



# Biggleswade Community News

MARCH 2022



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## **WHEN WILL TWO TIER SCHOOLS COME TO BIGGLESWADE?**

Following Central Bedfordshire's recent consultation on moving from three tier to two tier education in Biggleswade and our surrounding area, no majority consensus has been obtained.

St Andrews' Lower Schools, as well as Sutton, Upper Caldecote and Northill Lower Schools strongly supported moving to become primary schools, but the Dunton and Wrestlingworth Lower Schools voted 91% to both remain on their current sites and become primary schools. The proposal was for one of them to close. Stratton Upper School endorsed becoming a secondary school. Central Bedfordshire Council are therefore revisiting their proposals to ensure they are viable and fit for purpose. The Council will then bring forward new proposals.

One change which will proceed - to close Potton Middle School and change Potton Lower School to become a primary school by September 2023.

The original Biggleswade proposals included the building of a new secondary school (ages 11yrs+) on the proposed site East of Biggleswade and towards which Central Bedfordshire Council had obtained £14m from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), as well as a new primary school in that area. Additional funding is expected to come from S.106 monies from the development of the Garden Village site which has not yet commenced.

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Copies are available from Newsagents, Community Centres, Town Hall, Library, Churches and Eateries. Also online at

[www.biggleswadecommunitynews.uk](http://www.biggleswadecommunitynews.uk)

# NEWS FROM BIGGLESWADE ORGANISATIONS



## **BIGGLESWADE HISTORY SOCIETY**

[www.biggleswadehistory.org.uk](http://www.biggleswadehistory.org.uk)

The Society meets at 7.30 for 8pm on the first Monday of each month at Trinity Church, Shortmead Street. It has disabled access and there is a church car park. The Society's primary objective is promoting the study of local history in Biggleswade. The Society produces a bi monthly newsletter, and once things return to normal will resume its regular outings and walks.

With its interest in supporting conservation and preservation, and its local and family history research, the Society regularly makes representation at Countywide meetings and reviews Central Bedfordshire planning applications from a local history perspective.

An aspiration is also to help to support a museum for Biggleswade, to show its important place in the history of London to Scotland travel in the era before cars and public transport, when Biggleswade was a major staging post on the important Great North Road.

Annual membership is £10 plus £6 if you require your newsletter to be delivered to your door. Membership forms are available from its Chairman Jennifer Topham on 01767 313407 or email them through the above website.

Future dates and speakers are:

- 7<sup>th</sup> March Picture Postcards with Mark Andrew Pardoe
- 4<sup>th</sup> April Interesting Artefacts with Roger Quince
- 9<sup>th</sup> May Airship 101: Golden Age of British Airships with Alistair Lawton
- 6<sup>th</sup> June A visit to St Mary's Church Cardington



**IVEL FLIX**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**CINEMA**

Will be showing "We Bought A Zoo" on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March. It's a PG starring Matt Damon and Scarlett Johansson. A newly widowed Father struggling to raise his two children, decides to purchase and restore a run

down zoo. For details see [www.iveflix.org.uk](http://www.iveflix.org.uk)

## Biggleswade tots sow seeds in the community.

Matthew Power Photography



Children at Busy Bees nursery rolled up their sleeves and showed their green fingers to plant herbs and flowers at a community event. The tots teamed up with Grand Union Housing Group and The Hill Group, for the project, who also provided handmade,

recycled planters. The organisations are building a development in Sorrel Gardens, across the road from Busy Bees, set to provide 93 Extra Care apartments for the over 55s, 68 of which will be for social rent and 25 for shared ownership sale. It's part of Grand Union's mission to build more homes and stronger communities for better lives.

Karen Nicholson, Community Investment Manager at Grand Union, said: "The benefits of intergenerational work are clearly evidenced. I am really excited to see how we can develop such projects between our customers living in Sorrel Gardens and the children at the nursery."

Mick Clarke, Site Manager at Hill, added: "Creating social value to the local community is a passion for us at Hill. This project has been a wonderful way to offer the children something educational and experimental, teaching them the joy of growing something from seed."

Laura Howard, Assistant Centre Director at Busy Bees at the Saxon Centre, said: "We are honoured to be able to have the opportunity to work with Grand Union Housing Group and the Hill Group. As a centre, we want to be able to help use recycled wood and make amazing projects out of these and teach the children about the community and how we can help others around us"

***REMEMBER*** – if you can't access the Internet, ring us on 01767 448954 and we will try to assist.

# ABOUT THE TOWN



## TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

All on Tuesdays usual start time 7.00pm

1st	March	Personnel
8th	March	Full Council
15th	March	Finance & General Purpose
22nd	March	Full Council (12 noon start)
12th	April	Full Council
19th	April	Annual Assembly (7.30 start)

Visit their website at <https://biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk> and scroll down for the meetings link where, on the day, you can click to join the meeting, or view it on You Tube. All meetings are recorded and available to view on You Tube afterwards. For more information or advice phone 01767 313134.



**Your policing teams are holding local surgeries in March at the following venues:**

- 2nd – Biggleswade Market Square 1-3pm
- 12th – Sainsburys Car Park – 10-12 noon
- 23rd – Sainsburys Market Square Kings Reach 3-4pm

## CALLING ALL RIVER IVEL ANGLERS!

1,412 barbel went into the River Ivel at Biggleswade Mill and Blunham gauging weir. 12 of these barbel were given blue dye marks on their stomach. This is done so officers can identify some of the fish that have been stocked so they can evaluate how successful the stocking has been.

Anglers are encouraged to take a picture of these marked fish, weigh them, and get in touch at [enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk) or write to them at Environment Agency, National Customer Contact Centre, PO Box 544, Rotherham, S60 1BY.



## A REFURBISHED BIGGLESWADE SOCIAL CLUB

Biggleswade Social Club has recently undergone a complete refurbishment. With new furnishings and modern décor the club hall has capacity for 180 guests.

Facilities include a 5 star rated professional kitchen with caterers available on request. It has a licensed bar and staff, a stage for live music and entertainment and a large projector and screen. There are sufficient tables, chairs and linen for those special events, plus an in-house DJ. Even a new disco ball and lighting. The Club has full disabled access and its own car park, which has also been renovated.

The Social Club is a great place for all celebrations from weddings and parties, to business networking, meetings, charity events and wakes. For all enquiries email [events@biggleswadesocialclub.co.uk](mailto:events@biggleswadesocialclub.co.uk) phone 01767 312409, or visit their Facebook page.

The next main event is a Queen tribute concert on the 12th March (see flyer)

Tickets from [www.queenergy.co.uk/gigs](http://www.queenergy.co.uk/gigs)

Each month the Club holds a bingo evening and a pool knockout competition.



## The Weatherley Centre

Room hire for all events



**THE TEAM IS EXPANDING.** Our town's largest community centre is looking for staff to join their expanding team. They are now advertising for a part time cleaner and a part time Deputy Manager. The closing date for applications is Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March. For more details contact reception on 01767 315709 or email [staff.weatherleycentre@gmail.com](mailto:staff.weatherleycentre@gmail.com) or call in to the Centre at the rear of Stratton School. Or visit the Centre's Facebook page.



## **TOWN COUNCIL MATTERS**

### **UPDATING LOCAL PLAY AREAS**

Biggleswade Town Council has now agreed its 5 year Play Area Equipment Strategy. With much work to do over the next 5 years they will bring the play areas up to date, including new equipment for all ages and abilities/disabilities. Funding will increase over the coming years, and they will work closely with the surrounding communities. The Town Council also hopes to take over the play areas in Kings Reach over the lifetime of the strategy. They also intend holding a Community Day in the Market Square in early April 2022.

### **BIGGLESWADE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

After nearly 3 years of deliberation and two community surveys, the final Biggleswade Neighbourhood Plan has been agreed by the Town Council and submitted to Central Bedfordshire. It will now be scrutinised by an Inspector. If any changes are suggested it will be returned to the Town Council for any changes, if the Town Council decides to do so. Once this procedure is finalised it will be brought back to the residents and businesses in Biggleswade, who will vote to accept or reject the Neighbourhood Plan, via a referendum expected around May or June 2022.

### **QUEEN'S JUBILEE WEEKEND 2nd TO 5th JUNE**

A beacon will be lit in the Market Square at 9.45pm on Thursday evening, to mark the beginning of the Jubilee and again on Sunday to mark its end. Events will be held in the Market Square such as a Hog Roast etc. The Town Council are able to support community events, and street parties, bunting, etc.

### **SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT**

The Town Council is working towards a presentation on a Sustainable Transport Corridor and to hear the community's ideas for improvements to East to West local travel. This work will take several months but it is hoped that proposals could be considered by the end of 2022.

### **LOCAL MUSEUM OF BIGGLESWADE**

The Town Council is working with the Biggleswade History Society to find opportunities for either a short term or longer term museum in the town.

## COVID UPDATE



### COVID UPDATE

Cases in Biggleswade have fallen from 240 a week as at 30<sup>th</sup> January to 107 at 13<sup>th</sup> February, with hospitalisations falling to the same range as in early November. Cases proving positive have dropped from 20% to 14% but less testing is taking place.

Following questions to the Prime Minister in January, obtaining 4<sup>th</sup> jabs (boosters) for those who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) from covid, should have been improved and if you are on that list you should have received an invitation by text, email or letter. You should be able to take this to any vaccination centre, but particularly the walk in ones at the old Argos Store, Garden Square Shopping Centre, Robertson House, Stevenage, or at the Council Offices at Chicksands. If you received an unsolicited PCR priority testing kit, then you are more than likely to be on that list, as these PCR tests should ensure you receive the appropriate treatment, quickly, if you do test positive for covid. If you encounter any problems or have any questions, or think you should be eligible for that 4<sup>th</sup> booster jab, you can contact BLMK Clinical Commissioning Group (our local NHS) on 01525 624275 or email them at [blmkccg.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:blmkccg.contactus@nhs.net)

On 16<sup>th</sup> February, a statement was issued on vaccinating children aged 5-11 which read:

*This advice on the offer of vaccination to 5 to 11-year olds who are not in a clinical risk group is considered by JCVI as a one-off pandemic response programme. As the COVID-19 pandemic moves further towards endemicity in the UK, JCVI will review whether, in the longer term, an offer of vaccination to this, and other paediatric age groups, continues to be advised.*

2 smaller 10mcg doses of the Pfizer vaccine will be offered at 12 week intervals. The vaccine for children aged 5-11 who are clinically most vulnerable has been available since 30<sup>th</sup> January. At the time of writing there are no plans to carry out these vaccinations via schools, but this might change.

## A LITTLE HELP

**Dunton carboots** are back!

Starting on Saturday 19th March 19 then on the third Saturday of every month. 1.30pm for sellers and 2pm - 4pm for buyers. Come rain or shine we'll be there. Car £5, Car & trailer £7, Van £10.

Buyers free admission, donations welcome and greatly appreciated. Hot and cold drinks and food on sale. Disabled access & toilets Prebooking available or turn up on the day.

*Recreation Ground, Horseshoe Close, Dunton, SG18 8RY*

EMAIL: [admin@duntonra.org.uk](mailto:admin@duntonra.org.uk)

## IVEL BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICE

Are you recently bereaved?  
Have you been struggling with coming to terms with your loss?  
Would it help to talk to someone?  
For more information telephone

**07704 734225**

(Monday-Friday 9am - 6pm)

And speak to one of our

### Bereavement Support Volunteers



Free and Confidential  
(Donations Welcomed)

*Sharing your loss can  
make the burden of grief  
easier to manage*

**Please don't grieve alone**



Reuse it. Donate it.  
0844 99 343 99  
[reus matters.com](http://reus matters.com)

Preen are gradually reintroducing volunteer positions following COVID restrictions. If you fancy helping out during the week with dusting furniture or arranging bric-a-brac displays or repairing, cleaning or assembling furniture in their warehouse they would love to have you in their team. Volunteering is a great way to meet new people and get out and about if you're stuck in all day. Better than watching the telly and you can turn the heating off to save money too!

They can reimburse travel expenses and pay for your lunch if you're with them all day. Why not pop in to their premises near the roundabout between Sun Street and Shortmead Street SG18 0BP and grab a volunteer form or email [kathy@preencic.org](mailto:kathy@preencic.org) if you would like to know more.

**This newsletter is produced by volunteers free of charge**

but donations towards costs are welcomed.

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