 members of Committee. • Appointment of Staff below Scale Point 28 to Town Clerk.

Appointment of Staff (Cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk for casual staff and temporary appointments to approved positions below Scale Point 2 • Decision on whether to fill vacant positions is delegated to Town Clerk • Decision on recruitment of contract staff or interim contract staff to Committee
6. Disciplinary matters under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk with appeal to Personnel Committee • Personnel Committee in the case of the Town Clerk with appeal to 3 members of Council who are not on Personnel Committee. • Dismissal of Town Clerk to be ratified by Council
7. Determination of individual grading issues and job evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee, except Town Clerk reserved to Council
8. Issues relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme as it affects individual employees and administration of retirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee (Council in case of Town Clerk) • Administration of retirement in cases of permanent ill health, after appropriate medical advice via Bedfordshire Local Government Pensions • Pensions Discretions Policies to Committee
9. Approval of job descriptions & person specifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
10. Absence issues under the Council's Attendance Management Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk except Committee in the case of Town Clerk
11. Appeals Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk except Committee in the case of an appeal against decision of Town Clerk • In case of appeal against decision of Committee, to Appeals Committee.
12. To place staff at the disposal of other local authorities for the purpose of joint arrangements or Partnership working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council
13. Competence Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk except Committee in the case of Town Clerk
14. Issue of Contracts of Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk except Committee in the case of Town Clerk • Model Contract approved by Committee
15. Redundancy & Redeployment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee

16. Monitoring Equalities Policy in relation to employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
17. Approval of Officer Codes of Conduct & Member-Officer Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council
18. Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for approval of Policy other than General Statement & Organisation which are reserved for Council • Committee to oversee responsibilities for Council within budget and policy • Town Clerk for routine management
19. Grievance Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk except Committee in the case of Town Clerk
20. Administration of other Personnel procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk except Committee in the case of Town Clerk
21. Employee Development Review and assessment at end of Probationary period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk for all staff, often delegated to direct manager. Mayor, Personnel Chairman & one another Member of Committee for Town Clerk
22. Training & Development Plan for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk
23. To administer the Volunteers Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk to administer • Committee to monitor & recommend to Council
24. To administer the Child & Vulnerable Adult Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk to administer • Committee to monitor & recommend to Council
25. To administer the Council's Equality Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk to administer for employees, services, volunteers and democratic processes • Committee to monitor & recommend to Council

The Personnel Committee in 2016/17 adopted the following operational documents;

Officer Code of Conduct.

Member Officer Protocol.

Employee Handbook.

Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.

All the above documents are available on the Town Council Web Site.

Work Experience Placements

The Town Council continues to support work experience placements for individuals to experience the world of work, gain new skills and build confidence. Each year the Town Council offers work experience placements to local schools for both grounds staff and administrative roles.

Cllr I Bond
Chairman, Personnel Committee

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL - TOWN COUNCILLORS 2016/2017

CONTACT DETAILS		WARD/PARTY	
EMAIL AND ADDRESS	PHONE NUMBER		
Albone , Cllr David Albone david.albone@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 48 Drove Road, Biggleswade SG18 8HD	Tel: 01767 221385	Ivel	Labour
Biernis , Cllr Peter peter.biernis@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 12 Boothey Close, Biggleswade SG18 0DG	Tel: 01767 220758	Ivel	Labour
Bond , Cllr Ian J ian.bond@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk Shortmead House, Shortmead Lane, Biggleswade SG18 0FG	Tel: 01767 313663	Ivel	Conservative
Briars , Cllr Bernard V bernard.briars@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 61 Rowan Crescent, Biggleswade SG18 0PG	Tel: 01767 313197	Ivel	Labour
Fage , Cllr Grant 40 Coltsfoot, Biggleswade SG18 8SR grant.fage@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk		Holme	
Foster , Cllr Frank Sidney frank.foster@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 71 Wilsheres Road, Biggleswade SG18 0DN	Tel: 01767 314027	Ivel	Conservative
Foster , Cllr Mark Adrian mark.foster@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 22 Ripon Court, Biggleswade SG18 8JE	Tel: 01767 220250	Stratton	Independent
Medlock , Jonathan jonathan.medlock@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 6 Wharf Mews, Biggleswade SG18 0AW		Stratton	Conservative
North , Cllr Michael Robert michael.north@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 52 Dells Lane, Biggleswade SG18 8LP	Tel: 01767 600715	Holme	Conservative
Patel , Cllr Sarju 87A High Street, Biggleswade SG18 0LA sarju.patel@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk		Ivel	
Ramsay , Cllr Mrs Hazel ramsayh2@gmail.com 56 Holme Court Avenue, Biggleswade SG18 8PE	Tel: 01767 312874	Stratton	Conservative
Russell , Cllr Mrs Madeline Ann madeline.russell@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 31 Ivel Gardens, Biggleswade SG18 0AN	Tel: 01767 312966	Ivel	Conservative
Strachan , Cllr Duncan Anthony Duncan.strachan@ntlworld.com 3 Tennyson Avenue, Biggleswade SG18 8QD	Tel: 01462 814824	Stratton	UKIP
Watkins , Cllr Steven steven.watkins@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 9 Kidman Court, The Baulk, Biggleswade SG18 0FH	Tel: 01767 314489	Stratton	Conservative
Woodward , Cllr Timothy P tim.woodward@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 6 Ivel Mill, Mill Lane, Biggleswade SG18 8AZ	Tel: 01767 312100	Holme	Conservative

COUNCILLORS ATTENDANCE RECORD

10th MAY 2016 – 25th APRIL 2017

COUNCILLOR	NO. OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS (Including Annual Statutory and Annual Assembly) Total = 23		ATTENDANCE AT TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS			
			Total = 19			
			Committee Membership	Meetings Held	Attendance	%
Albone , Cllr David Albone	21	(91%)	4	16	8	50%
Biernis , Cllr Peter	17	(74%)	3	8	3	38%
Bond , Cllr Ian J	22	(96%)	4	16	13	81%
Briars , Cllr Bernard V	22	(96%)	4	16	16	100%
Fage , Cllr Grant (as from 11/04/17)	2	(100%)	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Foster , Cllr Frank Sidney	23	(100%)	4	16	16	100%
Foster , Cllr Mark Adrian	20	(87%)	4	16	15	94%
Medlock , Jonathan (as from 23/08/16)	10	(63%)	2	5	2	40%
North , Cllr Michael Robert	22	(96%)	4	16	16	100%
Patel , Cllr Sarju (as from 11/04/17)	2	(100%)	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ramsay , Cllr Mrs Hazel	20	(87%)	5	20	17	85%
Russell , Cllr Mrs Madeline Ann	19	(83%)	4	16	11	69%
Strachan , Cllr Duncan Anthony	23	(100%)	4	12	12	100%
Watkins , Cllr Steven	13	(57%)	2	6	2	33%
Woodward , Cllr Timothy P	8	(35%)	1	N/A	N/A	N/A

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Cllr David Lawrence
Cllr Mrs Jane Lawrence
Cllr Steven Watkins
Cllr Tim Woodward

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2016/2017

COUNCILLOR	COMMITTEE
David Albone (Mayor)	Council (Chair) , Finance & General Purpose, Town Centre Management, Personnel
Peter Biernis	Council, Public Lands & Open Spaces, Town Centre Management, Appeals (Vice Chair)
Ian Bond	Council, Finance & General Purpose, Public Land & Open Spaces, Town Centre Management, Personnel (Chair)
Bernard Briars	Council, Finance & General Purpose, Public Lands & Open Spaces (Chair) , Town Centre Management
Frank Foster	Council, Finance & General Purpose, Town Centre Management, Personnel
Mark Foster	Council, Finance & General Purpose, Public Lands & Open Spaces, Town Centre Management, Personnel (Vice Chair)
Jonathan Medlock	Council, Town Centre Management, Personnel
Michael North (Deputy Mayor)	Council, Finance & General Purpose (Chair) , Public Lands & Open Spaces (Vice Chair) , Town Centre Management, Personnel
Mrs Hazel Ramsay	Council, Finance & General Purpose (Vice Chair) , Public Lands & Open Spaces, Town Centre Management, Personnel
Mrs Madeline Russell	Council, Finance & General Purpose, Town Centre Management (Chair) , Personnel
Duncan Strachan	Council, Finance & General Purpose, Public Lands & Open Spaces, Town Centre Management, Appeals (Chair)
Steven Watkins	Council, Public Lands & Open Spaces, Appeals
Timothy Woodward	Council, Appeals



MEETING DATES FOR 2016/2017

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND



DATES	TIME	1 ST MEETING	TIME	2 ND MEETING
2016				
10 May	7.00 pm	Annual Statutory		
24 May	7.30 pm	Annual Assembly		
31 May	10.00 am	Personnel	7.00 pm	Finance & General Purpose
07 June	7.00 pm	Town Centre Management		
14 June	7.00 pm	Council		
21 June	7.00 pm	Public Lands & Open Spaces		
28 June	7.00 pm	Council		
12 July	7.00 pm	Council		
19 July	7.00 pm	Finance & General Purpose	Followed by	Town Centre Management
26 July	7.00 pm	Council		
09 August	7.00 pm	Council		
16 August	10.00 am	Personnel		
23 August	7.00 pm	Council		
13 September	7.00 pm	Council		
20 September	7.00 pm	Public Lands & Open Spaces		
27 September	7.00 pm	Council		
11 October	7.00 pm	Council		
25 October	7.00 pm	Council		
08 November	7.00 pm	Council		
15 November	10.00 am	Personnel	7.00 pm	Finance & General Purpose
22 November	7.00 pm	Council		
29 November	7.00 pm	Town Centre Management		
06 December	7.00 pm	Public Lands & Open Spaces		
08 December	10.00 am	<i>Biggleswade Joint Committee – CBC Chicksands, Room PH15</i>		
13 December	7.00 pm	Council		
15 December	10.00 am	Personnel		
2017				
10 January	7.00 pm	Council		
17 January	7.30 pm	Finance & General Purpose		
24 January	7.00 pm	Council		
14 February	7.00 pm	Council		
21 February	10.00 am	Personnel	7.00 pm	Town Centre Management
28 February	7.00 pm	Council		
14 March	7.00 pm	Council		
21 March	7.00 pm	Public Lands & Open Spaces		
28 March	7.00 pm	Council		
11 April	7.00 pm	Council		
25 April	7.00 pm	Council		
26 April	10.00 am	<i>Biggleswade Joint Committee - CBC Chicksands, Room PH15</i>		

COUNCIL STAFF

Town Clerk

Rob McGregor

Email: rob.mcgregor@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk

Deputy Town Clerk

Mike Thorn

Email: michael.thorn@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk

Office Manager

Kay Croft

Administrative Assistants

Corey Albone

Jan Durn

Heather Hammond

Angela Thomas

CONTACT DETAILS

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Biggleswade

SG18 8DL

Telephone: 01767 313134

Email: enquiries@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Carnival Week – Monday, 19th June 2017

Carnival Parade – Saturday, 24th June 2017

Remembrance Day – Sunday, 12th November 2017

Christmas Fair – November 2017