



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2019
AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL,
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE

PRESENT:

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

Mr R McGregor – Town Clerk
Mr P Truppin – Locum Clerk
Miss H Calvert – Meeting Administrator, Biggleswade Town Council
Members of Public – 10, including Simon Newton, Town Centre Operations Manager, BTC

A10/0901 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr H Ramsay

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

None

A10/0902 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A10/0902.1 a. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item - None

A10/0902.2 b. Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item – Item 9a – Cllr Strachan

A10/0903 3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Cllr Russell attended the following events:

2nd September, Re-Opening of Stratton House Hotel

This was a soft launch for staff and others closely involved with bringing the Hotel back to life. It was a pleasure to meet the new management, who already run a hotel in Surrey and it was gratifying to

learn that they have been able to re-employ some of the staff who worked at Stratton House previously.

9th September, Lord-Lieutenant's Honours Recipients Gathering

This was held at the Woburn Hotel and gave the opportunity to recognise people from Bedfordshire who had received an award in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2019. An invitation came to the Mayor because one of the recipients is a resident of Biggleswade. Mrs Libby Jackson was awarded an MBE for Services to the Northern Ireland Economy and Innovation in Law. It was a very pleasant occasion with a musical interlude and followed by afternoon tea which gave an opportunity to get to know Mrs. Jackson and her husband.

Another recipient of an MBE was Eve Burt, wife of the MP for North East Bedfordshire, for public and political service.

It was pleasing to see the County flag alongside the Union Jack at the event.

A10/0904

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Dr Kerr spoke on the Planning Application for 99 Drove Road, Biggleswade (Item A10/0909.1). Dr Kerr is involved with the non-profit organisation that wishes to purchase this property in order to provide further charitable services. The organisation provides support services for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and semi-independent living services to young people. The organisation further supports children with disabilities, particularly autism. It was explained that there would be a maximum of 4 employees at the property and so this would not cause any issues with parking.

Mark Winwood of Sycamore Close wished to object to the proposed Bridleway to Sycamore Close in the plans for the closure of Lindsell's Level Crossing, Biggleswade Bridleway No 11. This item was discussed at the 27th August 2019 Council meeting.

A10/0905

5. INVITED SPEAKER

Members welcomed Paul Prosser, Head of Welfare Services at NOAH, and Martin Rooney, Central Bedfordshire Outreach Team Leader at NOAH.

Mr Prosser thanked Cllr G Fage for the invitation to present the work of NOAH to Biggleswade Town Council.

Mr Prosser explained the work that NOAH are doing to help those who find themselves homeless and the number of factors that can lead to homelessness.

Members were informed that a Street Outreach Team at NOAH is currently being developed in Bedfordshire. This team will provide a variety of support for homeless people in the area such as the arrangement of temporary accommodation and connection to healthcare services.

Concerns were raised over the presence of rough sleepers in Biggleswade Town Centre during the last six months. Mr Prosser informed members that there have been rough sleepers in Biggleswade before but that they have not been situated in public places. Mr Prosser stressed that there is a difference between people who are sleeping rough and those who are begging. Furthermore, people sleeping rough in public places, or begging, is largely an indication of a drug addiction. It was suggested that those who are rough sleeping/begging in public areas of Biggleswade may be attracted to this area because it is affluent, and the community may be known for its generosity. It was noted that NOAH is in the early stages of its work in Biggleswade.

Members asked what the Town Council can do to help the current situation. Mr Prosser felt that it would be beneficial for the Town Council and Councillors to raise public awareness on homelessness in Biggleswade. It was suggested that publicity is used to inform people that we are aware that there is an increase of rough sleepers in Biggleswade and to notify them of the work of NOAH and other support services that are available. Furthermore, Councillors could inform the public about Street Link, a mobile app that enables members of the public to connect people sleeping rough with the local services that can support them.

Members thanked Mr Prosser for the informative presentation and requested that the presentation is sent to the Town Clerk to circulate to Councillors and upload to the BTC website.

A10/0906 6. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr Knight said that a number of streetlights on Fairfield Road are still not working despite this being raised with CBC over a month ago. Cllr Bond informed members that he had raised this issue several times with CBC and has been assured that all seven streetlights will be working by the end of this week. Cllr Bond reassured members that he will continue to chase with CBC if this matter is not resolved.

A10/0907 7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

A10/0907.1 a. Members received the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Tuesday, 27th August 2019 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

The following amendments were requested:

Item B27/0802.2: To amend to 'Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item – Cllr Woodhead, Item 11d'.

Item B27/0807.1: To adjust the amendment of the item A13/0811.1 to include the following 'The Locum Town Clerk has written to CBC raising concern over the issue'.

Item B27/0807.3: To amend to include the numbering of 'A13/0811.3'.

Item B27/0810.2: To amend to the following: Replace '**NOTED**' with '**RESOLVED**'.

Item B27/0810.4: To amend to the following: 'It was **RESOLVED** that there was **NO OBJECTION** to the Green Wheel as routed, both through Shortmead and via Sycamore Close. Vehicular access should only be allowed for Network Rail staff.'

Item B27/0811.1: To amend to read 'Cllr Bond has looked into the Bonds Lane/Foundry Lane application. The initial application was withdrawn, and a following application has been submitted and approved. It was noted that the application would be subject to building regulations and would require the provision of sprinklers'.

A10/0908 **8. MATTERS ARISING**

- A10/0908.1 **a.** Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday, 27th August 2019.

Cllr F Foster expressed strong objection to the proposed Lindsell's Level Crossing, Biggleswade Bridleway No 11.

- A10/0908.2 **b.** From the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on **Tuesday, 27th August 2019, B27/0808** on the subject of lighting provision on part of unlit Footpath 44 Southern Railway Crossing.

The Locum Clerk updated members that the work is expected to take 5 working days, however dates for this work to be completed have not yet been confirmed.

- A10/0908.3 **c.** From the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on **Tuesday, 13th August 2019, B27/0806** It was pointed out that residents have noted that the Biggleswade Bulletin is not reaching all residents of Biggleswade. It was confirmed that, although the Biggleswade Bulletin is not distributed by BTC, the Bulletin will be informed about this.

It was confirmed that the Bulletin is now published in tabloid form. The Locum Clerk has contacted the Bulletin who has asked that they be informed of specific addresses that are being out of the circulation.

A10/0909 **9. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

- A10/0909.1 **a.** **CB/19/02286/FULL – 99 Drove Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0HW**

The use of the outbuilding associated with the dwelling house to accommodate and provide care for 4 children between the ages of 7 and 12.

Concerns were raised over parking. The properties driveway has space for two cars. However there is likely to be a greater need for spaces due to staff and visitors. This application may lead to cars parking on what is a difficult corner. It was suggested that the Town Council could offer support on parking as the property is being purchased for a charitable cause.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application but registers a concern over parking on what is a difficult corner.

- A10/0909.2 b. **CB/19/01566/FULL – 15 Spring Close, Biggleswade, SG18 0HL**
Conversion of double garage for residential use.

It was noted that the proposal does not lead to loss of parking.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application providing 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.

- A10/0909.3 c. **CB/19/02442/FULL – White Hart Public House, 23-24 Market Square, Biggleswade, SG18 8AS**

Alter and adapt the bar back fitting, installation of new screens, remove existing fixed seating and install new fixed seating, installation of new external pergola, now planters and new festoon lighting.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application.

- A10/0909.4 d. **CB/19/02374/ADV – White Hart Public House, 23-24 Market Square, Biggleswade, SG18 8AS**

Advertisement: Installation of replacement illuminated and non illuminated signs to the exterior of the building.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application.

A10/0910 10. ACCOUNTS

- A10/0910.1 a. For Members to receive and adopt the following accounts:

- i. Detailed Balance Sheet to 31st July 2019.
- ii. Summary of Income & Expenditure 31st July 2019.
- iii. Income and Expenditure by budget heading 31st July 2019.
- iv. Current Bank Account, receipts and payments to 31st July 2019.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council adopt the accounts as presented.

A10/0911 11. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- A10/0911.1 a. **Bus services 85/85A and 188/190 in Biggleswade and East Bedfordshire**

The Public Transport Manager at CBC has written to BTC outlining bus service changes that will take effect from 30th September 2019. Members were requested to consider asking CBC to postpone the service changes while options to protect the service is urgently investigated and reviewed at Joint Committee. (attached).

Members expressed strong disappointment to the revised timetable. It was noted that CBC are now no longer offering a full day's service.

The following concerns were raised:

- The revised timetable will cause great issues for those relying on this service for work, and who may now have no other means of getting to their place of work.
- This will also add further to the issue of traffic and parking in Biggleswade.
- The timetable still lacks connectivity between the bus service and the train line despite plans in place to provide a Transport Interchange in Biggleswade.

The following was agreed/noted:

- This public service must be provided, and that greater support needs to be given towards bus services.
- The Baulk Bus Stop has recently been upgraded even though this stop is rarely used. It was felt that this money could have been better used elsewhere and that there is a lack of joined-up thinking at CBC.
- It is disappointing that CBC has to depend on S106 money, which is short-term funding, for a service that needs to be provided in the long-term.

It was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Locum Clerk would write to CBC expressing these concerns, and to request that CBC postpone the service changes while options to protect the service are urgently investigated and reviewed at Joint Committee.

A10/0912 12. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

A10/0912.1 a. **Central Bedfordshire Council and Network Rail – Proposed Closure Lindsell's Level Crossing, Biggleswade Bridleway No 11**

Members were advised that CBC has been informed of the views of BTC as resolved at the last Town Council meeting. An acknowledgement has been received

Once they have a finalised network and more details of the bridge CBC will provide an update for members.

It was noted that it will be some time before a decision is made and there will be a formal consultation before that happens. The funding comes from the HIF monies and the initiations meeting for the HIF project will be later in the month. Further information regarding the proposal will be received in due course. It was agreed that, if new information does come to light, the Council will revisit the decision from the Council meeting on the 27th August 2019.

It was requested for this item to be added to the Council agenda for the 24th September meeting.

A10/0913

13. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

Cllr Hayley Whitaker wished to add to Item 11a on the agenda. Cllr Whitaker shared the concerns raised by council. There is funding of £1.1m for the bus service and it costs close to £300k to run the Biggleswade service alone. It is hoped that as more money becomes available that the regular service can be resumed. Cllr Whitaker assured members that there is plenty of work being undertaken at CBC to resolve this poor service. Cllr Whitaker stated that the Passenger Transport Strategy is out of line with the CBC Environmental Impact Strategy.

A10/0914

14. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

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

15a. Staff Matters

15b. Minutes and Matters Arising from the Council Meeting 13/08/2019

15c. Minutes and Matters Arising from the Council Meeting 27/08/2019

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.