



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 11 AUGUST 2020
AT 7PM VIA ZOOM WEBINAR FUNCTION

PRESENT:

Cllr D. Albone
Cllr I. Bond
Cllr K. Brown
Cllr G. Fage (Vice Chairman)
Cllr F. Foster
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 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 – 9

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

Cllr L Fage and Cllr H Ramsay.

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

None.

b. **Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:**

- Cllr G Fage – Item 9 f.
- Cllr M North – Item 9 I.
- Cllr M Foster – Item 11 b.

3. **TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There has been discussion for some time about decluttering of the Market Square and High Street, that is the removal of extraneous street furniture. Due to the pandemic, the Government has provided funding for the improvement of High Streets to encourage trade and, as a result of this, Central Bedfordshire Council will be removing some of the items like railings, posts and bollards which are no longer needed. They will also be updating some of the signage. Work is likely to start within the next six weeks and the Town Council will publish the exact date when it is known. It is hoped that much of the work can take place evenings and weekends but there will be some disruption to traffic, particularly to keep workmen safe when railings are being removed. Funding has also been made available for the gradual refurbishment of all the bench seating in the town centre.

Cllr Russell was delighted to confirm that the new Town Clerk, Peter Tarrant, will be joining the Council on 24th August and Members look forward to his attendance at the next Town Council meeting. Philip Truppin (Acting Town Clerk) and Nina Villa (Interim Deputy Town Clerk) will remain in the short term as Assistant Clerks.

4. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

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

None.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

Charlotte Gurney, Head of Service for Central Bedfordshire Council's Housing Solutions

Ms Gurney talked about Central Bedfordshire Council's Housing Service provision across Central Bedfordshire as a whole and statistics for Biggleswade itself. The Housing Service covers issues of homelessness, the Housing Register and private sector housing - especially environmental health aspects of private rentals in disrepair.

There are a number of Acts of Parliament that govern the duties on Local Councils in dealing with homelessness and any social care issues that rough sleepers and homeless people face. Ms Gurney shared Central Bedfordshire Council's Strategy, Priorities and Vision showing an increased need for affordable housing across the County, but also shared with Members that, as a result of recent profile-raising campaigns, people are now more aware that Central Bedfordshire Council's Housing Service can intervene and assist people with various issues before homelessness occurs.

Statistics provided for homelessness in Biggleswade are as follows:

Local information

from – April 2019 and so far in 2020

Biggleswade	
Number of housing registration applicants who have expressed an interest to live within your area currently.	290 applicants on the register stated they want to live in Biggleswade
Number of households that have approached as homeless or threatened with homeless in your area	In 2019-20 = 176 approaches from households living in Biggleswade. In the first quarter of 2020-21 = 34 approaches from households living in Biggleswade.
Transition accommodation within your area	5 units of accommodation
Number of disrepairs reported to Private Sector Housing (PSH)	In 2019/20 = 11 First quarter of 2020/21 = 2
Number of enforcement notices in your area	In 2019/20 = 2 First quarter of 2020/21 = 0
Prosecutions in your area	In 2019/20 = 1 First quarter of 2020/21 = 0
Known Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) in your area	As of 23 rd July 2020 = 11

Ms Gurney encouraged Members and the public to report any rough sleepers to her team to facilitate engagement with them and advised Members that Central Bedfordshire Council has a new media campaign in the pipeline, which will help with messaging to the public about offering money to rough sleepers.

Cllr Russell acknowledged that this is a sensitive issue to deal with and offered Ms Gurney the Town Council's full support and help for the media campaign.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

- a. Cllr G Fage advised Members of a campaign to encourage residents to buy more locally to help stimulate the local economy. The Acting Town Clerk advised Members that banners are being designed and printed by a local firm of printers, and Cllr G Fage requested to see the draft design before it goes to printing. This campaign is being implemented by Biggleswade Town Council in support of local business owners, service providers and market traders to encourage the public to make use of these local services and products.
- b. Cllr Albone said that he was pleased to see the last Saturday Market looking considerably busier and that the new layout looked very attractive, noticeably different. He offered his thanks to the Market Superintendent and Town Centre Operations Manager for their work on this.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

Members received the minutes of the Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 28th July 2020**.
The following amendment was proposed:

- **Page 2 – Cllr G Fage – 6.a. – Decluttering** – Cllr G Fage clarified that it was Sam Caldbeck asked to engage on this action point, not the Planning Officers. Cllr Fage added that the minutes needed correcting to reflect that it was for the Town Centre Operations Manager to copy Cllr Bond and Cllr M Foster into the existing chain of emails.

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

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

Matters arising from the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting of **28th July 2020**.

- a. **Page 2: Item 6a.** - Cllr G Fage clarified that this item was not actioned, but that Cllr Watkins (Central Bedfordshire Ward Councillor) had obtained the map from Sam Caldbeck. Cllr G Fage offered thanks to Cllr Watkins for obtaining it.

Cllr Russell explained that what was ultimately provided was not the full report, but a plan of the market square which regrettably did not clearly show what would be happening to the street furniture. Cllr Russell, Cllr Watkins and Cllr Bond had met with the Highways Officer in charge and Sam Caldbeck and this was the update provided to Council at Item 3 above.

- b. **Page 3: Item 8c: Orchard Centre:** Cllr Pullinger asked for an update on works to floor and re-opening of the Centre. The Acting Town Clerk advised that separation joints had been installed to prevent the floor moving and there is a waiting period for settlement before the floor covering will be put down. Members will be given an opening date after that.
- c. **Page 3: Item 8a: Parking Orders:** Cllr Knight asked for any update on the parking orders issue. The Acting Town Clerk confirmed he had emailed Marcel Coiffait (Director of Community Services at Central Bedfordshire Council) following the Town Council meeting of 28 July 2020 and has, yet again, not received an acknowledgement of the email, nor a response. The Acting Town Clerk advised that he had copied Cllr Bond on the complete email trail on this topic, dating back to February 2020 and given that there has been no response, even on the most recent email, requested the assistance of Councillors to intervene to progress this.

Cllr Bond confirmed he would be happy to take this up with Marcel Coiffait and will circulate an update before the next scheduled Town Council Meeting of 25 August 2020.

- d. **Page 7: Item 11e: Council Website Working Group:** Cllr Pullinger updated members on the working group's progress. The group had met following an update from the Office Manager and had discussed what process needs to be followed to get quotes and finalise requirements. There are currently three companies preliminarily identified as suitable and the working group aim to bring recommendations to Council on 8th September 2020.

9. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

- a. **CB/20/02572/FULL - 148B Drove Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0HP**

Two storey side extension to form garden/dining room & ensuite.

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 Central Bedfordshire Council 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.

b. **CB/20/02251/FULL - 15 Ripon Court, Biggleswade, SG18 8JE**

Front porch.

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 Central Bedfordshire Council 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/20/02355/FULL - New Inn Public House, 16A Market Square, Biggleswade, SG18 8AS**

Refurbishment and extension of the site for restaurant/bar use (A4 Use) at ground floor and the conversion of the first floor into two new residential units (C3 Use) with the replacement of the single storey garage in the rear yard by a two-storey distillery.

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

Members expressed the view that the name of the premises should remain as the New Inn.

d. **CB/20/02356/LB - New Inn Public House, 16A Market Square, Biggleswade, SG18 8AS**

Listed Building: Refurbishment and extension of the site for restaurant/bar use (Ad Use) at ground floor and the conversion of the first floor into two new residential units (C3 Use) with the replacement of the single storey garage in the rear yard by a two-storey distillery.

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

e. **CB/20/02384/FULL - 8 Dartmoor Way, Biggleswade, SG18 0FL**

Proposed single-storey side extension and driveway to provide off-street parking.

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 Central Bedfordshire Council 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.

f. **CB/20/02432/LB - 63 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JH**

Listed Building: Conversion of existing bank to physiotherapy clinic at ground floor and 2 x residential flats above and construction of new residential block to rear of site. Cllr G Fage had expressed a non-pecuniary interest in this item but wished to add that the proximity to George Hall with its late licence and loud music playing may need an appropriate sound proofing mitigation. Cllr G Fage added that, whilst Members want to help this new business to thrive, it should not be to the detriment of other, well-established businesses and residents.

Due to technical difficulties, the Mayor was unable to continue to Chair this meeting and Cllr G Fage took the Chair to continue with the meeting in his capacity as Deputy Mayor.

Cllr Bond supported Cllr G Fage's points on George Hall and believed there should be legal clarification around the noise issue. He had raised this at the last DMC and asked for some clarity on this issue by the Legal Representative, but was told that the Council cannot refuse to accept noise complaints from neighbours, regardless of what mitigations have been put in place. Cllr Bond suggested that, with planning applications submitted where residential meets clubs/pubs/shops, BTC needs to find some concrete way to comfortably approve the applications without there being a detriment to the existing buildings.

Cllr Knight advised there is a concept of a Deed of Easement that is covered by the National Planning Policy framework that is essentially designed to ensure that new developments can co-exist with existing businesses.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided: 1) There is mitigation in place for sound proofing due to the adjacent business having a noise factor. Central Bedfordshire Council should conduct a noise assessment and take due consideration of impact of noise from business next door. 2) The residents are made aware that, as per Biggleswade Town Council Parking permit policy, there will be no eligibility for resident parking permits however the physiotherapy clinic will be eligible for worker permits for their staff.

g. **CB/20/00959/OUT - Land East of Biggleswade – Revised planning application**

Outline Application: seeking Planning Permission for up to 1,500 dwellings (use Class C3) and up to a 2ha of commercial development (use Class A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1a,b,c, B2, B8) up to 5ha of primary school development (classD1) 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. Subject to Environmental statement

Cllr Pullinger advised Members that although they had received further feedback from Central Bedfordshire Council today stating that there are no changes – these were on the Central Bedfordshire Council website and it was possible for Members to view those documents as of last week when the agenda was issued.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council refers to its previous response that it has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided the following points are considered:

1. Dunton Lane is upgraded.
2. The speed limit from Saxon Drive reduced from the current 60 mile per hour to 40 miles per hour.
3. The necessary facilities provided for pedestrian footpath and cyclist pathway.
4. Adequate access for Motorists to A1.

h. **CB/20/02516/FULL - 25 Sun Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0BP**

Replacement and enlarged 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 Central Bedfordshire Council 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.

i. **CB/20/02368/FULL - 15 Sycamore Close, Biggleswade, SG18 0HY**

Two storey side & 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 Central Bedfordshire Council 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.

j. **CB/20/02496/FULL - 2 Station Chambers, Station Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8AH**

Change of Use from A1 to mixed A1 / A4 with internal alterations.

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

It is noted that Councillors welcome new business to town.

k. **CB/20/02172/FULL - Little Acre One, Langford Road, Biggleswade, SG18 9JU**

Change of use of land adjacent to an existing traveller site to expand the existing facility. Proposal to also include the siting of 4 static and 4 mobile caravans to facilitate accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers with new separate cross over/vehicular access.

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

l. **CB/20/02693/FULL - 24 Broadmead, Biggleswade, SG18 8LF**

Proposed demolition of existing outbuilding and construction of prefabricated detached garage, with erection of single storey rear extension, replacement UPVC windows and new crossover for new detached garage.

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 Central Bedfordshire Council 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.

m. **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.

Cllr I Bond confirmed this has been called in for DMC next week. He had checked the website and there are no changes to this Planning Application.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECTS** to this planning application.

1. The objection is due to the height of the building.
2. The aesthetics of the building is overbearing and out of keeping to the original application.
3. The building is too close to the residential homes and have detrimental impact to adjacent residents.
4. Previous applications have been objected to for buildings of this height.

Councillors noted that this application has been “called in” for consideration at the Development Management Committee of CBC.

10. **ACCOUNTS**

None.

11. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Diversion of Footpath 24 Biggleswade:**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has no objection.

b. **Street Naming - CB/SN/20/0079 - Land at Sorrell Way, Biggleswade, SG18 8WB**

Local Government Act 1985 - 93 apartment retirement scheme. The Developer has asked in this instance that the Town Council make the street name suggestions. Whilst only one street name is required it is advised that 2-3 suggestions are provided. A copy of the Street Naming and Numbering guidance is attached.

It was **RESOLVED** by the Town Council to submit the suggestions of Chamomile, Parsley and Cardamom.

c. **Committee Meetings**

Councillors to consider a request from Cllr F Foster for Committee Meetings to resume.

Cllr F Foster said that formal committee meetings have been suspended for 5 months now as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the work of the committees has continued informally with actions as necessary being dealt with by the Council meetings agendas, he believes Committee meetings need to be made public once again, with published formal agendas and minutes. Since the office is now fully staffed and normal office hours have resumed, Members voted to resume committee meetings forthwith, either virtually or physically in person at the Town Hall building as soon as regulations allow this to happen.

Feedback from Officers and Town Council Members indicated a need to reduce the number of meetings in the calendar.

It was **RESOLVED** for the Committee meetings to resume from mid-September, with the Acting Town Clerk to provide a proposed schedule of meetings up to the end of December 2020.

12. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Planning Application Outcomes**

Cllr Pullinger noted that the planning application for Bonds Lane has been formally decided and approved.

This item was **NOTED**.

b. **Temporary Closure: Footpath 36: Biggleswade**

Cllr Pullinger advised Members this application was commented on previously and this is simply the notice that it has been sealed.

This item was **NOTED**.

c. **Chapel at Drove Road**

Cllr F Foster has discussed this with the Works Manager, he has been pressing for some action on this and it is top of the Public Lands & Open Spaces agenda.

The Public Realm team are doing extra grounds maintenance work tidying up the entrances and along the pathways so there is a lot of work going on in the cemetery. Cllr Thomas confirmed he had been to the cemetery earlier that day and it was a lot tidier than the week before. With three Public Realm Operatives on site there is a lot being done.

Members **NOTED** that they will be provided with three quotes from the Works Manager once these are available.

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. None.