



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 28 APRIL 2020
AT 7PM VIA ZOOM WEBINAR FUNCTION

PRESENT:

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

- Mr P Truppin – Acting Town Clerk, Biggleswade Town Council
- Ms N Villa – Deputy Town Clerk, Biggleswade Town Council
- Mrs S van der Merwe – Meeting Administrator, Biggleswade Town Council

Members of Public – 26

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 Mayor reminded all that when not speaking, please mute microphone and it would be impossible to hear if everyone speaks at once, please therefore speak one at a time. There is an IT Administrator who can mute or remove anyone who causes a nuisance. As this is a new way of working, the Mayor appealed for patience from all involved.

A28/0401 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr M North and Cllr M Foster.

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

None

A28/0402 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A28/0402.1 a. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item: None

A28/0202.2 b. Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item: None

A28/0203 3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

15 March 2020 – Central Bedfordshire Civic Service

The Mayor was pleased to support the Chairman of Central Bedfordshire Council, Cllr. Brian Saunders, at his civic service at St. Mary's Church, Stotfold on Sunday, 15th March.

A28/0404 4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

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

A28/0404.1 a. Ian Jemmett – Land East of Biggleswade Planning Application:

Mr Jemmett stated he objected to any major developments currently happening in Biggleswade; to the timing of the application; to the loss of countryside and agricultural land and to the increase in traffic.

A28/0404.2 b. Rosemary Vernon – Land East of Biggleswade Planning Application

Ms Vernon objected to anything adding to the burden of noise and traffic pollution. She agreed with the previous speaker and pointed to the lack of infrastructure.

A28/0404.3 c. Cllr Hayley Whitaker – Land East of Biggleswade Planning Application:

Cllr Whitaker asked for three points to be considered: that Appendix 7 (including the Land East site) has been removed from the Local Plan; that the 5-year land supply is sufficient and the homes are not needed; and that Dunton Lane is not an appropriate access.

A28/0405 5. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

A28/0405.1 a. Cllr G Fage asked what further could be done about rough sleepers during the current Covid-19 crisis as they are a risk to both themselves and others. In particular, Cllrs L Fage and G Fage noted two homeless people of concern – based mainly at ASDA and Co-op.

Cllr M Russell supported contacting the Police – with current legislation in place they will be best placed to deal with the rough sleepers and ensuring they are housed within the government mandated guidelines of Covid-19 pandemic. The Mayor requested Cllr Strachan to liaise with the Police to take this matter forward.

A28/0405.2 b. Cllr M Knight noted the defibrillator near Century House beside the public toilets has gone missing for several weeks with a notice of "Awaiting Service" and asked when it had been removed and when it will be restored. The Acting Clerk advised that he had followed it up in the last 3 weeks and would continue to monitor the situation.

- A28/0405.3 c. Cllr R Pullinger requested an update from the Acting Clerk on access to the BTC Facebook page. The Acting Clerk advised that an official letter had been sent to Facebook, but he has not had any further feedback in the last 3 weeks.

A28/0406 6. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

Members received the minutes of the Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 10th March 2020** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

The following amendments were proposed:

- Item B10/0301.1: Cllr J Woodhead advised he had emailed the Acting Town Clerk on 27 February 2020 that he would not be at the Council Meeting.
- Item B10/0311.1 a.: Street naming and numbering: Cllr G. Fage wanted it noted on a point of accuracy that the action was not for Cllr G Fage to bring the information to Council at the next meeting – it was purely for him to bring it to the attention of the Clerk, which he did shortly thereafter by email.

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

A28/0407 7. MATTERS ARISING

Members received the minutes on the Town Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 10th March 2020**.

- Item B10/0306.1: Cllr R Pullinger requested an update on any progress relating to parking orders. The Acting Clerk advised that all comments from the Council were sent to CBC on 11 March 2020 by email (to Marcel Coiffait, Director of Community Services). To date the Acting Clerk has not received any response. We will need to wait for the orders to be actioned by CBC and then go through the process.
- Item B10/0306.1: Cllr M Knight - Parking: Original proposed date to implement was 11 February 2020, once lockdown is relaxed this needs to be implemented in a timely fashion to facilitate businesses in town centre and would like this expedited.
- Item B10/0311.2: CBC Eagle Farm Investigation: Cllr D Strachan asked if CBC have issued the master plan on a single sheet on this matter. The Acting Clerk advised he could not recall seeing anything and agreed the Council need to know what the latest thinking is before we proceed with any other actions.
- Item B10/0311.4 D: Cllr R Pullinger advised the Biggleswade Scout Group's St. George's event (due 26 April 2020) was unfortunately cancelled due to the Covid-19 crisis. Cllr Pullinger would like to extend sincere thanks to the Town Council from the Scouts for agreeing for the event to go ahead and is

proposing the event go into the calendar next year April. The Scouts will approach the Council in the usual formal fashion for the next event.

A28/0408 8. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

A28/0408.1 a. CB/20/00985/FULL - Land to rear of 33 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0AT

Resubmission of planning permission CB/19/03921/FULL Convert existing workshop into two dwellings, with partial demolition of existing workshop and erection of detached barn cottage.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECT** to this planning application on the grounds of: 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.

A28/0408.2 b. CB/20/00959/OUT – Land East of Biggleswade Road

Outline Application: seeking planning permission for up to 1,500 dwellings (use Class C3) and up to 1 2ha of commercial development (use Class A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1a, b, c, B2, B8) up to 5ha of primary school development (class D1) and up to 4ha of other leisure and community development (Use Classes D1 and D2) up to 61ha of open space including play space, allotments and a country park, infrastructure, including site access, internal roads, car parking, footpaths, cycle ways, drainage and utilities.

The developers already have outline planning permission for this site. This new application is for a change of access.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided that the following points are considered by CBC in their deliberations: 1) Dunton Lane should be upgraded; 2) the speed limit from Saxon Drive east to beyond the access should be 40 miles per hour; 3) adequate provision should be made for pedestrians and cyclists; 4) vehicular access to the A1 via Saxon Drive/London Road is already congested.

A28/0408.3 c. CB/20/01037/TDM – The Grass Verge Adjacent to Winston Crescent, Biggleswade, SG18 0EZ

Prior Approval application: Proposed installation of 15m monopole mast with three antennas, two 300mm dish antennas, two associated radio equipment cabinets, associated electricity meter cabinet and development work as required.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECT** to this planning application on the grounds of: 1. The width of the footpath would be reduced to below the minimum required under CBC Highways standards; 2. The mast is overbearing, too close to adjacent housing and would be a detriment to light and privacy. The site is unsuitable and an alternative needs to be found.

A28/0408.4 d. **CB/20/01120/LB- 15C Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0AT**

Listed Building: Replacement of all of the existing timber-framed windows and the front door. Demolition of the existing non-original garden room to the rear of the property and construction of a new garden room extension, connected to the existing building by a contemporary glazed link.

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. In addition, the Council is to ensure that their guidelines on the size of the proposed dwellings are complied with to eliminate detriment in respect of light and privacy of adjacent residents.

A28/0408.5 e. **CB/20/01119/FULL - 15C Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0AT**

Replacement of all the existing timber-framed windows and the front door. Demolition of the existing non-original garden room to the rear of the property and construction of a new garden room extension, connected to the existing building by a contemporary glazed link.

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. In addition, the Council is to ensure that their guidelines on the size of the proposed dwellings are complied with to eliminate detriment in respect of light and privacy of adjacent residents.

A28/0408.6 f. **CB/20/01278/FULL – 120 Drove Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0HJ**

Proposed loft conversion with rear dormers.

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. In addition, the Council is to ensure that their guidelines on the size of the proposed dwellings are complied with to eliminate detriment in respect of light and privacy of adjacent residents.

A28/0408.7 g. **CB/20/01272/FULL – 5 Tate Drive, Biggleswade, SG18 8UD**

Single storey UPVC rear conservatory.

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. In addition, the Council is to ensure that their guidelines on the size of the proposed dwellings are complied with to eliminate detriment in respect of light and privacy of adjacent residents.

A28/0409 9 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

A28/0409.1 a. Annual Meeting

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 suspend the requirement to hold an Annual Council Meeting in 2020 but permit a Council to hold one if it wishes. Where an appointment would otherwise be made or is required to be made at an Annual Meeting of a Local Authority, the appointment continues until the next annual meeting of the Authority or until such time as that authority may determine (Regulation 4 (2)). This would apply to the election of the chairman, the first business at the annual council meeting. Therefore, the current chairman and other appointments made at an Annual Meeting will remain in place until an Annual Meeting is held (possibly next year) unless the council decide to elect a replacement earlier. Members are, therefore, requested to consider whether the Council wishes to hold an Annual Meeting.

Members were advised that NALC had advised Councils to proceed with Annual Meetings unless there were good reasons not to. It was proposed that the Town Council keep its Annual Meeting in the calendar, but that it was appropriate to postpone it to 26 May to give time to get all documents and processes in place.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Meeting should be postponed to 26th May 2020.

A28/0409.2 b. Local Government Act 1985 Street Naming and Numbering Location: Stratton Business Park, London Road, Biggleswade Proposal: New Distribution Centre

Correspondence from CBC the above application for Street Naming. The Developer D B Symmetry have proposed the Street Name: Symmetry Way.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council objects to the use of commercial names for streets and therefore to "**Symmetry Way**".

The Town Council would like to continue reference to D-Day Beaches for streets in that area and as such **RESOLVED** that "**SWORD ROAD**" be allocated. If this street name has already been allocated elsewhere then an alternative proposal of "**GOLD ROAD**" is proposed.

It was suggested that the Town Council should review additional naming themes for future developments.

A28/0409.3 c. Fairfield Cricket Ground

Open Reach have requested permission to lay a cable around Fairfield Cricket ground to a communication tower.

Members discussed the need to understand the legal implications of the contract and access rights going forward. Members supported a need to defer this motion to give time for solicitors to review the contract and boundary lines. Proposals for access or maintenance fees will also form part of the review.

It was **RESOLVED** to defer this item pending a legal review, to be tabled once the solicitor's findings are returned.

A28/0409.4 d. **CEMETERIES**

Correspondence had been received from the Chief Executive of CBC with regard to cemeteries being made available during the Covid-19 crisis and the acceptance of burials from outside the parish.

It was **RESOLVED** that burials from outside the parish would be accepted for the period of the pandemic, with a review at the next Council Meeting dated 13 October (the next Council meeting after the Government mandated legislation pertaining to this issue is reviewed by Parliament on 26 September).

It was **RESOLVED** to waive the double fee for the duration of the pandemic for non-resident burials.

A28/0410 10 **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

A28/0410.1 a) **Planning Application Outcomes**

Members reviewed the report of the Planning Application Outcomes as at 24/03/2020 & 22/04/2020.

Concerns were raised that Bonds Lane is still showing as "awaiting decision" and it was suggested that the Acting Clerk write to CBC to find out what the delay is, given the Town Council's previous objections to this.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Acting Town Clerk would write to Central Bedfordshire Council requesting an update on the delay to this Planning Application.

A28/0410.2 b) **OPCC Newsletter – March 2020**

To receive a newsletter from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Cllr D Strachan discussed the contents of the letter and confirmed that the Police and Crime Commissioner will remain in situ for the next year given the Covid-19 situation. Of particular note is the increase in the number of additional police on the Bedfordshire force over the last year.

Cllr F Foster felt that it would be nice to offer some support to the Commissioner given that she has done a good job and it is good that she is continuing in place for the next year. Cllr M Russell supported this suggestion given that the Commissioner would have had to put aside a number of personal plans to remain in her post.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Acting Clerk would write to the Police and Crime Commissioner extending our thanks for an excellent job and for staying on in the position given the current crisis to address the needs of the County and its residents.

A28/0410.3 c) **Grants**

Correspondence had been received from Link a Ride and The Avenue, thanking the Town Council for the grants awarded but have declining them due to changes in organisational circumstances. This was noted.

A28/0411 11 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

- A28/0411.1 a. Cllr Whittaker spoke in support of the homelessness issues raised by Cllr G Fage and about the work of CBC in this area. She asked the Town Council to work closely with CBC on this matter

The Town Council will take this forward as set out previously.

A28/0412 12 EXEMPT ITEMS

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

None

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