



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 10th NOVEMBER 2020
AT 7PM VIA ZOOM WEBINAR FUNCTION

PRESENT:

Cllr M. Russell (Chairman)
Cllr G. Fage (Vice Chairman)
Cllr D. Albone
Cllr I. Bond
Cllr K. Brown
Cllr F. Foster
Cllr H. Ramsay
Cllr L. Fage
Cllr M. Foster
Cllr M. Knight
Cllr M. North
Cllr R. Pullinger
Cllr D. Strachan
Cllr C. Thomas
Cllr J. Woodhead

Mr P. Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive, Biggleswade Town Council
Mr P. Truppin – Assistant Town Clerk, Biggleswade Town Council
Ms N. Villa – Assistant Town Clerk, Biggleswade Town Council
Mr S. Newton - Town Centre Operations Manager, Biggleswade Town Council
Ms H Calvert – Deputy Office Manager, Biggleswade Town Council
Mrs S. van der Merwe – Meeting Administrator, Biggleswade Town Council

Members of Public – 16

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees, both panel and public, 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 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 the individual. The Mayor asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Cllr G Fage – Item 11c. – Parking Permits.

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

Cllr M Russell – Item 12c. – Tree Preservation at 30 Ivel Gardens.

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. **Biggleswade Remembrance Sunday ceremony**

Cllr Russell extended her thanks to Town Council staff and members of the British Legion for the successful socially-distanced Remembrance Sunday event held in the Town Centre on 8 November 2020. Special thanks were extended to the Town Council's IT Service providers for their assistance with live streaming to YouTube.

b. **New Biggleswade Business**

Cllr G Fage attended the opening of Seasons' Fruit and Veg store and Drink Biggleswade craft beer shop. It was inspiring to see two new businesses opening within the community and feedback was that both had sell-out openings.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

The IT Administrator advised members of the public wishing to speak to use the "raise hand" function on screen.

a. **Mrs Kathryn and Mr Colin Pell-Walpole**

As residents of Station Road there were questions on the proposed Transport Interchange: whether the design of the proposed structures will be in keeping with the style of the residential buildings surrounding it and town itself; the policy with regard to residential parking; mitigation of the environmental impact, potential vandalism, litter, noise, light and carbon pollution from the buses.

b. **Mr Julian Vaughan – Biggleswade Rail Users Group**

Mr Vaughan's concerns about the Interchange were: potential lack of security and provision of CCTV coverage, cycle provision, lighting and disabled access; loss of car park spaces directly at the front of the station entrance; lack of toilet provisions and amenities. In addition, Mr Vaughan asked if Station Road would become one-way to facilitate bus usage.

c. **Cllr Hayley Whitaker, Central Bedfordshire Council**

Cllr Whitaker asked if the Council would consider suspending standing orders to allow questions by the public after the presentation on the Transport Interchange.

d. **Mr John Duxbury**

As a resident of Station Road, he asked if he would be able to put questions to the Invited Speaker following the presentation.

It was **RESOLVED** by the Town Council to suspend standing orders and allow questions after the presentation.

e. **Mr and Mrs Milner**

The Milners are residents of Tavener Road and asked why CBC has planned to create 3 bus stops, rather than a combination of bus and taxi drop off points which would be more beneficial to the Interchange.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

Mrs Aziza Jeppe, Principal Highways Officer Central Bedfordshire Council and Mr Christian Bodé, AECOM, Director (Roads) – Transportation Interchange

Mrs Jeppe and Mr Bodé presented on the current plans for the proposed Biggleswade Transportation Interchange.

Consultations were held between CBC, Govia Thameslink and Network Rail to formulate the requirements for this Interchange. These include provision of 3 bus stops that act independently of each other with their own shelter, improved access and safe crossing for pedestrians, CCTV provision and a passenger information totem. Consideration of a number of factors resulted in extension of the 20mph speed zone, kerb extension re-design to allow space for cars entering the site and additional disabled access provisions.

CBC plan to submit the planning application by 1 December 2020 to meet the first requirement of the Grant Determination Agreement (GDA). Members expressed concern at the lack of consultation and communication from CBC during the development of this project and requested an extension to the planning application deadline of 1 December 2020 to Spring 2021 to allow further time for consultation with the Town Council and members of the public.

Additional concerns were raised by Members over narrowing of Station road as a result of this proposed Interchange - the Police station is based on Station Road and emergency service vehicles and heavy goods vehicles travel in both directions.

At this point, Standing Orders were suspended to allow members of the Public to comment on this Interchange proposal.

Mr J Duxbury

Mr. Duxbury has considerable safety concerns about the corner of Station Road and Saffron Road. This is a tight corner with no official crossing for pedestrians. The road suddenly becomes one way. Motorists consistently enter the corner at speed, posing considerable risks

to pedestrians using the pavement and to parked cars. Mr Duxbury asked CBC to conduct an urgent review of traffic management and control around this corner.

Mr and Mrs Willis

Mr and Mrs Willis said that children are observed crossing at the widest point of the road en route to school. This has not been addressed in the plan. Heavy goods vehicles often use Station Road at speed and without due care and attention. The proposals will significantly reduce the number of parking spaces on Station Road. Noise and light pollution affect houses currently and this will be worse once the Interchange is in place.

Mr and Mrs Pell-Walpole

Mr and Mrs Pell-Walpole asked what considerations have been given to rail replacement services (up to 6 buses can be parked outside the station during rail disruption incidents). They requested clarification on the operational hours, expressed concern over potential vandalism, safety for late travellers and local residents, lighting and noise pollution and also that the development be in sympathy with surrounding period homes.

Cllr Hayley Whitaker, Central Bedfordshire Ward Councillor

Cllr Whitaker presented questions on behalf of Julian Vaughan: Where will bus drivers use the toilet if there are no toilets on the station? Are the green spaces on the map green verges? The crossing at the car park towards Baystrait House is unacceptable and are there any changes proposed to this crossing.

Christian Bodé responded that green spaces will channel pedestrian traffic; Network Rail are looking at their land to see if they can accommodate a toilet and are also responsible for the crossing at the car park (this will not form part of the Transportation Interchange development).

Standing Orders were reimposed at this point.

It was **RESOLVED** to write urgently to Central Bedfordshire Council raising concerns over the lack of consultation and communication from CBC to the Town Council, and that CBC postpone the proposed 1 December 2020 planning application date to Spring 2021 to allow Members time to work with CBC on urgent and necessary revisions to the Transport Interchange proposal in order to deliver value to Biggleswade.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

a. Workshop

Cllr North asked for an update on this matter. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised that it remains a top priority for the Council - the specification has been drawn up and sent to commercial surveyors. A proposal will be submitted to Council at the earliest opportunity.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

a. For Members to receive the minutes of the Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 13th October 2020 via Zoom Webinar.**

- Members commented that there was no draft watermark on the Minutes.

- **Page 2 – Item 3a. – Town Mayor’s announcements:** Richard Fuller – Amend his constituency to “North East Bedfordshire”.

Subject to these amendments, the minutes were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record.

- b. For Members to receive the Recommendations and Resolutions of the Personnel Meeting held on **Tuesday, 3rd November 2020** via Zoom Webinar.

Members were sent a corrected version of these minutes on 10th November, 2020. The Chairman of the F&GP Committee was mistakenly included in the proposal for the Appraisal Sub-Committee.

Subject to this recorded amendment, the minutes and were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

Matters arising from the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting of **13th October 2020**.

- **Page 10 – Parking Orders** – Cllr Knight asked if there is a target date for the consultation and implementation of parking orders. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised Members of an update to this at 10c and on the Exempt items of this Meeting.
- **Page 10 – Website Design** – Cllr Pullinger asked for an update on progress of the website design. The Town Clerk confirmed an engagement meeting was held with Tim’s Digital, process maps are being scoped and deadlines on the project plan are being met.

9. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

- a. **CB/20/03591/FULL - Harrison House, Sheep Walk, Langford Road, Biggleswade, SG18 9RB**

Dormer extension and changes at ground level to openings on the East Elevation.

Extension for comments has been granted by CBC to **11th November 2020**.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations.

- b. **CB/20/03674/FULL - 161 Holme Court Avenue, Biggleswade, SG18 8PB**

Single storey front extension.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations.

- c. **CB/20/03279/LB - 2-6 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JA**

Listed Building: Alterations to Courtyard involving demolition of existing single storey outbuildings and repairs to existing boundary wall.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations.

d. **CB/20/03565/FULL - Kramp Warehouse Unit 3B, Pegasus Way, Stratton Business Park, Biggleswade, SG18 8QB**

Change of use from Use Class B8 'Storage and Distribution' to Use Class B2 'General Industrial'. Extension for comments has been granted by CBC to **11th November**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application.

e. **CB/20/03784/FULL - Land to rear of 33 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade**

Re-submission of planning permission CB/20/02285/FULL Partial demolition of workshop, convert remaining workshop into two dwellings and erection of single storey bungalow.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECTS** to this planning application due to:
1) Overdevelopment of the site; 2) The access to Shortmead Street will be compromised; 3) The privacy of the neighbours will be compromised; 4) There is inadequate parking.

f. **CB/20/03820/VOC - Land at Phase 6 Stratton Business Park, East of Pegasus, Biggleswade**

Variation of Conditions 3 and 7 of planning permission CB/19/00066/RM (Reserved matters approval is sought for the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of a 61,427 sqm (661,201 sq. ft.) Distribution Centre (B8 Use), including ancillary office space and VOSA approved vehicle maintenance unit. Following Outline Consent CB/15/03078/OUT).

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application.

g. **CB/20/03884/FULL - 8 Parry Rise, Biggleswade, SG18 8FU**

Single storey rear extension and part garage conversion.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECTS** to this planning application due to the loss of parking.

h. **CB/20/03871/FULL - 8 Wiseman Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8LN**

Re-submission of planning permission CB/19/04262/FULL - Ground floor rear extension.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations.

i. **CB/20/03923/VOC - Asda Store, Church Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JS**

Variation of condition 3 of appeal decision APP/P0240/A/12/2185842 (Redevelopment for construction of retail store with catering facilities, bakery, pharmacy, dry cleaners, crèche and associated level parking for 363 cars, store serving and access arrangements (all matters reserve except siting and means of access). Change of opening hours.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided that lorry delivery hours are not changed.

j. **CB/20/03908/VOC- Park Corner Farm, Dunton Lane, Biggleswade, SG18 8SH**

Variation of Condition 3 from planning permission CB/17/02726/FULL (Erection of an agricultural building for the storage and grading of potatoes and storage of associated farming machinery).

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application.

k. **CB/20/03919/FULL - Land Rear of, 2 Market Square, Biggleswade, SG18 8AP**

Conversion of and alterations to an existing outbuilding to form one Dwelling.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided that it is recognised that any future resident is made aware that they would not be eligible for a resident parking permit under the terms of the Council's Parking Policy.

l. **CB/20/03909/FULL - 17 Darwin Drive, Biggleswade, SG18 8GD**

Proposal: Single storey rear extension.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations.

m. **CB/20/03824/FULL- 7 & 11 Britten Place, Sullivan Court, Biggleswade**

Conversion of commercial units (A2) to two residential dwellings.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **STRONGLY OBJECTS** to this planning application due to loss of commercial space. Amenities, including retail units, promised by the Developer are still to be delivered. With the loss of these units, such delivery will be highly unlikely. The Council will provide further representations in due course.

10. **ACCOUNTS**

a. Members received and **ADOPTED** the following accounts:

- i. Detailed Balance Sheet to 30/09/2020.
- ii. Summary Income and Expenditure by Committee 30/09/2020.
- iii. Detailed Income and Expenditure by Committee 30/09/2020.
- iv. Lloyds Bank Payment listing September 2020.

Cllr Ramsay asked Members to review Page 25 separately which may help to inform decisions on car park charges and allotments.

11. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. London Luton Airport

A consultation is being held as part of a proposal to change the arrival routes into London Luton Airport. This is sponsored by London Luton Airport and NATS (Air Traffic Control). Stakeholder mapping indicates that Biggleswade may be affected by the proposal and Members were invited to consider the Options set out in the Consultation.

It was **RESOLVED** to respond to the public consultation a) setting out the Town Council's preference for Option 1 with the wider approach and b) raising concerns about air quality between St. Neots and Biggleswade over the A1.

b. BRCC Funding Request

The Council has partially funding the Community Agent post through annual Grant Fund applications. BRCC wish to continue with this role permanently and are requesting funding for a three-year term instead. The role has added considerable value to the community, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Members asked for a presentation from the next Community Agent once the incumbent has settled into their role to better understand the support the role is providing.

It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** the request for funding for the Community Agent for a period of three years.

c. Parking Permits

Cllr G Fage declared a pecuniary interest in this matter and excused himself for the duration of this item.

The Town Centre Operations Manager said that CBC had confirmed it will not be enforcing parking during the period of the second lockdown up to 2 December 2020, unless there are safety issues.

The Town Council previously extended Residential and Worker Parking Permits at the end of the first lockdown. Members felt stimulating the local economy is essential following the second lockdown and over the Christmas period, suspending all town centre parking charges and extending the parking permit renewal to the end of December 2020 would help to support local business and residents.

It was **RESOLVED** to extend the suspension of all Town Centre parking charges up to 31 December 2020 and also to extend all Worker and Resident parking permits due to expire up to 31 December 2020.

Cllr G Fage re-entered the meeting to continue with the remaining items.

d. **Christmas Offering**

The Town Centre Operations Manager submitted a written report for Members to review and decide on Christmas-themed events for December 2020.

Members requested an additional performer for 19th December. The Town Centre Operations Manager has written confirmation from the vendor that, in the event of the second lockdown being extended beyond 2 December requiring cancellation of the events, there will be no financial obligations on the Council's part. He agreed to consider including local charities in the craft fair.

It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** to the proposed events for the Christmas offering.

e. **Review of Financial Regulations**

The Assistant Town Clerk advised Members that they are being asked to update financial regulations to bring them in line with NALC financial regulations. The proposals in this report include for Members to consider increasing the spending authority for Officers to expedite Council business.

Cllr F Foster requested that the Council be notified in the event of large spend values and the Town Clerk and Chief Executive confirmed this practice would be adopted and enforced.

It was **RESOLVED** to **ACCEPT** the proposal that all authorisations for expenditure up to the value of £15,000 will be determined by the Town Clerk & Chief Executive.

It was **RESOLVED** to **DEFER** all other Regulation issues to the 8 December 2020 meeting where these should be presented in conjunction with the current Financial Regulations.

f. **Central Bedfordshire Council Draft Local Plan Examination in Public**

Cllr Russell circulated a draft Hearing Statement to Members relating to the Council's position on issues to be discussed at the EIP relating to Biggleswade.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Hearing Statement be submitted to the Inspectors for the Examination in Public of the CBC Draft Local Plan.

g. **Consultation on the Future of Abbotsbury Care Home**

This item was listed on the agenda as an Item for Information but Council requested that it be moved to become an Item for Consideration.

Cllr Knight said that the consultation is running to **29 January 2020** suggested a presentation from CBC at the next Town Council meeting to help inform the Council's response. The presentation should include current and projected care needs of the community.

Cllr Woodhead advised it will likely be the Commissioning Team for social care within CBC, however, should they not be in a position to present the required information to the Council at that meeting, it would be prudent to ask for an extension to the consultation.

It was **RESOLVED** to request a presentation from CBC at the meeting of 8 December 2020 to inform the Council's response to the consultation.

12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Planning Application Outcomes

- i. Cllr Woodhead asked if there was an update on the Bonds Lane development. Cllr Bond confirmed that the S106 agreement has been signed and the application is now approved.
- ii. Lawrence Road: Despite the Town Council's objection to this planning application, Central Bedfordshire Council has approved it. Cllr L Fage asked the Town Council to support residents of Lawrence Road should any issues arise.

b. Crime Statistics – September 2020

The Deputy Office Manager and Amanda Cawthorn (Biggleswade Community Safety Group) have been working on a Crime Statistics Report in a more useful format and Members were delighted with the presentation of the report before them.

Members raised concerns over the level of theft and attempted theft and requested further analysis to recategorize those to differentiate business theft/attempted business theft by road and by ward. Members felt this amended format clearly outlines those theft types and Cllr Strachan felt it would also be useful to have thefts around the Marketplace identified.

The Town Centre Operations Manager will be discussing these concerns with the Safer Communities & Partnership Manager at Central Bedfordshire Council.

Cllr Strachan advised no police liaison meetings have been held following Chief Constable Jon Boutcher's retirement. Cllr Strachan has reached out to the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office and is awaiting contact from senior officers.

Cllr G Fage provided an update on the Town Centre Management Committee's Crime Working Group. At the meeting of 6th October 2020, it was resolved that this group needed to review the CCTV.

c. Work to trees at 30 Ivel Gardens

Cllr Russell declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item.

This item was **NOTED**.

13. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

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

None.

14. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

The resolution was **moved** that it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press be excluded whilst the following exempt items were discussed.

- a. Rose Lane Car Park
- b. Parking Orders
- c. Christmas Dinner