



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 25th AUGUST 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 L. Fage
Cllr M Foster
Cllr M. Knight
Cllr M. North
Cllr R. Pullinger
Cllr H. Ramsay
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
Mrs S. van der Merwe – Meeting Administrator, Biggleswade Town Council

Members of Public – 7

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 Bond – 11G – Lindsell’s Crossing.

b. Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

None

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Town Clerk:

Cllr Russell expressed her delight in welcoming Peter Tarrant as the new Town Clerk and Chief Executive to the Town Council.

Expression of thanks to Biggleswade Town Council staff:

A member of the public wrote to the Town Council to express her thanks to the Council on its offer of an allotment to her daughter. Many young people have struggled with isolation and motivation during the COVID-19 lockdown and being outdoors and busy has brought huge satisfaction and a sense of achievement to her daughter. The writer hoped that more young people can be made aware of the provision of the allotments as it is such a healthy and fulfilling hobby. The writer expressed her sincere thanks to the Town Council and everyone in the allotment team.

18 August 2020 – Presentation to the Biggleswade Rotary Club:

On 18 August Cllr Russell was invited to speak at the Biggleswade Rotary Club to update its Members on developments in Biggleswade. During questions, a Rotarian was nominated as a member of the Neighbourhood Plan Group.

20th Anniversary of the Twinning with Erlensee:

This year is the 20th anniversary of the Twinning of Biggleswade with Erlensee and a party from Erlensee were due to visit Biggleswade in July. Since this was unable to go ahead, the Twinning Association organised a Zoom event on 22nd August 2020. Bernard Briars and Manfred Heller, the respective Mayors who signed the twinning agreement shared their memories over the years. Cllr Russell also addressed the attendees as the current Biggleswade Mayor and gave greetings from Biggleswade Town Council to their Mayor, Stefan Erb, and everyone in Erlensee.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

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

Mr Richard Philp – re Lindsell’s Crossing

In July 2014 Network Rail held a series of consultations covering the closure of several local crossings. The proposal was to close Lindsell’s Crossing and replace it with a bridleway bridge. An information event was held on 10th September 2019 and the preferred option was to build a bridge 385m north of the crossing. Members of the public felt that this was in the incorrect location. Mr Philp urged Councillors to make every effort to have this bridge sited significantly closer to the present crossing.

Cllr H. Whitaker, Central Bedfordshire Ward Councillor

Cllr Whitaker spoke about the allotment road access (Item 11b). The track leading to Kennel Farm is owned by CBC, not by Taylor Wimpey, but it is not designated as a right of way. CBC Officers are investigating what rights were given to Taylor Wimpey with regards to putting in a gate to stop public access. Cllr Whitaker will update Councillors if any further information becomes available.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

None.

6. MEMBERS’ QUESTIONS

None.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

Members received the minutes of the Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 11th August 2020**.

The following point was discussed:

Page 5 – Cllr M Foster – there was a spelling error on one of the street names put forward and Cllr M Foster wished to note that the choice was “Cardamon” and not “Cardamom” as stated in the Minutes.

The Assistant Town Clerk confirmed that, having checked the dictionary, the correct spelling is “cardamom” but “Cardamon” is used as an alternative. What has been included in the minutes is correct spelling per the dictionary. The Assistant Town Clerk confirmed that he has communicated “Cardamom” to the local authority but both words are in use.

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

8. MATTERS ARISING

Matters arising from the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting of **11th August 2020**.

a. Page 4 – Item 8c – Biggleswade Parking Orders:

Members wished to receive an update regarding the Parking Orders.

Members were informed that this has been addressed with Marcel Coiffait, Director of Community Services at CBC. It was agreed that an update will be provided at the next Council meeting.

b. **Page 4 – Item 8b – The Orchard Community Centre:**

Cllr Pullinger requested an update on the re-opening of the Orchard Community Centre. The Assistant Town Clerk confirmed that he would notify members as soon as he had an update on the installation of the flooring.

9. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/20/02788/FULL - 48 - 54 Lawrence Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0LS**

Construction of new residential bungalow, formation of access, parking, turning and garden areas.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECTS** to this planning application for the following reasons: 1) Poor Access, 2) Lack of capacity for the volume of traffic on the road, 3) The issue of construction lorries and the right of way access for current residents.

b. **CB/20/02667/FULL - 1 Jasmine Close, Biggleswade, SG18 8SW**

Loft extension with raised roof height.

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.

c. **CB/20/01520/FULL - Phase 6B Stratton Business Park, East of Pegasus Drive, Biggleswade**

The erection of 4 no. B8 use distribution units, together with associated energy centre, balancing pond, landscaping and all other ancillary works.

Members noted that the Town Council's original comments were included on the CBC Planning Portal, and it was suggested that we raise no objections. Councillors wished to know where the S106 monies from these commercial units in particular were to be allocated.

There are amendments providing additional information, including further ecological, landscape, highways, a travel plan and sustainability details.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided that: 1) Neighbours are consulted and that any comments they make are considered by CBC in their deliberations 2) CBC show transparency of where S106 monies are allocated 3) Consideration is taken with regards to the bridleway and/or rerouting of this as well as pedestrian access and cycleway.

10. ACCOUNTS

Members **ADOPTED** the following accounts:

- i. Detailed Balance Sheet to 31/07/2020.
- ii. Summary Income and Expenditure by Committee heading 31/07/2020.
- iii. Detailed Income and Expenditure by Committee heading 31/07/2020.

11. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Schedule of Committee Meetings

Members were asked to approve the proposed schedule of Committee Meeting dates.

The Neighbourhood Plan Group dates need to be altered to not clash with CBC Development Management Meetings and other dates were put forward.

It was noted that the Town Clerk will be putting together a list of 2021 Committee dates to be presented at a future Council meeting for approval.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the Council, Committee and Neighbourhood Plan Group meeting dates.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the altered start time of the Personnel Committee meetings on 29th September and 3rd November to commence at 7pm.

b. Allotment Access

Members were updated on the building of an access gate at the top of Kennel Farm Lane.

Members felt it would be in the public interest to have an explanation from CBC of what permissions Taylor Wimpey has been given.

Members questioned whether the public had a 'prescriptive right' to access this road.

It was **RESOLVED** to write to CBC to ask if the access road can be kept open, and if not, the duration of the closure.

c. Pedestrian Crossing Potton Road

Members were informed that a previous temporary crossing was removed but this crossing will be reinstated by the beginning of the new school year. CBC have expressed their intention to monitor the situation once the crossing is in place.

It was **RESOLVED** to write to CBC to ask for confirmation that the temporary crossing will be reinstated before the start of term and that CBC will be monitoring the junctions at Stratton Way and Nursery Close as well as the crossing itself.

d. **Drove Road Chapel Wall Repairs**

Councillors were requested to consider a report from the Works Manager with quotes for urgently required repairs to Drove Road Chapel Wall.

It was **RESOLVED** to defer this to the next Council Meeting on 8 September 2020.

e. **MHCLG Planning Consultations**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has issued three consultations on reform of the planning system:

1. Changes to the current planning system (NALC deadline for responses 17.9.20 (MHCLG deadline 1.10.20)
2. Planning for the future - the planning white paper (NALC deadline for responses 15.10.20) (MHCLG deadline 29.10.20)
3. Transparency and competition: a call for evidence on data on land control (NALC deadline for responses 16th October) (MHCLG deadline 29.10.20)

Briefings were provided to Members for consultation and councils are requested to respond to NALC emailing policycomms@nalc.gov.uk by the individual deadlines given.

Members recommended forming a small Working Group to review the documents and report to Council at the end of September 2020.

It was **RESOLVED** to set up a small Working Group with Cllr Albone, Cllr Russell, Cllr North, Cllr G Fage, Cllr Strachan and Cllr Bond.

Cllr Russell requested that the NALC consultation paperwork be re-circulated and the documents from the government website should be downloaded for further review.

f. **Workshop Facilities**

The Town Clerk advised that he has spoken to the Works Manager on this matter and his overall impression is that the cost of a permanent solution is financially disproportionate. He believes the solution would be to lease the right local premises and feels this should be moved along quickly.

It was **RESOLVED** that Officers of the Council investigate a short-term lease and present a report to the F&GP Committee Meeting on 15th September 2020.

g. **Lindsells Level Crossing, Biggleswade – Proposed closure of Lindsells Level Crossing – Biggleswade Bridleway No. 11**

Cllr Bond left the meeting.

Councillors were advised that this is not the most up-to-date version of the document and that the consultation will be extended by CBC to take this into account.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to defer this item to the next Council Meeting of 8th September 2020 to give Councillors further time to review the most recent proposal.

Cllr Bond returned to the meeting.

12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. **Appointment of new Town Clerk & Chief Executive Officer**

Members welcomed the new Town Clerk & Chief Executive Officer, Mr Peter Tarrant.

b. **Crime Statistics**

Members discussed the Crime Statistics for July 2020. Members were concerned at the continuing number of reported assaults, offences against a person, and sexual harassment. Members were reassured that Bedfordshire Police continue to monitor these statistics.

Members were unhappy with the format of the Crime Statistics reports. It was noted that if the raw data can be provided, a more user-friendly report can be created. Members requested a comparison with previous year's statistics to understand if there is a connection with the lockdown and COVID-19.

It was **AGREED** that the Town Clerk and Cllr Strachan discuss an alternative way to present these statistics.

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.

a. **Amanda Cawthorn – Biggleswade Community Safety Group**

Members were informed that two speed indicators will be placed on Baden Powell Way. The Community Safety Group will be able to provide data trends.

Members were informed that The Community Safety Group provided support to Mulberry Close residents during recent flooding.

The Community Safety Group have been collecting crime statistics for a number of years and have identified trends. Mrs Cawthorn will provide this information to the Town Clerk.

Cllr H. Whitaker, Central Bedfordshire Ward Councillor:

Cllr Whitaker informed members that Kennel Farm Road was proposed to be a permissive bridleway. However, this has not been formally agreed. Members noted that a right of way was unlikely to be granted. This is currently being reviewed by the CBC Legal Team.

14. EXEMPT ITEMS

There were none.