

FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the 394th Meeting of Flitwick Town Council held on
Tuesday 18th September 2018 at the Rufus Centre

Present: Cllr G Mackey (Chairman)
Cllrs K Badham I Blazeby J Dann
A Lutley M Platt J Roberts
M Sheehan D Toinko P Thompson
M Williams

Also present: CBCllrs F Chapman A Turner
Sarah Smith – Planning Consultant (Rapleys)

Apologies for Absence Received Cllrs J Blakeman P Feerick A Larkins
K Quantrill M Waites C Gomm

No Apologies Received Cllr Bonner

In attendance: Town Clerk Assistant Town Clerk

The Chairman advised that Sarah Smith had attended the meeting to advise on a development proposal and land offer. Ms Smith informed Members of the current situation and provided background information regarding the land off Trafalgar Drive. Her clients were Kensworth Builders and their plan was due to go to examination with an aim of submitting a planning application. Historically the developers had wanted 16.5 hectares with two phases of development, which the Planning Consultant had not been comfortable with due to the land being greenbelt. Staff changes at Belcross meant that they were more receptive to a different type of perspective and were looking at a maximum of 250 houses with the additional offer of the remainder of the land being offered to the Town Council to enhance the already planned Country Park.

Members were informed that the planning application would include the housing development and additional Country Park space. Ms Smith advised that her clients were holding a consultation at The Rufus Centre on 25th September to present this to the public and enable residents to make comments. She encouraged Members to attend and specified that outcomes from the consultation and any areas that needed addressing would determine timescales. The developers ideally wanted to be in a position to submit the planning application at the end of October/beginning of November.

Ms Smith advised that there were no water pipes going through the Country Park land as part of the transfer. There were sewers around the boundary and into land owned by Central Beds Council but no indications of these in the land offering. Further discussions needed to be handled regarding land transfer principles and potential drainage ponds.

(Cllr Lutley left the meeting at this time.)

Ms Smith advised that it would make sense to utilise existing ponds for enhancement of biodiversity however no other specific concepts/designs had been formulated.

(Cllr Lutley re-entered the meeting at this time.)

Ms Smith was content to work alongside the Council's contractor for the original Country Park project for design and stressed it was important for the planning process and the Council to be comfortable with it. She added that it would be helpful to the Council and the community if the developers could have a draft transfer agreement or principles agreed by

the examination point. It would be a comfort for all that the land was secure to be developed into a Country Park.

Ms Smith offered to meet with the Council at a later date and explained that visuals were going to be available at the consultation event.

Cllr Blazeby had received a promotional leaflet and had been intrigued regarding the choice of wording on it and the inference made that the Country Park was the developer's. He commented that this added confusion and questioned whether or not those carrying out the consultation would mention anything about intentions for this land and how the people would answer concrete questions about linkage with the Council's Country Park. Ms Smith advised that the focus would be to say that there was no fixed design and the consultation was to gather views. The Chairman commented that following the land transfer, the utilisation of green space would be a Council decision.

(Ms Smith left the meeting at this time).

Town Clerk Retirement Presentation

The Chairman commented that it was both a sad and momentous occasion as it was the Town Clerk's final Council meeting after 37 years. He officially thanked Carol for the enormous impact she had on the town and advised she had dedicated a lifetime to Flitwick. He added that hers would be mighty shoes to fill and hoped that the Council would face the future with the stability Carol had given in her service.

The Chairman and Deputy Town Mayor presented Carol with gifts from the Council. Carol commented that she had lots of different sorts of memories from her time working at the Council and advised she had worked with great Councillors, such as David Thompson, Eric Bonner and Lenny Lockyer. She added that she had done lots of exciting things including setting up the allotments, her part in the build of a Leisure Centre, taking on The Rufus Centre etc., which had all started with just six members of staff.

CBCllr Chapman advised that whenever she wanted something in Flitwick then it would be Carol who she would contact to get it done. She emphasised that Flitwick and CBC owed a lot to Carol and wished her a splendid retirement. CBCllr Chapman thanked Carol for all her work and congratulated her on her achievements.

Open Forum – there were no items.

Reports from Central Bedfordshire Members

1. CBCllr Turner informed Members about the pilot scheme that took place in Shefford for Customer Services in Libraries. It had been very successful with good feedback and the initiative was due to run in Flitwick and Leighton Buzzard. Customer Services would be in Flitwick Library from 25th September on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8.30am – 5pm. Feedback from the pilot scheme had shown that there needed to be a private area for discussions and that a lot of residents preferred face to face interaction.

2. CBCllr Chapman advised there had been notices regarding a meeting at the Rufus Centre on 24th September from 4.30pm – 6.30pm about a proposed crematorium that CBC were possibly planning on the land behind Steppingley Hospital. Members were informed that problems had been raised already and urged Town Council representatives to attend and provide comments.

3. The Chairman commented that the Council had been disappointed to hear about the proposed crematorium as discussions had been held regarding the Town Council provision of a mini crematorium on the new Burial Ground site. CBCllr Chapman apologised and stated that this was unfortunately an example where Officers, Members and Portfolio Holders were not talking with one another.

4. Cllr Dann asked if the Customer Services being at Libraries had been publicised. CBCllr Turner advised that he only saw an email 2 days prior and that CBC were planning imminent promotions. Cllr Thompson commented that this should be promoted in Flitwick Papers and at the library.

5. The Town Clerk advised that the Council had only been sent information on the crematorium that week and had agreed to assist with promotions.

4641 **To note any Declarations of Interest relating to items on the agenda**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4642. **Town Mayor's Announcements**

- (i) The Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor had attended the Parish Church Lych Gate blessing.
- (ii) Cllr Williams had attended the Lord Lieutenant's Awards Ceremony and the Fire Service Awards.
- (iii) A letter had been sent to the Chairman from Cllr Blakeman requesting a sabbatical for 6-8 weeks and her reasons were read aloud to Members.

It was **Resolved** to accept Cllr Blakeman's sabbatical from the Council for 6-8 weeks.

- (iv) A letter had been received from Bedfordshire Against Covanta Incinerator (BACI) which was read aloud to Members. BACI were grateful for previous support given by the Council, e.g. advertising in Flitwick Papers, hosting meetings, displaying banners etc., and advised that the campaign would soon conclude. Permission had been given for the case to be looked at on 10-11th October at the Royal Court of Justice and BACI were seeking financial contributions towards this from local Councils. Cllr Lutley asked if contributing to this cause was within the remit of the Council and Members were informed that other Councils were donating.

It was **Resolved** for the Council to contribute £250 towards the BACI campaign.

Vote: 10 in favour, 1 against.

- (v) The Chairman asked if Members wanted to take part in the National Beacon Lighting at the Millennium Park on to mark 100 years of remembrance for WW1.

It was **Resolved** for the Council to hold a Beacon Lighting event on 11th November.

- (vi) The Chairman asked Members to put the Remembrance Service in their diaries so that adequate representatives from the Council were in attendance. Members requested for this information to be uploaded to Sharepoint.

4643 **Town Clerk's Report**

- (i) The Town Clerk advised that when the Town Council were looking into providing a mini crematorium on the new Burial Ground site, a Needs Survey had been carried out and the Council had been advised that it was not possible to have a crematorium due to the distance between Flitwick and the one already in situ at Henlow. The Council's contracted Project Manager for the provision of

the new Burial Ground would be attending the consultation event to ask relevant questions on this.

- (ii) Putnoe Walk-in Centre's contract had been extended for two years.
- (iii) Members who had not responded to the Civic Service invite were asked to do so as soon as possible.
- (iv) The Chairman formally invited Members to the Town Clerk's retirement lunch on 28th September between 12 – 2pm.

4644 **To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Flitwick Town Council (393rd) held on 29th August 2018**

- (i) Cllr Blazeby advised that he wished to raise a question under the Confidential Section and Cllr Thompson advised that the Confidential Report he had produced would be deferred to the October Town Council meeting.
- (ii) It was proposed, seconded and agreed to **Resolve** that the Extraordinary Meeting of Flitwick Town Council (393rd) held on 29th August 2018 having previously been circulated be taken as read, signed and adopted as a true record.

4645 **To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 310th meeting of the Planning Committee held on 30th August**

It was proposed, seconded and agreed to **Resolve** that the Minutes of the 310th meeting of the Planning Committee held on 30th August 2018 having previously been circulated be taken as read, signed and adopted as a true record.

4646 **To confirm and adopt the Minutes of the 86th meeting of the Business Services Committee held on 13th September 2018**

It was proposed, seconded and agreed to **Resolve** that the Minutes of the 86th meeting of the Business Services Committee held on 13th September 2018 having previously been circulated be taken as read, signed and adopted as a true record.

4647 **To fill Sub Vacancies on the Community Services Committee**

It was **Resolved** for Cllr Williams to be a Sub on the Community Services Committee.

4648 **To discuss the process for Planning decisions**

- (i) The Chairman explained that Members had previously spoken about the Planning Committee and the number of cancellations that had been made due to quorum issues. He added that it had been agreed to look into the need of having Planning as a Standing Committee in order to make consultee recommendations to CBC. Cllr Badham commented that he had originally asked for advice to be sought on this matter.
- (ii) Cllr Blazeby asked if the investigations had been carried out and the Town Clerk advised that a survey had been done and an alternative process was not found since other Councils all had Committees, Sub Committees or Panels. The Chairman asked how a Panel would affect the process and it was agreed that it would make no difference as the Planning Committee had already reduced in numbers. Cllr Sheehan advised that since the number reduction, there had not been quorum issues and that the Council can still operate using Chairman's decisions or have conversations via email if required.

It was **Resolved** to keep the Planning Committee to make decisions and review the situation in 6-12 months.

4649 **Resident Driven Projects – Costs Submitted**

- (i) Members were informed that one of the applicants for the Resident Driven Projects initiative had withdrawn from the process but may contribute towards the Fun Palace weekend.
- (ii) It was agreed for the applicants of the Manor Park projects to be invited in for a meeting to make progress and the Chairman and Cllr Roberts agreed to assist.

It was **Resolved** to support all Manor Park Resident Projects. (Vote: all in favour).

4650 **Action Log Report from the Town Mayor**

- (i) The Chairman thanked Cllr Lutley and Julie (staff) for their efforts in getting the Action Log information together. The Town Clerk advised that the Action Log was in transition to iron out problems and the final version would be available at the next meeting.
- (ii) Cllr Blazeby gave the Chairman a document containing all of the Committee meetings where the Action Log had not been put in place since August 2017.

4651 **To receive reports from representatives on Outside Bodies**

There were no reports from Outside Bodies representatives.

4652 **Questions**

- (i) Cllr Toinko asked about the extent at which the Town Council had fed into the Department for Transport funding stream. The Town Clerk explained that over the years, the Council had made it very clear that access was a necessary improvement which had been fed into CBC.
- (ii) Cllr Toinko pointed out that the deadline for submissions was early November and commented on Biggleswade's application. He added that there were four options for improving accessibility, e.g. lifts, lengthening of platform, bridge, and asked if the Town Council had considered these. CBCllr Turner advised that CBC held regular meetings and this was a recurring conversation. The local MP had raised this with the Minister and that this was not a failing of CBC but Network Rail.
- (iii) CBCllr Turner informed Members that the application for Flitwick was being submitted in the next funding period and that everybody considered access at the station to be a real problem and would be sorted as soon as possible.
- (iv) Cllr Thompson asked if this funding was a different resource to the fund that Cllr Badham had previously discussed and Cllr Badham commented that he thought it was. Cllr Toinko explained that the responsibility of making the application was on Govia but the Council needed to emphasise the importance of accessibility needed.
- (v) Cllr Toinko agreed to send the Town Clerk the information he had which would be circulated to Members and it would be an item for discussion at the next Corporate Services meeting. A copy of the information would be sent to CBCllr

Turner as he had a meeting with Govia Thameslink on 16th October. CBCllr Gomm would be contacted to see if he could attend Corporate Services.

- (vi) Cllr Badham stated that a resident had contacted him regarding a problem and this person had previously contacted two other Members but had no response. He asked if there was a central system the Council could put in place to report residents' concerns to the office to keep track. Cllr Lutley referred to a previous 'green cards' system and agreed to bring in a copy of these to look at. Cllr Thompson suggested creating a 'discussion board' type system on Sharepoint and this would be investigated for the next meeting.

(CBCllrs Chapman and Turner left the meeting).

Confidential Section

In accordance with Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act 1960) the public and press to be excluded for item 14 in view of the confidential nature of the information to be discussed relating to financial and contractual negotiations and item 15.

(Town Clerk and Assistant Town Council left the meeting at this time).

4653 **To receive an oral report from the Chairman of the Personnel Panel**

(Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk re-entered the meeting at this time).

4655 **Questions**

Members asked questions under the Confidential Section.

Meeting closed 9.14pm.

Signed
(Chairman)