

FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the 406th meeting of Flitwick Town Council held on 15th October 2019 at the Rufus Centre

Present: Cllr P Thompson (Chairman)
Cllrs K Badham J Blakeman I Blazeby R Coleman J Dann
P Dodds P Earles M Halligan A Lutley M Platt
J Roberts R Shaw A Snape D Toinko M A Williams

Also present: CBCllr C Gomm
1 resident

In attendance: Assistant Town Clerk RFO & HR Officer

Apologies for Absence Received: Cllr G Mackey

Open Forum

A resident asked the Council questions regarding the public meeting that took place on 3rd October. He expressed his frustration that the advert for the meeting had stated that residents' questions would be answered on the night if submitted in writing prior to a specific date and this did not happen. He and other residents were left wondering when the questions which were unanswered via the Acting Town Clerk's presentation would be responded to. He subsequently wondered when and how follow-up questions would be taken and answered. The Chairman advised that answers were being formulated but there was a large quantity to get through. Answers would be made available shortly and he would ask the Clerk to advise on a follow-up forum for subsequent questions. The resident stated that the public were not being made aware of what was happening. The Chairman reassured the resident that the public would be kept updated on this matter and he explained that staff resources were low. Answering questions on such a complex issue would take time. The resident was advised that the Acting Town Clerk was working to a deadline of generating responses by the end of October.

Reports from Central Bedfordshire Members

1. CBCllr Gomm advised that the consultation for Ferndale Nursing Home had ended on 2nd October and that responses were being collated. The report would be issued to the Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Executive Committee on 3rd December where a decision was expected. This meeting was open to the public.
2. CBC had heard from the agents acting on behalf of Aldi and Members were advised that the public support for the application had been overwhelmingly positive.
3. The owner of the Barclays Bank building had applied for a change of use for the first floor to be residential but it was expected for the bank on the ground floor to remain. The lease for Barclays was due to expire in two years. The Chairman commented that there was a national announcement the previous week regarding the remaining branches in towns. He added that Flitwick Barclays was within the list to be kept open and this would be reviewed after two years. CBCllr Gomm commented that the two years was a worry and that it was worth keeping pressure on them to keep the Bank open. He added that he was speaking to MP Nadine Dorries about this.
4. Cllr Snape understood from speaking with CBCllr Mackey that a motion had been put to CBC regarding the need for supporting step free access at Flitwick station. He asked CBCllr Gomm for the reason why he voted against this motion. CBCllr Gomm advised that supporting the motion would have committed CBC to an unspecified sum on an unspecified date for land that CBC did not own. He added that Network Rail (NWR) were the landowners and asked for Officers to organise a meeting with NWR and Govia Thameslink

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to find out how and if it was possible to pursue the step free access issue before the next grant application.

5. Cllr Snape asked CBCllr Gomm if he was aware of how CBC had utilised the Housing Infrastructure Grant. Members were advised that this information had recently been sent by email to the Acting Town Clerk.
6. Cllr Badham commented on the implication that had been made that Flitwick Town Council (FTC) were not engaging in talks with NWR and Govia Thameslink over the 8 year period that these meetings had been held. He added that he believed FTC were being kept in the loop but asked if this was not the case, for the FTC to be invited to meetings. CBCllr Gomm agreed that it was essential for FTC to contribute to these meetings as the more pressure that was applied regarding step free access, the better. Cllr Thompson added that invitations to meetings concerning the station regeneration project had ceased. CBCllr Gomm advised that these meetings were being coordinated by Sam Caldbeck of CBC now and that he would begin to invite all interested parties. Cllr Thompson was frustrated with the implication that FTC were not engaging on such important issues because it was untrue and he would be approaching Cllr Saunders regarding this. He added that FTC were fully engaging and many Members made themselves available to attend meetings of this kind.
7. Cllr Badham commented that Cllr Duckett had said that the Mid Tier Programme for the Access for All Grant intended to deliver major access improvements but this was not the case because the redevelopment for Flitwick station did not include step free access. He advised that he had been disappointed that there had been no interjections on this. CBCllr Gomm advised that it was the same situation for Harlington station and that progress was not being made.
8. Cllr Dodds commented that the works were not due to begin on this project for two years due to a problem with the land underneath, which needed to be resolved first. CBCllr Gomm believed that as long as target dates had been set that there was not an issue and that both CBC and FTC needed to chase these. Cllr Blazeby advised that the target dates mentioned were misleading as CBC were meant to have started already. Cllr Dodds advised that CBC had taken soil samples and the results had shown problems therefore quotes had to be sought to resolve the issue first.
9. Cllr Blazeby asked if there had been an update on the sewage works for Chapel Road. CBCllr Gomm advised that there were no updates at present but would chase this with the Officer in charge.

4860 To note any Declarations of Interest relating to items on the agenda

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4861 Town Mayor's Announcements

- (i) The Town Mayor had attended the following; Judges Service with the High Sheriff, a Lord Lieutenant Cadet event in Flitwick and FTC's Civic Service. He thanked all Members and staff for their great support with the Civic Service and commented that the Church had been full with local organisations and a school taking part.
- (ii) The Deputy Town Mayor had attended the following; Judges Service with the High Sheriff, Houghton Regis Town Council's curry evening, Potton Civic Service and FTC's Civic Service.

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4862 To note the circulated Clerk's Report

The Clerk's Report was noted.

4863 To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 405th meeting of Flitwick Town Council held on 17th September 2019

- (i) Cllr Badham referred to Minute Number 4853 where the Council resolved to amend Standing Order 23 in relation to the execution and sealing of legal deeds to accommodate lettings of rooms at the Rufus Centre. He advised that this process may need to be revisited as the Standing Orders stated that a special motion would be required for this to take place in the form of three Members requesting (in writing) for the Standing Order to be amended. Due to this, Members agreed that this would be put on the agenda for the next meeting for clarification and for the correct procedure to be followed.
- (ii) It was proposed, seconded and agreed to **Resolve** that the Minutes of the 405th meeting of Flitwick Town Council held on 17th September 2019 having previously been circulated, be noted and signed as a true record.

4864 To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 326th meeting of the Planning Committee held on 8th August 2019

It was proposed, seconded and agreed to **Resolve** that the Minutes of the 326th meeting of the Planning Committee held on 8th August 2019 having previously been circulated, be noted and signed as a true record.

4865 To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 327th meeting of the Planning Committee held on 29th August 2019

- (i) Cllr Toinko commented on the inconsistency of how decisions were recorded as some had details of unanimous votes whereas others did not mention voting. He also asked if the Chairman's Decision specified for Minute Number 2608 had been written in error. Members were advised that the Chairman's Decision may have been a result of a package error but this would be investigated. Officers who produced the Planning Committee Minutes would be requested to be consistent with how decisions were recorded.
- (ii) It was proposed, seconded and agreed to **Resolve** that the 327th meeting of the Planning Committee held on 29th August 2019 having previously been circulated, be noted and signed as a true record.

4866 To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 328th meeting of the Planning Committee held on 19th September 2019

- (i) It was proposed, seconded and agreed to **Resolve** that the Minutes of the 328th meeting of the Planning Committee held on 19th September 2019 having previously been circulated, be noted and signed as a true record with the following amendment: correct date to 17th September under Minute Number 2619.
- (ii) Cllr Dann commented that the Planning Committee meeting that had been due to take place the previous week was cancelled due to it being inquorate. He advised that two Members had not submitted apologies which led to Subs not being approached to attend. Cllrs Coleman and Halligan advised that they had sent in apologies and Cllr Coleman had approached Cllr Earles to Sub for him however she was unable to do so. Members understood that there had been a misunderstanding on this occasion as these messages had been missed.

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4867 To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 50th meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 6th August 2019

- (i) Cllr Toinko referred to Minute Number 578 1) - Review of Resident Driven Projects - Cycle Pump Track - and questioned the use of the word 'recommended'. The Chairman advised that this was an unfortunate word choice and Members believed 'suggested' would be more

appropriate as a formal decision had not been made. Cllr Toinko commented that the wording within point 1 did not make sense and Members agreed for this particular item to revert back to Community Services for discussion and rewording.

- (ii) Cllr Dodds referred to item 571 - Play Areas & Open Space - Play Area Inspection Report - and questioned the expertise of Members checking equipment. Cllr Lutley advised that in previous years, a couple of Members would conduct site visits to the play areas along with the former Head of Services to look at the aesthetics but not the maintenance aspects, which were carried out via professional companies. She added that this was beneficial in order to make contact with users of the parks and play areas. Cllr Dodds advised that the use of the word 'maintenance' was therefore not appropriate. The Chairman advised that formal inspections were carried out by a professional company annually and that the Grounds Team did their checks daily and information generated from these were both recorded. Members were in agreement that this point - 571 a) - would be brought back to Community Services Committee to be reworded.

4868 To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 51st meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 3rd September 2019

- (i) Cllrs Badham and Toinko advised that they wished to raise matters included in the Minutes under the Confidential Section and this was agreed.
- (ii) It was proposed, seconded and agreed to **Resolve** that the Minutes of the 51st meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 3rd September 2019 having previously been circulated, be noted and signed as a true record.

4869 To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 52nd meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 1st October 2019

- (i) Some Members had questions to raise under the Confidential Section and this was agreed.
- (ii) Cllr Badham stated that the Standing Orders requested for apologies to be noted at the top of published Minutes alongside those present and in attendance. The Assistant Town Clerk advised that staff would be asked to do this for future Minutes however this action point could have been missed within her maternity leave handover and Officers were probably following the agenda order instead.
- (iii) It was proposed, seconded and agreed to **Resolve** that the Minutes of the 52nd meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 1st October 2019 having previously been circulated, be noted and signed as a true record with the following amendments: correct spelling of 'people' (Minute Number 608), add Cllr Blakeman's apologies and insert Cllr Coleman to the list of Members for the Manor Park parking meeting.

4870 To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 44th meeting of the Corporate Services Committee held on 25th September 2019

- (i) Cllr Blazeby commented that actions had been denoted within the Minutes and asked if these would be done within other Committee Minutes as well. The RFO & HR Officer advised that actions were already being denoted for Business Services Minutes and other staff had since been asked to do this for other Committees too.

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- (ii) Cllr Blazeby advised that he wished to discuss 511 iv - Local Organisation Leases - under the Confidential Section and this was agreed.
- (iii) Cllr Badham asked if the leaflets produced (Minute Number 510) regarding step free access were for Ian Cook's campaign and he was advised that they were. He stated that the Minutes

would need to be amended to reflect that this campaign was not specific to Flitwick but it was for a wider remit. Cllr Blazeby advised that although he had not seen the flyers, these were supposed to be in relation to Flitwick. Cllr Toinko advised that he had attended a meeting where Ian Cook had thanked FTC for the leaflets.

- (iv) It was proposed, seconded and agreed to **Resolve** that the Minutes of the 44th meeting of the Corporate Services Committee held on 25th September 2019 having previously been circulated, be noted and signed as a true record.

4871 To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 97th meeting of the Business Services Committee held on 15th August 2019

- (i) Cllr Shaw referred to Minute Number 1058 - proposed amendment to Financial Regulations - and the proposal to allow the Rufus Centre Manager to sign off purchase orders up to the value of £5000. He asked Members of the Committee to explain the reason for this. The Chairman advised that this was generic in relation to the Financial Regulations and that when the current form of Regulations were agreed, the Council did not have a Rufus Centre Manager in post. Cllr Dodds asked if there was a time limit to adhere to for this and the Chairman explained that this type of regulation was different within a local authority setting because a number of items may be carried out at any one time for ordinary expenditure. Cllr Williams added that the recommended change to the Financial Regulations was only to add an individual's name.
- (ii) Cllr Dann referred to item 1060 (iv) - replacement of Reception carpet - and asked if the former carpet could be donated to the Need Project as he had a contact there. The Chairman advised that this would be possible and thanked Cllr Dann for the suggestion.
- (iii) It was proposed, seconded and agreed to **Resolve** that the Minutes of the 97th meeting of the Business Services Committee held on 15th August 2019 having previously been circulated, be noted and signed as a true record.

4872 To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 98th meeting of the Business Services Committee held on 12th September 2019

- (i) Cllr Shaw referred to Minute Number 1071 - Rufus Report Part 2 - Rufus Centre Manager PowerPoint Presentation - and asked if other Members could view this to see what was planned. Cllr Thompson suggested doing this at a future meeting and Cllr Blazeby suggested that it could be uploaded to Sharepoint. Cllr Snape confirmed that this would be possible via Sharepoint and this would be arranged.
- (ii) Cllr Shaw advised that he wished to ask a question within the Confidential Section and this was agreed.
- (iii) Cllr Dodds commented on the fact that each Committee had Minutes that were presented differently and asked if they could be standardised. The Assistant Town Clerk advised that she and the Acting Town Clerk had recently discussed this as an action point.

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- (iv) Cllr Toinko advised that some Confidential Reports for Community Services had recently been uploaded to Sharepoint without any clarity that they were Confidential and that some appendices for Planning had not been uploaded. This would be investigated by staff and it was agreed that all documents should be adequately titled and uploaded for Members to view.
- (v) It was proposed, seconded and agreed to **Resolve** that the Minutes of the 98th meeting of the Business Services Committee held on 12th September 2019 having previously been circulated, be noted and agreed as a true record.
- 4873 **To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 99th meeting of the Business Services Committee held on 10th October 2019**
 - (i) Cllr Blazeby advised that he had a question to be raised under the Confidential Section and this was agreed.
 - (ii) Cllr Shaw asked what the acronym 'RFO' stood for and Cllr Williams advised that it represented the Responsible Financial Officer.
- 4874 **To receive reports from representatives on Outside Bodies**
 - (i) Cllr Dann had attended the Police Priorities Setting meeting and had passed on the resident's concerns regarding Flitwick Skatepark following the previous Council meeting.
 - (ii) Cllr Dodds had attended the Projects & Highways Meeting where timescales had been discussed in relation to the transport interchange project for the station. Phasing of works for the area outside Barclays Bank/Kings Road had been discussed and there was a potential for tree planters to add greenery. The timescale for works towards the station redevelopment was approximately 18 months therefore CBC were going to try and do something about the potholes at the entrance to the site. Members had asked CBC to look into whether or not the speed limit for the centre of Flitwick could be reduced to 20mph and the Acting Town Clerk had agreed previously to raise this matter at a future meeting. Cllr Dodds informed Members about a positive initiative that had been used to reduce dog fouling in another town and CBC had agreed to look into whether or not they could implement a similar initiative for Flitwick.
- 4875 **To note the response from Central Bedfordshire Council regarding an alternative location for the proposed Crematorium**

Members noted the response letter from CBC.
- 4876 **To fill the vacancy on the Business Services Committee**
 - (i) Members were informed that since Cllr Mackey had withdrawn from the Business Services Committee a vacancy had become available. Both Cllrs Dodds and Coleman advised that they would be interested in joining the Committee. Cllr Shaw proposed Cllr Dodds which was seconded by Cllr Earles. Cllr Williams proposed Cllr Coleman which was seconded by Cllr Badham.
 - (ii) Members took a vote and CBCllr Gomm and the RFO & HR Officer collated the papers.

It was **Resolved** for Cllr Dodds to be elected as a Member of the Business Services Committee and Cllr Coleman would remain a Sub.

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4877 Questions

- (i) Cllr Badham had a question to submit to the Ward Members. He advised that a letter made up of 17 pages had been submitted to CBC from the Planning Inspectorate which had been damning. He asked the Ward Members if they were confident that the Local Plan would be in place to prevent CBC from losing control of the process which could result in new houses and adhoc speculative developments in Flitwick. CBCllr Gomm (as the only Ward Member present) stated that he was hopeful regarding the Local Plan and that Ward Members would do all they could to have a Plan that the Planning Officer would be pleased with.
- (ii) Cllr Badham continued in stating that Flitwick was hardly mentioned in the Plan and that the town had already seen significant development. He advised Members that if the Plan was not accepted then the Government could take control and more developments would be expected. Cllr Dodds suggested the Town Council putting together a response however Cllr Badham stated that this had been previously discussed and Members all had different views. The Chairman advised that the Council did not have the opportunity to comment further unless the consultation period reopened.
- (iii) Cllr Shaw asked what the special Police service was mentioned in the Community Services Minutes. Members and Officers could not quickly locate this reference within the Minutes however the Assistant Town Clerk advised Cllr Shaw of a previous discussion regarding FTC being asked to co-fund a PCSO for the area. Members had declined funding a PCSO since there would be no guarantee the Officer would be based in Flitwick.

(CBCllr Gomm and the resident left the meeting at this time).

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION

In accordance with Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act 1960) the public and press to be excluded for items 21, 22 and 23 in view of the confidential nature of the information to be discussed relating to financial and contractual negotiations and item 24.

The Chairman advised that there were several confidential questions to be raised in relation to the Minutes on the agenda. He proposed to deal with these questions in advance of the confidential agenda items and this was agreed.

4868 cont.

To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 51st meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 3rd September 2019

- (i) Cllr Toinko referred to a recommendation from the Minutes and advised Members of the request and the associated decision made by Community Services Committee. The wording within the recommendation would be amended to reflect this.
- (ii) Cllr Blazeby referred to an earlier comment that recommendations would not have been carried out until after resolutions at this meeting since the leaflets discussed under the Corporate Services Committee Minutes had already been produced. Members were informed that some recommendations with minimal cost and time constraints were actioned in advance of ratification at Town Council meetings.
- (iii) Cllr Badham raised questions regarding the Remembrance Parade and advised Members of three quotes received.

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It was **Resolved** to:

1. Progress with quotation 2 at a cost of £834.00 for the hire of a PA system (proposed by Cllr Badham, seconded by Cllr Coleman)

2. For the Town Council to look to organise and agree a budget for the 2020 Remembrance Parade with support and the opportunity of opinions from the Royal British Legion (proposed by Cllr Thompson, seconded by Cllr Badham)

3. To move the Remembrance Parade and organisation of the event from Corporate Services Committee to Community Services Committee (proposed by Cllr Badham, seconded by Cllr Platt)

4869 cont.

To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 52nd meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 1st October 2019

Members asked questions on these Minutes under the Confidential Section.

4870 cont.

To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 44th meeting of the Corporate Services Committee held on 25th September 2019

Members asked questions on these Minutes under the Confidential Section.

4872 cont

To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 98th meeting of the Business Services Committee held on 12th September 2019

Members asked questions on these Minutes under the Confidential Section.

4873 cont.

To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 99th meeting of the Business Services Committee held on 10th October 2019

Members asked questions on these Minutes under the Confidential Section.

4878 **Projects Update**

Members noted the report circulated and Cllrs Toinko, Dodds, Blazeby and Roberts expressed an interest in joining a Working Party for progressing local organisations' leases. Cllr Thompson also wished to be part of this group if he was available on the meeting date.

The Chairman advised at this point that if Members wished to continue discussions they would need to vote to extend the meeting. Cllr Dodds proposed to extend the meeting which was seconded by Cllr Lutley. A vote took place and Members voted in favour of this in order to deal with urgent Council business (Abstained from the vote: Cllrs Snape, Blazeby, Blakeman and Dann).

4879 **To receive a report from the Acting Town Clerk**

The report was noted.

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It was **Resolved** to continue with the Christmas Lights if final details had been confirmed with the Councils contractor by 18th October 2019. Expenditure would not exceed £5000.

Proposed by Cllr Shaw, seconded by Cllr Earles.

Vote in favour: 14 (2 abstentions from Cllrs Blazeby and Dann)

4880 To receive a report from the RFO relating to financial statements

Members discussed the report briefly however the matter was deferred to the next meeting.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed to **Resolve** that the facts regarding the background to this financial statement be presented to all Members at the next meeting.

4881 Questions

There were no questions.

Meeting closed at 10.05pm.

Signed
(Chairman)