



**MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 10th MARCH 2020
AT 7PM AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL,
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE**

PRESENT:

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

Mr P Truppin –Acting Clerk, Biggleswade Town Council
Mr S Newton – Town Centre Operations Manager
Ms K Saunders – Meeting Administrator, Biggleswade Town Council

Members of Public – 5, including Cllr. Hayley Whitaker CBC

B10/0301 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr R Pullinger, Cllr D Albone, Cllr J Woodhead

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

None

B10/0302 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

B10/0302.1 a. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item: None

B10/0302.2 b. Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

9d Cllr L Fage, 9a Cllr K Brown, 9b Cllr H Ramsay

B10/0303 3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

B10/0303.1 a. **8th March 2020 – Dunstable Civic Service**

The Mayor was pleased to support the Mayor of Dunstable, Cllr Sid Abbott, at his Civic Service at the Priory Church of St. Peter, Dunstable.

9th March 2020 – The Lord-Lieutenant’s Honours Recipients Gathering

The Mayor attended the Gathering which was held at the Bunyan Meeting Church in Bedford and included recognition of OBEs and MBEs awarded to Bedfordshire residents as well as the presentation of British Empire Medals.

B10/0303.2 b. **East/West Rail Consultation**

The East West Rail Company is currently holding public engagement events now that the Preferred Route Option has been announced. Colleagues will know that the Option is between Sandy and St. Neots. The next stage is to undertake the detailed work necessary to identify possible route alignments and station sites before a further round of consultation. It is hoped that the Development Consent will be obtained in 2024 so that construction can begin in 2025, with trains running by 2030.

B10/0303.3 c. **Hallam Land Management**

Apologies are given to Hallam who were inadvertently noted on the Agenda for 10th March 2020 as the invited speaker, they may attend as guest speaker at a future meeting.

They will be holding a public exhibition about their Development Brief next Wednesday, 18th March between 3.30pm and 7.30pm at Biggleswade United Football Club.

B10/0304 4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

B10/0304.1 a. Mr Christopher Overman questioned the presentation of planning applications, namely Items 9a and 9e. Planning applications 9a. CB/20/00248/FULL – 14 Fennel Drive, Biggleswade, SG18 8WD was submitted to CBC on 29th January 2020 and is now presented to Council 6 weeks later. Planning application 9e. CB/20/00763/FULL – 60-62 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0AP was submitted 3rd March 2020 and has already been presented to Council. Cllr M Russell explained that there have been shortages in staff which resulted in the delay.

B10/0304.2 b. Cllr H Whittaker questioned why item 15b – Neighbourhood Plan – was an exempt item and not on the public session.

B10/0305 5. INVITED SPEAKER

No invited speaker.

B10/0306 6. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

B10/0306.1 a. Cllr L Fage asked that communication be given regarding plans for VE Day.

Cllr M Russell advised that Cllr H Ramsay has requested a report for the next Council meeting regarding VE Day.

Cllr M Knight requested an update from the Acting Town Clerk with regards to the timescales of the amended parking orders.

The Acting Town Clerk advised that he was still to contact CBC but would shortly be in a position to do so.

B10/0307 7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

B10/0307.1 a. Members received and approved the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Tuesday, 3rd March 2020 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

B10/0307.2 b. Members received and reviewed the Recommendations and Resolutions of the Personnel Meeting held on Tuesday 18th February 2020, at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

It was **RESOLVED** that Council accept that each Committee monitor its budget at each of its meetings.

B10/0307.3 c. Members received and reviewed the Recommendations and Resolutions of the Finance and General-Purpose Meeting held on Tuesday 3rd March, at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

It was **RESOLVED** that Council obtain legal advice from a solicitor regarding renewal of the Rose Lane car park lease

It was **RESOLVED** that the BRCC Community Agent (BRCC) application be approved through the grants system for the coming financial year grant and that subsequently a Service Level Agreement be formulated for future funding for BRCC.

It was **RESOLVED** that The Royal British Legion (RBL) grant application be approved. It was **RECOMMENDED** that at the next full Council meeting 24/03/2020, further information be presented by the Office Manager regarding the RBL memorial bench design and location in the area of the Market square

B10/0308 8. MATTERS ARISING

B10/0308.1 a. From the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Tuesday, 3rd March 2020.

There were no Matters arising.

B10/0309 9. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

B10/0309.1 a. **CB/20/00248/FULL – 14 Fennel Drive, Biggleswade, SG18 8WD**
Garage Conversion.

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.

B10/0309.2 b. **CB/20/00659/FULL – Harrison House, Sheep Walk, Langford Road, Biggleswade, SG18 9RB**
Single storey “orangery” extension.

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.

B10/0309.3 c. **CB/20/00439/FULL – 40 Potton Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0DZ**
Two storey side & rear extension.

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.

B10/0309.4 d. **CB/20/00625/FULL – 132 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8EL**

Two storey side extension and single storey rear extension.

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.

B10/0309.4 e. **CB/20/00763/FULL – 60-62 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0AP**

Change of use of out building to commercial use.

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 particular with respect to 64A Shortmead Street and the flats above 60 to 62 Shortmead Street and ,also, to access to the rear of the property.

B10/0310 10. ACCOUNTS

The reports to the end of February 2020 were in preparation.

B10/0311 11. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

B10/0311.1 a. **Street Naming and Numbering**

After much discussion it was suggested that street names for the development at Saxon Drive be within the 'flower' theme and that Cllr G Fage was requested to submit 15 suggestions to the Acting Clerk for flower names to be considered at the next Council meeting for approval.

B10/0311.2 b. **CBC Eagle Farm Road Investigation**

After much discussion regarding resident and visitor car parking, which was considered to be insufficient, Cllr D Strachan felt that the plans were not presented effectively as these plans showed the proposed car parking restrictions in sections, rather than the whole plan. It was suggested that CBC be contacted to request a master plan on a single sheet.

B10/0311.3 c. **Leisure Facilities Strategy**

Cllr G Fage would like CBC to discuss where the leisure facilities should be located, pointing to the Saxon Pool extension and whether this was consistent with Neighbourhood Planning aspirations to provide leisure facilities across the town. It was suggested that this item be discussed at the next Neighbourhood Plan.

B10/0311.4 d. **Biggleswade District Scouts – St Georges' Day Event**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council had **NO OBJECTION** to this event taking place on 26th April 2020.

B10/0312 **12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION – N/A**

B10/0313 **13. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

B10/0313.1 **a.** No members of the public raised more questions.

B10/0314 **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 Exempt item from Minutes of the Personnel Committee held on 180220)
- (15b NP Membership)
- (15c Land North of Biggleswade)
- (15d Payroll)

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.

PINK

15. EXEMPT

B10/0315

a. Minutes and Matters Arising from the Personnel Meeting 18/02/20

B10/0315.1

Members received and approved the minutes of the Personnel Meeting held on the 18th February 2020.

B10/0315.2

b. NP Membership

Members were informed that Cllr H Whitaker has written to the Town Clerk questioning why the two items on the exempt from the Council agenda 10/03/2020 are not being held in the Open session.

Regarding the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Membership, this is another issue that Cllr. Whitaker queried with the Monitoring Officer, particularly the inclusion of a developer who already has outline planning consent.

The Council agreed in February 2018 to work with all relevant bodies to bring forward the development of the four villages, as it was then, in the Pre-submission version of the Local Plan. The Council has to be an advocate for the town to realise the best possible outcome in terms of design and community benefit.

Wider discussion of membership would inevitably mean mentioning individuals, so it would not be appropriate to have that discussion in public. The membership of the Working Group will be added to the Council website for transparency.

Land North of Potton Road is with reference to the Development Brief and Outline Planning Application submitted by Hallam Land Management.

The Council has been opposed to this development since it was first proposed, and our opposition was made clear in the representations last summer to the Examination in Public of the Local Plan.

The Council's formal response to the outline planning application was discussed at a previous meeting and is in the public domain.

However, there are further details which would be detrimental to our efforts to stop the development if these were discussed in public at this point in time so there is definitely a public interest exemption for this item

Cllr H Whitaker has apparently made a formal complaint to the Monitoring Officer at Central Bedfordshire Council and the Local Government Ombudsman about the way that the Town Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. She alleges that the constitution of the Working Group is wrong and that the Council is not following the correct statutory process.

Council has not heard from either the Monitoring Officer or the Ombudsman but there has been correspondence with one of the planners at Central Bedfordshire Council which was discussed at the last meeting of the Working Group. As Chairman of that Group, I have also spoken to the consultant who is supporting us in the preparation of the Plan and who will prepare the final version in due course to go out to Statutory Consultation and then on to Examination.

The Mayor assured Council that there was nothing illegal in what BTC is doing.

She said that It is unfortunate that the process has stalled somewhat due to lack of capacity within the Council, who has had to postpone the planned public engagement when it was wanting to reflect the issues which came out of the first engagement and ask for further comment. However, the Town Council has recently received the place shaping report, produced externally, which will serve as evidence for the Plan and which will shortly be available on the website. The council has also just had the consultation on the refresh of the Green Infrastructure Plan, including consultation on the possible designation of important green spaces within the Neighbourhood Plan process. So, some progress is being made.

Regarding the constitution of the Working Group, it is a working group and not a formal committee of the Council. It is doing the detailed work necessary to bring forward ideas for Council's consideration. The Neighbourhood Plan cannot go through the statutory process until it is discussed and approved by Council.

At present the membership of the Neighbourhood Planning Group is: Shirley Leggett, resident of Biggleswade, Bernard Briars, resident of Biggleswade, Philip Sheldon, Chamber of Trade, Jackie Sadek, UKR, Ingrid Hooley, CBC, Tom Price CBC, Cllr Strachan, Cllr North, Cllr Bond and Cllr Russell

B10/0315.3

c. Land North of Biggleswade

Cllr G Fage reported that the Technical Audit was complete, but 2 more days were needed to feedback. The Audit would be made available to CBC but on a strictly confidential basis and would not be available to Hallam. A meeting on the 24th March will be scheduled to include Councillors and the Transport Officer.

B10/0315.4

d. Management of Payroll

It was **RESOLVED** at the Finance and General Purposes meeting on 03/03/2020 that that Payroll Bureau at George Hay Partnership (GH) would take over full management of the payroll.