



**MINUTES OF THE FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 17TH NOVEMBER 2020
AT 7:45PM VIA VIRTUAL ACCESS**

Present:

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

Cllrs 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 - 5

5037. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted for the following Councillors:

Councillor Thompson – attending a charity AGM meeting for which she is a Trustee

Councillor Shaw – family member's birthday

Central Beds Ward Councillor Bunyan – attending Police & Crime Panel meeting

No apologies received from Councillor Halligan.

5038. 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.

5039. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked the Deputy Town Mayor for chairing the previous meeting.

An update was given on the Remembrance Service which had gone well, and a wreath had been laid at the War Memorial on behalf of the Council.

Councillors were thanked for their assistance with delivering leaflets promoting the Rendezvous Café takeaway service.

The Chairman thanked the Councillors who had attended the informal Council meeting.

5040. REPORTS FROM WARD MEMBERS

- (i) Councillor Gomm reported:
- Ampthill Road re-surfacing works were rescheduled to take place between 23rd – 27th November.
 - Highways had been asked to urgently respond to flooding concerns at Hornes End Road and Froghall Road – Ward Councillors had requested a statement of action.
 - Works to the bridge for the shared pedestrian/cycle route in Froghall Fields was planned to take place from 23rd November for three weeks.
 - Ward Members were chasing CBC Officers on timescales for the step free access and transport interchange projects for Flitwick Station.
 - Wreaths had been laid at the War Memorial on Armistice Day.
 - There was a Winter Grants Scheme organised by the Department for Work & Pensions which totalled £170m – it would give direct assistance to those from vulnerable households affected by the pandemic. Information was on the CBC website.
- (ii) Councillor Mackey reported:
- CBC had adopted their Vision for 2050.
 - CBC had written to the Secretary of State regarding proposed Luton Airport flight path changes – Flitwick was affected, and the consultation had been inadequate.
 - Good cross-party working was happening to tackle food poverty in the area.

5041. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

- (i) Mr Ashton advised he was interested in step free access and wanted to know if the Council were doing anything to push this issue. Councillor Mackey advised that Network Rail, the delivery authority for step free access, had advised there was no resource assigned but initial designs were overlaid with the transport scheme. Members were advised that this project was approximately 2-3 years away from delivery.
- (ii) Mr Hull had attended the meeting as a candidate for the co-option. He advised that he had lived in Flitwick for 48 years and for the last 6 months, had been attending Council/Committee meetings and showing an interest in the Council.
- (iii) Mr Motson had attended the meeting as a candidate for the co-option. He advised that he had lived in Flitwick for 5 years and wanted to give something back to the community.
- (iv) Mr Chacko had attended the meeting as a candidate for the co-option. He advised that he had also lived in Flitwick for 5 years and wanted to put his name forward.
- (v) Mr Gleave had attended the meeting as a candidate for the co-option. He had undertaken some recent work relating to walking and cycling initiative/funding for Flitwick and Ampthill. He had lived in Flitwick for 17 years and wanted to give something back. He advised Members that due to a last-minute emergency, he was unable to stay for the rest of the meeting.

Mr Gleave left the meeting at this time.

5042. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

- (i) Councillor Badham raised three questions for the Ward Members:
- 1) He gave some background on the challenges people and businesses had faced since the lockdown was imposed, especially those who had been excluded from Government support, and advised that 5 people had taken their own lives.

Councillor Badham advised that CBC were given £2,287,500 to hand out to small businesses affected by the pandemic under the Discretionary Grant Scheme. However, they followed the guidance to the letter and did not, like many other Councils, use any discretion. Many of these businesses who were given help under this scheme will have been able to take advantage of CBILS, SEISS and Furlough schemes.

Councillor Badham had posted on social media to ask residents of Flitwick to let him know if they had been affected. 13 local businesses had responded who had received virtually no support. Some of the messages were harrowing and he gave examples.

He added that the Government recently announced a new Additional Restrictions Grant fund, which was expected to be available the following week. This fund totalled £5.7m for CBC and the Government guidance was clear with 'local Councils have the freedom to determine the eligibility criteria for these grants.'

His question – "would my fellow members support my request to our three ward councillors to urge and lobby their fellow CBC councillors and colleagues to prioritise Additional Restrictions grant funding to those who have been excluded from meaningful support so far? This is an opportunity for you to save businesses, relationships, and lives."
 - (ii) Councillor Mackey advised that it was a heart-breaking position and had submitted questions to Portfolio Holders and Officers at CBC. He would do everything that he could and would gladly take up cases.
 - (iii) Councillor Gomm echoed Councillor Mackey's comments and advised that Ward Councillors were taking every opportunity to do this as it was horrifying.
 - (iv) Councillor Badham agreed to send questions to Ward Councillors.
- 2) Councillor Badham referred to the fact that CBC had changed their Terms & Conditions of Webcasting and had denied permission to download or share footage. He mentioned that the Coronavirus Act 2020 also explains that by attending a webcast of a meeting, that those present online, are in effect, physically there. He had written to CBC about this but was yet to receive a reply.
 - (v) Councillor Mackey advised that Ward Councillors were surprised about this decision. He could not offer formal reassurance from CBC and stated that it may be because they were intimidated by recent legal action. Councillor Gomm advised that he agreed and did not understand the reasons behind the decision.
 - 3) Councillor Badham referred to CBC's unanimous decision to support a proposal to prioritise responding to climate change and to begin producing a deliverable plan ready to roll out in 2020. He asked how that was going and if CBC Members could provide monthly updates as part of their reports.
 - (vi) Councillor Mackey responded that CBC were not working fast enough but that work was being undertaken in the background. Ambitions had been created rather than actions and he was disappointed at the level of consultation with Town and Parish Councils. He agreed to enquire about this.

- (vii) Councillor Gomm advised that Councillor Dixon was leading on this and that information was not always shared.

5043. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. For Members to receive and adopt the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held, on **Tuesday 20th October 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 20th October 2020 via virtual access. Councillor Badham advised that reasons for apologies needed to be recorded.

- b. For Members to receive and consider **recommendations** of the Corporate Services Committee Meeting, held on **Tuesday 27th October 2020**, this meeting was held via virtual access.

Members received and approved the recommendations of the Corporate Services Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 27th October 2020 via virtual access.

- c. For Members to receive and consider **recommendations** of the Planning Committee Meeting, held on **Tuesday 29th October 2020**, this meeting was held via virtual access.

Members received and approved the recommendations of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 29th October 2020 via virtual access.

Councillor Mackey advised that the crematorium application was due at the Development Management Committee (DMC) on 26th November however it had been withdrawn again. Reasons for this were unclear but CBC Ward Councillors believed this was due to some conflicting legal advice.

Councillor Dodds advised that he had spoken to a Steppingley Parish Councillor at a recent Highways meeting regarding the CBC crematorium application.

Councillor Mackey suggested a co-ordinated response with Steppingley PC and to liaise with Ward Members who did not have a time limit for speaking at DMC.

- d. For Members to receive and consider **recommendations** of the Community Services Committee Meeting, held on **Tuesday 3rd November 2020**, this meeting was held via virtual access.

Members received and approved the recommendations of the Community Services Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 3rd November 2020 held via virtual access.

- e. For Members to receive and consider **recommendations** of the Business Services Committee Meeting, held on **Tuesday 12th November 2020**, this meeting was held via virtual access.

Members received and approved the recommendations of the Business Services Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 12th November 2020 via virtual access.

- f. For Members to receive and consider **recommendations** of the Personnel Committee Meeting, held on **Monday 16th November 2020**, this meeting was held via virtual access **(Chairman will move this item to be considered under Exempt)**.

Members received and approved the recommendations of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on Monday 16th November 2020 held via virtual access.

5044. MATTERS ARISING

a. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 20th October 2020.

Councillor Gomm left the meeting at this time.

- (i) The Chairman asked for an update on the Town Ranger Scheme but there was no further information. Councillor Mackey agreed to pick this up.

Action: Councillor Mackey

- (ii) Councillor Badham referred to minute 5028i and asked if there was an update on reasons for why Tesco were challenging the planning decision regarding Aldi supermarket. The Planning Chairman and Councillor Mackey had no information on this, but members were informed that the case was still being evaluated.

- (iii) Councillor Badham asked for an update on SEND (minute 5028 xi) and was advised this was still ongoing. Councillor Mackey advised it was difficult to resolve because CBC were struggling to admit the problem however the new CEO had given assurances this would be actioned as soon as possible.

- (iv) Councillor Badham asked for an update on the planters for outside Barclays Bank. The Town Clerk advised that they were ordered and would probably arrive in approximately three weeks.

- (v) Councillor Badham referred to minute 5030i and stated he had not received information regarding CBC's Development Company. Councillor Mackey agreed to forward this.

Action: Councillor Mackey

- (vi) Councillor Badham asked if a breakdown of costs had been received for the works outside Barclays. Councillor Mackey advised that he was chasing this information via the new CEO.

- (vii) Councillor Badham referred to minute 5028xvi regarding The Grove Theatre and the email Councillor Mackey had said he would circulate. Councillor Mackey advised that he would look out the clause, he believed it may be a comment rather than an email.

Action: Councillor Mackey

- (viii) Councillor Roberts advised that he had a meeting on 24th November for the Patient Group at Flitwick Surgery. He asked for Members to pass on any questions in readiness for this.

- (ix) Councillor Dodds referred to minute 5028xiv and stated that the land between Keech Hospice charity shop and the first house in Steppingley Road needed tidying. Councillor Mackey advised that Ward Members were constantly asking for this to be done and was a matter of immense frustration.

5045. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Councillor Co-option

- (i) The Chairman explained the process undertaken including the interview panel for all candidates being made up of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor Lutley. He reminded the candidates that if they were unsuccessful, there was an opportunity to stand for election next year. He advised that the panel recommended James Gleave for co-option and referred to the scoring that had been circulated previously.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed to **resolve** to co-opt James Gleave to Flitwick Town Council for the East Ward.

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office would be undertaken another time as James Gleave had left the meeting.

Mr Hull left the meeting.

- (ii) An extended discussion took place regarding the co-option process with some Councillors stating that the previous process was more inclusive, whilst others responded that they did not agree and stated reasons. Councillor Blazeby advised that all Councillors could propose candidates and take part in voting under the new procedure. Councillor Dodds suggested that the paper circulated did not show how the information was scored.

b. External Audit for the year ended 31 March 2020

Members were advised that the Year End paperwork for the External Audit was re-submitted to restate figures that were previously incorrect.

It was **resolved** to accept the Annual Return, external auditor's certificate and report for the year ended 31 March 2020.

c. Play area repair costs

Members were advised that this item was on the agenda due to urgency. Members were advised that it had been difficult to get the quote circulated and that the expenditure would be taken from the Rolling Capital Fund. Station Road play area would remain closed due to Health & Safety reasons.

It was **resolved** for an additional quote to be sought if possible and within a suitable amount of time. The Town Clerk was given delegated authority to decide which company to progress the play area repairs with to be funded by the Rolling Capital Fund.

Action: Amenities Officer/Town Clerk

d. Calendar of Meeting Dates 2021

Councillor Williams advised that she had spoken to the Deputy Mayor and Deputy Town Clerk about her inability to attend Business Services meetings on a Tuesday evening and therefore would not support the list of dates circulated. There were issues with holding two virtual meetings on the same evening.

A vote took place to progress with the January 2021 dates circulated but this was not carried.

The dates would be looked at further.

Action: Deputy Town Clerk/Town Clerk

e. Grounds Team Lease Vehicles

Councillors discussed the quotations at length and agreed that another company should be asked to quote – suggestions were made to ask Drive Style and see if an electronic vehicle would be possible. Quotes would be considered at an Extraordinary Council meeting that was needed in December.

Action: Amenities Officer

f. **Manor Park**

It was **resolved** to allow the Greensand Country Landscape Partnership to undertake a PA2 Survey of Manor Park, which was required in the process of creating a Parkland Management Plan. The Council agreed to contribute £1,000 towards this process.

Action: Amenities Officer

5046. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Notice of Temporary Footpath Closure**

Member noted the temporary closure of footpath 15 to enable a new bridge to be installed where the footpath crosses the ditch. The closure was expected to take place from Monday 23rd November for up to 3 weeks.

b. **Planning Committee Decisions**

The decisions were noted.

5047. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

Mr Ashton thanked the Council for accommodating him in the meeting and stated he would like to be invited to others in the future. He added that he was co-opted twice previously using the old system.

Mr Ashton and the Deputy Town Clerk left the meeting.

5048. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

The following resolution was **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

a) **Recommendations of the Personnel Committee**

Members received and approved recommendations of the Personnel Committee Meeting, held on Monday 16th November 2020, held via virtual access.

The Deputy Town Clerk re-entered the meeting.

b) **Asset Review**

Members discussed the eight proposals recommended by Councillors at the informal Council meeting on 10th November. The Council voted on 8 matters separately.

Another informal Council meeting would be arranged for December to progress further with the Asset Review.

c) **Trophies & Shields**

It was **resolved** to contact any recipients identified to see if they wished to collect the trophy/shield and to dispose of or recycle any that were not required.

Meeting closed at 9:41pm.