



**MINUTES OF THE FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 15TH SEPTEMBER 2020
AT 7.45PM VIA VIRTUAL ACCESS**

Present:

Cllr J Dann (Chairman)
Cllr A Snape
Cllr A Lutley
Cllr M Platt
Cllr P Dodds
Cllr M A Williams
Cllr I Blazeby
Cllr K Badham
Cllr R Shaw
Cllr P Earles
Cllr D Toinko
Cllr J Roberts
Cllr G Mackey
Cllr C Thompson

Cllrs N Bunyan, C Gomm, G Mackey – Central Bedfordshire Ward Councillors

Rob McGregor – Town Clerk
Stephanie Stanley – Deputy Town Clerk
Susan Eldred – Community Services Officer
Members of the public - 2

5013. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received by the Town Mayor for Councillor Halligan but these were not accepted by Members as the correct procedure had not been followed.

(Councillor Gomm entered the meeting)

5014. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

- (a)** Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – none.
- (b)** Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – none.

5015. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor noted the resignation of Councillor Ryan Coleman and had thanked him for his contribution by email.

Members were advised that 6 staff members had delivered presentations the previous week as part of their ILM Level 3 qualification.

5016. REPORTS FROM WARD MEMBERS

- (i) Councillor Mackey had provided an email response to Councillor Toinko regarding the Emergency Travel fund. He had also asked for information regarding phasing of the station development but was yet to receive an official response from a CBC Officer.
- (ii) Councillor Gomm advised that the bungalow site in Church Road which had been an eyesore for some time had been cleared and would be redeveloped.
- (iii) The Council were advised that there had been a recent rumour that Flitwick Manor Hotel was housing immigrants on a short-term basis, which was untrue. The hotel was set to re-open in February.

5017. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No items.

5018. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

- (i) Councillor Badham referred to recent social media posts regarding the removal of NHS/Key Worker and other banners that were installed at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. He had questions and these did not relate to the decision to remove the banners, but about the reaction afterwards from a few Councillors. He summarised his reasons for asking the following questions, in the spirit of the Council doing things right and to properly protect the staff:
 - 1. Having read the Code of Conduct, does Councillor Platt feel it was appropriate to suggest that Flitwick Town Council had a lack of community spirit? Councillor Platt responded that he believed it did lack community spirit.
 - 2. In light of the Code of Conduct, can I ask Councillor Platt if he gave details of correspondence between him and a staff member to anyone else? Councillor Platt advised that he did not share this correspondence.
 - 3. Given the upset and anxiety that had already caused staff members to leave the Facebook group, could Councillor Mackey outline what steps he is taking to ensure that the reputation and integrity of staff is being protected on his Facebook group? Councillor Mackey responded that there were standards in place for the group, he mentioned that as soon as the name was seen, the post was deleted and he apologised for what happened. Subsequent discussions had been held with moderators of the page.

(Councillor Gomm entered the meeting)

- 4. Does the Council feel that it is appropriate for Councillor Bunyan to suggest a standing FTC Councillor break Planning regulations, on a public Facebook page, particularly as that Councillor is the current Deputy Chair of the Planning Committee. Councillor Bunyan believed the situation had been handled badly and understood Councillor Platt's annoyance.
- (ii) Councillor Dodds questioned if the correct procedure was being followed by concerns being aired at this meeting regarding the issue above. The Town Clerk advised that there was an option of contacting the Monitoring Officer however the Deputy Town Mayor commented that some Councillors were attempting to resolve the issue informally first. Councillor Badham had not wanted to waste staff time on approaching the Monitoring Officer.

(Councillor Thompson entered the meeting)

- (iii) Councillor Blazeby advised that the Policy agenda item dealt with this topic later.

- (iv) The Chairman asked if Planning Committee Minutes would come to Council meetings and the Town Clerk advised that they would from next month.

5019. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. For Members to receive and adopt the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held, on **Tuesday 21st July 2020**, this meeting was held via virtual access.

Members received and approved as a true record, the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 21st July 2020 via virtual access.

- b. For Members to receive and adopt the minutes of the Extra Ordinary Town Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 18th August 2020**, this meeting was held via virtual access.

Members received and approved as a true record, the Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 18th August 2020 via virtual access with the following amendments: alter final two minute numbers and insert Councillor Badham's question regarding whether or not CBC had returned the £0.8m funding to Government, which he did not receive an answer for.

- c. For Members to receive and consider **recommendations** of the Corporate Services Committee Meeting, held on **Tuesday 28th July 2020**, this meeting was held via virtual access.

Members considered and approved the recommendations of the Corporate Services Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 28th July 2020 via virtual access.

- d. For Members to receive and consider **recommendations** of the Community Services Committee Meeting, held on **Tuesday 4th August 2020**, this meeting was held via virtual access.

Members considered and approved the recommendations of the Community Services Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 4th August 2020 via virtual access.

- e. For Members to receive and consider **recommendations** of the Business Services Committee Meeting, held on **Thursday 13th August 2020**, this meeting was held via virtual access.

Members considered and approved the recommendations of the Business Services Committee Meeting held on Thursday 13th August 2020 via virtual access.

- f. For Members to receive and consider **recommendations** of the Corporate Services Committee Meeting, held on **Tuesday 25th August 2020**, this meeting was held via virtual access.

Members considered and approved the recommendations of the Corporate Services Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 25th August 2020 via virtual access.

- g. For Members to receive and consider **recommendations** of the Community Services Committee Meeting, held on **Tuesday 1st September 2020**, this meeting was held via virtual access.

Members considered and approved the recommendations of the Community Services Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 1st September 2020 via virtual access with a few minor grammatical changes and an amendment to note one abstention for item 730j (Flag Flying Policy) recommendation number 3.

- h. For Members to receive and consider **recommendations** of the Business Services Committee Meeting, held on **Thursday 10th September 2020**, this meeting was held via virtual access.

Members considered and approved the recommendations of the Business Services Committee Meeting held on Thursday 10th September 2020 via virtual access

5020. MATTERS ARISING

a. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 21st July 2020.

- (i) Councillor Badham referred to Minute Number 5000(x) and asked if Councillor Mackey had forwarded a copy of the email to the Deputy Town Clerk. The Deputy Town Clerk did not recall receiving the email but would check her inbox. Later in the meeting, Councillor Mackey advised that he had sent a copy to the Town Clerk on 17th July.

Action: Deputy Town Clerk to send a copy of this email to all Councillors

b. Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 18th August 2020.

- (i) The Chairman referred to item 5010b (iii) – MTRF – and asked for this to be chased up. It related to the site visit outside Barclays with the Highways Team. The Town Clerk advised that this related to an agenda item coming up soon. Councillor Badham asked for an update on the breakdown of costs for the project and Members were informed that this was in hand. Councillor Mackey agreed to circulate email correspondence on this.

Action: Councillor Mackey

5021. Items for Consideration

a. Committee Membership

As Councillor Coleman's resignation had created a vacancy on the Community Services Committee, there was no need to consider increasing the size of this Committee. It was agreed to elect Councillor Thompson to the Community Services Committee and Councillor Halligan to the Planning Committee.

b. Mid Beds Citizen's Advice Grant Request

It was **Resolved** for the Mid Beds Citizen's Advice Grant Request to be considered by the Community Services Committee once the late grants budget was known, and that the applicant be asked to complete the usual application form.

Action: Amenities Officer/Deputy Town Clerk

c. Publication Scheme

- (i) Councillor Blazeby referred to page 4 – for where a small number of documents only are requested – and suggested that there should be no charge if the actual costs are below £3.

It was **Resolved** to adopt the circulated Publication Scheme and Information Guide with one amendment on page 4 of the Guide to state that there would be no charge if the actual costs of printing was below £3.

d. Data & IT Related Policies

Members discussed the draft policy documents circulated and suggested some amendments.

It was **Resolved** to adopt the following Data & IT Related Policies:

- Information & Data Protection Policy (incorporating Digital ICT, Data Breach Notification, CCTV and Subject Access Policies)
- Removable Media Policy
- Internet Acceptable Usage Policy
- IT Access Policy

e. Fun Fair Request

Members discussed the request for Henry Harris' Fun Fair to be situated on the Millennium Park from 28th September – 12th October 2020. After an extended discussion, Councillors did not feel it was appropriate this year.

Councillor Blazeby requested for the fee structure for hiring the Millennium Park to be looked at by the Community Service Committee before committing to future requests.

It was **Resolved** to refuse the fun fair request due to the new Government rule of 6 with gatherings/mingling. Councillors suggested getting dates from him for next year with at least 3 months' notice of when they want to come.

Action: Amenities Officer

f. Credit Card Policy

It was **Resolved** to adopt the Credit Card Policy document circulated.

g. Standing Orders

- (i) Councillor Badham requested for gender related terms to be removed from the document other than for references to the 'Chairman' and other Councillors suggested grammatical amendments.

It was **Resolved** to adopt the Standing Orders circulated, incorporating the gender-neutral terminology and grammatical changes suggested. The Standing Orders would allow speakers at meetings to present from a seated position and the 'approved' list of activities that were acceptable for apologies reasons would be taken out.

(Vote: all in favour)

5022. Items for information

a. Precept

Members noted that Central Beds Council had sent the second and final instalment of the Town Council Precept for 2020/21.

b. Town Council Website

Members noted that the new Council website was due to be launched on 16th September. Councillors thought the site looked impressive and further amendments would be made once it was launched. Councillor Blazeby had sent the Communications & Marketing Officer details of a few required changes.

c. Councillor Surgeries

- (i) Members noted the document circulated on dates and locations for surgeries. It was agreed for finish times and additional sessions at Flitwick Market to be included. Members were asked to indicate their availability to attend sessions to the Deputy Town Clerk and these would be added to the schedule.

Action: Deputy Town Clerk

- (ii) Councillor Badham had attended the recent Comedy Night at the Rufus Centre and believed that there was room for Councillor Surgeries to be held prior to events like these.

Action: Community Services Officer

d. Action Log

Councillor Blazeby thanked the staff who had been involved in creating the Action Log and getting it to this stage. Members understood that this would be an item for future Council and Committee meetings. It was noted that one element of the Action Log needed further work.

Action: Deputy Town Clerk

5023. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

A resident asked for an explanation about the fee charge for Henry Harris' Fun Fair and he was advised that historically, £100 of his fee went to the Town Mayor's Charities with the remainder supplementing children's activities run by the Council for the town. Councillors advised that the fair organisers historically never asked for their deposit back.

5024. EXEMPT ITEMS

No items.