



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 12 MAY 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 Foster
Cllr M. Knight
Cllr M North
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 – Interim Deputy Town Clerk, Biggleswade Town Council
Mrs S van der Merwe – Meeting Administrator, Biggleswade Town Council

Members of Public – 15

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

A12/0501 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

None

A12/0502 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A12/0502.1 a. **Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:**

None

A12/0502.2 b. **Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item**

None

A12/0503 3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None – no civic events have been held.

A12/0504 4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

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

Timothy Soden:

Mr Soden requested the retention of the existing bridge at Biggleswade Station as removal would extend the commuter walk from the East of the town.

Regarding the Land north of Biggleswade development Mr Soden has no real objection but believes one access point down Furzenhall Road only is unfeasible.

Cllr M Russell clarified that the existing railway bridge is intended to be left in place.

Mr Martin Kernan: Planning Application 33 – 57 Shortmead Street

Mr Kernan, a resident of Wharf Mews, believes the developer has built the wrong house. It is substantially bigger than planning originally granted. Mr Kernan feels it is wrong that the developer can submit retrospective planning as this undermines removes confidence in the planning application process. This oversize house does not match the original planning officer's conditions and is an overbearing structure not in keeping with adjacent properties. Mr Kernan requested that the Town Council physically visit Wharf Mews to see the house and confirmed that the developer has not stopped building regardless of the planning application status.

Councillor Whitaker: Planning Application for 4 London Road

Cllr H Whitaker believes the plans submitted lack sufficient detail and confirmed that CBC have asked owner to re-submit plans.

Regarding the Railway Station plans, Cllr H Whitaker believes serious consideration should be given by the Town Council to getting the railway bridge designated as a right of way, rather than relying on Network Rail to do this.

A12/0505 5. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

- A12/0505.1 a. Cllr F Foster asked the Acting Town Clerk to confirm that the public schedule of committee meetings will resume given the virtual meetings now in place. The Acting Town Clerk responded that he would take guidance from the Council, but believes it will be difficult at the present time given the challenges faced by the supporting staff working from home to produce supporting papers and agendas.

Cllr M Russell recommended this be addressed at the next Town Council meeting and will be added to the agenda.

- A12/0505.2 b. Cllr G Fage expressed his appreciation that outdoor staff are doing a great job in difficult circumstances, but he remains concerned about the north entrance into town which is unsightly. Cllr G Fage proposed writing to Northill Parish Council to ask them to use this quieter period to consider cleaning the roundabout up and would be happy to draft this on behalf of the Council. Cllr M Russell pointed out that the boundary for Northill Parish Council comes down Hill Lane so BTC should work with Northill Parish Council.

- A12/0505.3 c. Cllr J Woodhead suggested the Town Council give thanks to the Sea Cadets for last post given on VE Day, which was well received by those in attendance. Cllr J Woodhead also suggested contacting the police regarding the recent stabbing incident at Eagle Farm Road, Cllr D Strachan said he would contact the police.

Cllr M Russell commended the Sea Cadets for an excellent last post ceremony.

A12/0506 6. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

Members received the minutes of the Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 28th April 2020** via Zoom online webinar.

The following amendment was proposed:

- **Item A28/0411 a)** be corrected to reflect that Cllr G Fage should be listed as the proposer.

Subject to this amendment, the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

A12/0507 7. MATTERS ARISING

From the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on **28 April 2020**:

A12/0507.1 a. **Item 28/0405 b):** Cllr M Knight requested an update on the defibrillator at Century House. The Acting Town Clerk advised that the Ambulance service are investigating its whereabouts as they believe it has been used and that if the Ambulance service find the unit it will be returned. Failing this, it will need to be replaced. Cllr M Russell confirmed that it was unusual for the casing not to have been damaged if it has been stolen. The usual process is to dial 111 for the code to release the defibrillator and they will also send an ambulance. There is no record of this happening.

A12/0507.2 b. **Item 28/0405.3 c):** Cllr R Pullinger requested an update from the Acting Town Clerk on access to BTC's Facebook page. The Acting Town Clerk confirmed the Council now has access to the page, although there are still some formalities to be completed allowing full posting access to the page.

A12/0508 8. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

A12/0508.1 a. **CB/20/01375/FULL - 40 Potton Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0DZ**

Two storey side and 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. 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.

A12/0508.2 b. **CB/20/01322/FULL- 43 Maunder Avenue, Biggleswade, SG18 8GL**

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. 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.

A12/0508.3 c. **CB/20/01343/ADV - Building 3 (Phase4), Stratton Business Park Pegasus Drive, Biggleswade, SG18 8UB**

Advertisement: Building signage detailing business name to be placed on the West Elevation above main entrance. General site signage also included in application, as detailed in drawings.

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

A12/0508.4 d. **CB/20/01309/FULL- 120 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8EL**

First floor extension incorporating a loft conversion.

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.

A12/0508.5 e. **CB/20/01393/VOC - Land at the rear of 33 - 57 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0AT**

Variation to Condition 19 of Planning Permission CB/16/00181/FULL (Construction of 30 no. dwellings and associated road, demolition of commercial premises) Addition of working drawing for TH2 house type to approved plans RDC1034-TH2-200H – retrospective planning application.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECTS** to this planning application: 1. The house type is overbearing and not in keeping with the original application; 2. The Town Council objected to this height of building in the original application; 3. The building is too close to other housing and will have a detrimental impact.

The Town Council agreed to notify Central Bedfordshire Council that, should they be minded to approve this application, Biggleswade Town Council would like to call it in.

A12/0508.6 f. **CB/20/01012/RM - Land adjacent to Unit 2 (Plot 3 Phase 5) Juno Place Biggleswade SG18 8XP**

Reserved Matters: following Outline planning permission CB/15/03078/OUT Erection of a single industrial unit (use Class B1, B2 7 B80 with associated parking and landscaping. All matters reserved except for Access). Approval is being sought for Layout, Appearance, Scale and Landscaping.

Cllr G Fage proposed that the Town Council contact our Central Bedfordshire Councillors to provide some transparent reporting around the S106 funds due to Biggleswade through residential and commercial developments and where these funds are being spent.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided that 1. CBC show transparency of where S106 monies are allocated. 2. The speed of traffic generated from this application is considered.

A12/0508.7 g. **CB/20/01453/FULL - 4 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8EB**

Change of use from A1 beautician (back to) C3 house residential dwelling (house only).

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECTS** to this planning application. 1. The objection is due to further detailed plans on the design for this application required. 2. There needs to be clarity on the parking spaces

for this application.3. Clarity whether the Coffee shop included in the application.

A12/0508.8 h. **CB/20/01357/FULL - 162 Hitchin Street, Biggleswade, SG18 8BP**

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. 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.

A12/0509 9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

A12/0509.1 a. **PUBLIC NOTICE – A00033 - High Street, Biggleswade**

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PROPOSES TO INSTALL A PEDESTRIAN CROSSING ON HIGH STREET, BIGGLESWADE

Notice is hereby given that Central Bedfordshire Council, in exercise of its powers under Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and all other enabling powers, proposes to establish a Zebra crossing on High Street, Biggleswade. This proposal is part of a scheme to improve pedestrian and cycling facilities. A Zebra Crossing is proposed to be sited at the following location in Biggleswade: - High Street, crossing to begin at a point approximately 12 metres north west of the northern property boundary of No 2 London Road. Further Details may be viewed online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council welcomes the installation of a zebra crossing but has concerns about the design being proposed: 1. buildouts should not be included as this narrows the street considerably and causes traffic flow issues on what is the key road connecting the town across the railway; 2. A narrower road will also be a problem given that London Road/High Street/Shortmead Street is the designated Highways Agency diversion for the A1 when the Biggleswade bypass is closed; 3. the power supply should be working on the first date of use of the crossing (the last zebra crossing installed in Biggleswade had power supplied 4 months later which is unacceptable).

A12/0509.2 b. **Biggleswade Train Station Access**

Councillors were advised that there has been further work on the options for the new access to the station and the revised drawings provided for Options 4 and 5 were considered.

Option 4 is the shallower access, more suitable for wheelchair users, with two accesses onto each platform. The existing bridge will remain in place as a further access, with sliding gates at the top of the steps for station security. Biggleswade Rail Users Group asked for the retention of Option 5 at this

stage until is confirmed that there will be proper access from the proposed transport interchange to the new bridge.

Cllr M Russell confirmed that both designs are similar in costings/funding and the next step is for Network Rail to complete the options appraisal and apply to the Dept. of Transport for funding.

Council discussed the current concerns relating to both options, including provision of access to platforms from East and West directions, increasing access/departure points for peak times in the future subject to the Town's growth, quality and aesthetics of design, lift access, ticket area congestion, access to parking from both the West and East access points of town, the condition of the current footbridge and need for future maintenance, disabled access and access for parent commuters with buggies, as well as where the bicycle racks would be re-located if Option 5 were to be taken forward.

It was **RESOLVED** to support Option 4 for disabled access to the station.

It was **RESOLVED** to request that Network Rail keep the existing bridge and step access in place and maintain this in a safe fashion.

It was **RESOLVED** to ask CBC that the bridge be declared a public right of way.

A12/0509.3 c. **Market future**

The National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) has written to ask for help in supporting local market (s) and the markets industry in the UK at this critical time. Currently there are around 1150 regular traditional markets and over 40,000 micro business operating from these markets nationally. They are requesting that market authorities write to their local MP to highlight the difficulties at the present time.

It was **RESOLVED** by the Town Council that the Acting Town Clerk contact NABMA and ask them to clarify what exactly they want the Town Council to say in respect of lobbying the Bedfordshire MP to support their cause.

A12/0509.3 d. **Land North of Biggleswade**

Councillors are invited to consider a response to an approach from the representatives of Hallam Land for a virtual meeting about the Development Brief for Land North of Biggleswade.

As part of their round of consultation in virtual fashion, they have a public webinar that people can sign up to.

Cllr G Fage provided an update on this issue. Over the last few months BTC sent the technical audit on the transport assessment to CBC Highways – this is now a public document and has been forwarded to Hallam as such. Central Bedfordshire Council Officers are interested in the results of the audit and it needs to be pushed so that they take into account the Town Council's

concerns. The Transport Consultant has agreed to meet with Central Bedfordshire Officers to discuss this.

It was **RESOLVED** to invite Hallam to a future Town Council meeting to presents its proposals to the Town Council and members of the public.

A12/0510 10. ACCOUNTS

A12/0510.1 a. **Financial Administration**

Members **ADOPTED** the following accounts:

- i. Detailed Balance Sheet to 29/02/2020.
- ii. Income and Expenditure by budget heading 29/02/2020.
- iii. NatWest Payment Listing to 29/02/2020.
- iv. Lloyds Bank Payment listing to 29/02/2020.

Cllr H Ramsay raised the issue of the large balance currently in the Lloyds account and requested that this be addressed urgently. An investment policy has already been agreed by Council, using CCLA. It had also been agreed to close the NatWest accounts and then consider investment. The amount to be invested needs to be agreed but the Acting Clerk reminded Council that an operational minimum funds level has to be maintained.

Cllr M Russell has been working with the Acting Clerk to get the Natwest account closed because he is not a signatory. NatWest require some confirmation before enacting the request.

It was **RESOLVED** that the funds balance and potential investments would be considered at the Council Meeting on 9 June 2020.

A12/0511 11. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

A12/0511.1 a. **Rose Lane Car Park**

The Interim Deputy Clerk has instructed Solicitors to ascertain the position of the landlord on the renewal of the lease. The Interim Deputy Clerk will revert to Council when further details are available.

A12/0512 12. 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.

A12/0512.1 a. **Cllr Hayley Whitaker: Neighbourhood Planning Committee**

Cllr Whitaker referred to comments made by the Mayor at Council on 10th March 2020 relating to the Neighbourhood Plan agenda item and said that the allegations made by the Mayor were potentially slanderous. Cllr

Whitaker, having received notes of the Neighbourhood Plan meetings in January 2020, raised some Neighbourhood Plan issues with the CBC Monitoring Officer and asked CBC how they can better support BTC to ensure BTC meets its obligations as regards the Neighbourhood Plan. However, Cllr Whitaker insisted that she did not make a formal complaint and asked for a formal retraction of the comments and a public apology.

Cllr M Russell said that BTC is being advised by a planning consultant who advised the Government on Neighbourhood Plans and who has assured the Town Council that they are not breaking any statutory guidelines.

A12/0512.2 b. **Carole Birtwhistle – Edward Peak pupil disruptive behaviour in the Community:**

Ms Birtwhistle emailed her comments to the Interim Deputy Town Clerk in relation to the concerns of residents next to Edward Peake school entrance in Maythorns Estate – pupils have been causing disruption and considerable litter. This has been less of an issue during the Covid-19 lockdown but the School Management has not been helpful in dealing with this issue.

Cllr M Russell agreed to speak to the Acting Town Clerk offline on this issue as it is not usually the Council's remit to intervene in school issues.

A12/0512.3 c. Cllr R Pullinger asked to put on record that Cllr Whitaker has put her concerns about the Neighbourhood Plan on Facebook and has posted that she has already taken this to the Monitoring Officer who has taken legal advice and devised a plan. Cllr Whitaker also posted that If the situation continues she will contact the Local Government Ombudsman.

A12/0513 13. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

A12/0513.1 a. **Minutes of the Exceptional Town Council Meeting held on 10 March 2020.**

A12/0513.2 b. **Recommendations & Resolutions from the Personnel Committee held 12 March 2020.**

A12/0513.3 c. **Other staffing matters:** The Acting Town Clerk is to give a verbal report. 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.