

A Summary of Your
TOWN PLAN
for
BIGGLESWADE



Adopted by Biggleswade Town Council 14th December 2010



**Biggleswade
Town Plan**

Message from the Mayor of Biggleswade

Biggleswade Town Council is pleased to support the Town Plan, which has been produced by members of the Town Plan Steering Group and details the views and desires gathered from the residents of Biggleswade via the questionnaire and numerous other consultation exercises.

Following the endorsement of the Action Plan Tables by the Town Council it has been noted that many of the issues raised by residents are also concerns of the elected councillors.

Several of the issues identified in this Town Plan have been actively pursued by our Town Council in the past and without doubt, will be again.

There are many areas in which the Town Council is actively engaged at the moment.

Examples include the search for additional allotment space, the provision of accessible information about public rights of way, improvements at the Sun Street / Shortmead Street and London Road / The Baulk / Dells Lane junctions.

Cllr. Wendy Smith – Mayor of Biggleswade Town Council 2010



Message from the Biggleswade Town Plan Steering Group Chairman

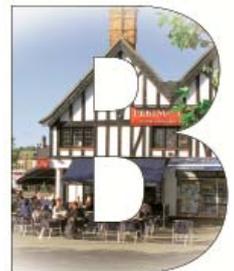
The **Biggleswade Town Plan Steering Group** (BTPSG) was created following a public meeting arranged by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) with the full support of Biggleswade Town Council. The inaugural meeting was held on 1st July 2008 at the Weatherley Centre and the initial Chairman of the BTPSG was the late Mike Scott-Coomber. His enthusiasm spurred other volunteers to join and participate in this project.

The Town Plan represents a collective view of what the residents of Biggleswade want. It is the result of wide-ranging discussions and consultations with the people of the town. It was up to the community as a whole to decide what is important to them, what they would like to change and develop and what they would like to stay the same.

A Town Centre Master Plan has been produced by Central Bedfordshire Council, at the same time as this document. There has been involvement between the two groups to ensure a joined-up approach and to avoid duplication. We have also referred to the Biggleswade Green Infrastructure Plan and fed relevant findings from our consultations back.

We readily acknowledge that many residents wish to preserve the friendly nature of our town with its "Market Town" feeling. This goes, however, with a recognition that no community can ever stand still. Whilst Biggleswade must evolve, any development should augment and not threaten the essential character of Biggleswade.

*Gerry Lawrence
Chairman Biggleswade Town Plan Steering Group 2010*



Biggleswade Town Plan Steering Group - Action Plan

The Action Plan, produced as a result of a great deal of consultation with the people of Biggleswade, shows the community's views as to how the town should progress in the future. The Action Plan tables can be viewed in the full Town Plan report of the BTPSG.

It represents the actual feelings of the town and indicates how the majority would like to see Biggleswade change. At the same time, it shows those areas that people like and do not want to see changed. Biggleswade has a fantastic history and the residents have clearly expressed that there are aspects of it that need to be retained.

These actions were developed from the data in our "Action Plan Consultation Report" - see our website for details.

Visit our website: www.biggleswadetownplan.org.uk

The Consultation Process

Consultation with the residents of Biggleswade was extensive and much of the detail in the full report was obtained as a direct consequence of that consultation.

The BTPSG volunteers organised and ran a number of events to obtain views from the maximum possible number of residents. The following feature among the activities undertaken:

- A presence at the Saint Andrew's Country Fayre in 2008 and 2009
- A "meet the people" day at ASDA
- An early morning "meet the commuters" event at the railway station
- A visit by the "R.A.V.E." bus to Stratton School
- Individual presentations to various local community groups
- A stall on the Saturday Market
- A "Planning for Real" day and evening at St Andrew's Rooms
- An extensive questionnaire was delivered to all the houses in the town, which achieved a 17% response.
- Individual discussion with town residents
- Discussion of the Action Plan, developed from the 1,220 questionnaire responses, with partner organisations who could be involved in implementation of solutions
- A public consultation on the final "Action Plan"

Community Safety

The overall response from residents was that the vast majority regard Biggleswade as a safe place in which to live. Issues highlighted include:

- Need to raise awareness amongst residents of existing community safety initiatives operating in the town (e.g. the Community Safety Forum and police advice surgeries)
- Improved control of alcohol sales

Transport and Traffic

There are times when it is extremely difficult to either drive through or access the town centre.

As the development of the land east of Biggleswade proceeds there will be increasing pressure on existing routes and parking provision.

These inevitable problems need to be addressed urgently.

Other issues highlighted include:

- Need for increased promotion of bus services to increase passenger numbers and ensure the service is retained
- Access to the Biggleswade station platform for those with mobility problems / pushchairs / bicycles
- Need for increased capacity on trains to Kings Cross at peak times
- Support for a transport interchange at Biggleswade railway station
- Facilities to improve cycling in the town
- Pavement and road condition
- Speeding in certain areas



Community Services and Facilities

The residents of Biggleswade have identified the following needs:

- A centrally located community facility that can be used by all age groups .
- More casual sport and leisure facilities outside of club usage,
- More youth targeted facilities and activities.

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Housing, Growth and Environment

Residents clearly have high regard for the rural character of the town the following points were made:

- The river and green spaces should be retained and enhanced for the benefit of the community
- It is imperative that a “green buffer” around the whole of the town is retained
- Development of Bonds Lane/Foundry Lane is supported
- Affordable housing should continue to be provided
- There is strong support for Biggleswade to become a “Fair Trade” town



The consultation process has been comprehensive. This summary report is not intended to replicate the detail of the level of consultation that has taken place. It is aimed at providing a high level overview of the main areas being considered. The full report can be found as detailed below, the Town Plan is about looking forward.

The image displayed [left] is one from the History Society collection that shows how the town centre looked in the late 1930's, happily much of it is recognisable today.

For more information about the history of Biggleswade visit the history society website:

www.biggleswadehistory.org.uk

What Happens Next?

The Town Plan is a living document and will be monitored regularly and updated in 5 years time to ensure that it is always relevant to the needs and priorities of the community. The Town Plan was adopted by Biggleswade Town Council on 14th December 2010, to assist them in their decision making in the future.

The Town Plan Steering Group will remain as a sub-group of the Town Council to assist with progressing the actions identified. It is intended that a further review and report on progress is undertaken by the BTPSG in 2015.

If you would like to join this group and can assist with any of the areas identified in the Town Plan please contact BTPSG Chairman Gerry Lawrence via email: chairman@biggleswadetownplan.org.uk or telephone 01767 315317.

A copy of the full report can be viewed in the Biggleswade Town Council Offices, Central Bedfordshire Council Offices, Biggleswade Library, for those who want to read the full details, plus of course our website www.biggleswadetownplan.org.uk which contains all reports and activities of the BTPSG.

The BTPSG would like to thank their supporters in producing this and the full Town Plan reports, particularly, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC), Central Bedfordshire Council and Biggleswade Town Council.

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