



**MINUTES OF FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 19th JANUARY 2021
AT 7.30PM VIA VIRTUAL ACCESS**

Present:

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

Cllrs G Mackey, C Gomm & N Bunyan – Central Beds Ward Members

Also present:

Rob McGregor – Town Clerk
Stephanie Stanley – Deputy Town Clerk
Jon Barkat – Business & Facilities Manager
Stacie Lockey – Environmental Services Manager
Members of the public - 1

5060. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received however Councillors were advised that the Deputy Town Clerk had received an email from Councillor Williams who was having problems registering for the meeting via Zoom. This matter would be dealt with later.

No apologies were received from Councillor Halligan.

5061. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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

5062. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor apologised for not noticing when Councillors were wishing to speak at the last meeting. He asked for Councillors to use the 'hand up' icon going forward and for assistance from Officers to advise him if Councillors were indicating to speak.

It was disappointing that CBC Highways Officers had not turned up to the recent meeting.

He asked that family members of Councillors wishing to attend meetings needed to register separately and advised that it was not otherwise appropriate for other people to be present while members were participating in virtual council meetings.

5063. REPORTS FROM WARD MEMBERS

Councillor Mackey asked for a schedule for the Highways meetings. The Environmental Services Manager advised that they were usually held bi-monthly but the setting a date for the next meeting had been put on hold until CBC Officers had confirmed their availability. Councillor Gomm commented that the Ward Members were able to assist FTC in asking CBC Officers for their attendance and advised that he was aware that the Highways Officer had simply forgotten the date of the meeting, but was also due to change jobs.

Councillor Gomm advised that he had spoken to a Planner regarding the Crematorium application. Unfortunately, a report had not been ready for the Development Management Committee (DMC) in December however there was a need to seek legal advice for developing in greenbelt land. FTC would be consulted on the application and Ward Members would circulate the documents in due course.

Regarding Aldi Supermarket – Councillor Gomm reported that it had been determined that there were arguably legal grounds for Tesco to file for a Judicial Review, the application was being reconsidered and will go back to the DMC. The Planning process was required again, and it was a known delaying tactic.

Councillor Bunyan asked for an update on the Town Ranger Scheme. FTC were waiting for more details however CBC had been told by their Officers that they were waiting for information from FTC. Councillor Bunyan would be sent a copy of the correspondence received so far.

Action: Town Clerk

Councillor Mackey gave details on the CBC budget consultation that was now open and encouraged Councillors to make comments.

There was a new planning application for the Station Interchange project which was out for consultation for three months. There were changes to access/egress to the site and the orientation of bus stops. Comments so far related to the loss of 69 car parking spaces which was due to be discussed with Govia in advance of presenting to CBC on 28th January.

The new Leader of CBC was Richard Wenham.

Councillor Badham wished to congratulate CBC on the tree planting at Flitwick Woods. Ward Members advised that there was a £1.6m fund allocated for tree planting/hedging and that FTC could apply to this for other areas of town. The Town Clerk advised that the Grounds Team were already conducting a survey for this purpose.

5064. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

It was **resolved** under Standing order 26(a) to suspend Standing Order 3f for a period of 3 minutes for members of the public questions relating to an item not on the Agenda in order to hear a representation from a resident regarding an urgent matter.

A resident addressed the Council presenting on the struggles she and others in the Health and Beauty industry were facing in the pandemic. She referred to the CBC ARG Policy where businesses in the industry had no support in Central Beds, which was not the case under other local authorities. The resident explained that business owners in this sector

cannot work virtually or sell services online – other Councils had used their discretion to help but questioned why CBC had not done this. She wanted her voice to be heard and had met with MPs. She had emailed the Ward Members as she wanted grants to be made available.

Councillor Mackey advised that the Ward Members had given a collaborative reply to the resident based on the information provided by the Corporate Resource Team at CBC. He commented that he was frustrated with the discretionary element and believed the answer given was unsatisfactory. Councillor Mackey advised that a further grant was coming, and Ward Members were asking for this to be wider ranging as to the businesses it could support. There was work being done behind the scenes and plenty of engagement with Officers/Leaders. More answers were not available at this time however he advised the resident that Ward Members were fighting her corner.

Councillor Badham asked for the choice of words regarding prioritisation to be looked at for the additional restrictions grant.

5065. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Councillor Dodds updated the Council on an ongoing issue that residents of Buttermere Close, Kendal Drive and Steppingley Road were facing with Tesco continuing to undertake noisy work at night. This work was being carried out in the daytime as well. He requested to know what the exceptional circumstances were for the most recent work and what steps were done to notify residents. Councillor Mackey had raised the concern with the Team Manager and would chase this up the following day.

Action: Councillor Mackey

Councillor Gomm had been in touch with Environmental Health and was waiting for a reply. He hoped that when works were undertaken for the Interchange Scheme – a better level of communication was necessary. Councillor Dodds commented that this should be a minimum level of work in the evenings.

Councillor Badham referred to the 4.95 % rise in Council Tax and asked if a similar percentage would be used as a reduction to the Councillor Allowances. Councillor Mackey believed the rise to be excessive and would be voting against this. He believed CBC were spending irresponsibly (e.g., for the crematorium) but some increases were necessary. He commented that the reduction for allowances was unlikely. Councillor Bunyan commented that Covid-19 would be responsible for increases in the coming years.

Councillor Badham referred to his question from the November meeting regarding the assisted restrictions grant and the concerning suicide rates for those from the excluded groups. He was delighted that Ward Members agreed to lobby on this and asked what form this would take. Councillor Badham also requested to know how much of the £5.77m had been distributed in the first tranche and when the next tranche was available. Councillor Mackey gave assurances that the issue was taken seriously but that lobbying was not always done at Council meetings and Councillor Bunyan commented that policy was discussed at meetings. It was discussed with Mr Muskett at CBC but the reply received was confidential at this time. The Ward Members also discussed it with CBC Officers. Councillor Mackey would get the figures and ask the Town Clerk to circulate them.

Action: Councillor Mackey

It was **resolved** for Councillor Badham to work with the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk to draft a letter from the Town Council regarding the additional restrictions grant

based on discussions above with the view of approving its contents with the rest of the Council via email. A copy of the final version of the letter would be sent to Ward Members.

Action: Councillor Badham, Town Clerk & Deputy Town Clerk

Councillor Shaw asked who was responsible for emptying the bins in the play area on the Froghall Fields estate. The Council were advised that CBC had not yet formally adopted the play area and the responsibility remained with the developers. Councillor Mackey agreed to find out when CBC were likely to adopt the play area.

Action: Councillor Mackey

5066. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. For Members to receive and adopt the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held, on **Tuesday 22nd December 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 22nd December 2020 via virtual access.

- b. For Members to receive and consider **recommendations** of the Corporate Services Committee Meeting, held on **Tuesday 24th November 2020**, this meeting was held via virtual access.

Members received and approved the recommendations of the Corporate Services Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 24th November 2020 via virtual access.

- c. For Members to receive and consider **resolutions and recommendations** of the Community Services Committee Meeting, held on **Tuesday 5th January 2021**, this meeting was held via virtual access.

Members received and noted the resolutions of the Community Services Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 5th January 2021 via virtual access.

- d. For Members to receive and consider **resolutions and recommendations** of the Planning Committee Meeting, held on **Thursday 7th January 2021**, this meeting was held via virtual access.

Members were asked to note the circulated Terms of Reference for the Planning Committee which was adopted as part of the Scheme of Delegations documentation at the Council Meeting on 22nd December. No Members commented on the document.

Members received and noted the resolutions of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Thursday 7th January 2021 via virtual access.

- e. For Members to receive and consider **resolutions and recommendations** of the Business Services Committee Meeting, held on **Thursday 14th January 2021**, this meeting was held via virtual access.

Members received and approved the one recommendation and noted the one resolution of the Business Services Committee Meeting held on Thursday 14th January 2021 via virtual access.

5067. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 22nd December 2020.

Councillor Dann asked about the Standing Orders for Contracts and Councillors were advised that this had been intended for discussion at Business Services on 14th January but it was delayed to the February meeting in order for the Town Clerk to discuss the document with Councillor Thompson. Councillor Dodds asked for an update on the approved contractors list and was advised there was no further update at this time.

Councillor Platt apologised for not sending apologies in for the meeting on 22nd December and explained he had been dealing with a close family member bereavement.

Councillor Badham referred to the November meeting and asked if there was an update on the CBC terms and conditions for webcasting. He was informed that this was ongoing due to copyright and the options of only being able to share the full meeting or nothing. Councillor Badham commented that he felt it was more about interpretation than copyright.

Councillor Badham also referred to the November meeting with regards to the climate emergency declared in 2019 where CBC said they would be releasing a policy in 2020 and Ward Members agreed to give monthly updates. Councillor Mackey advised that the planned meeting with Steve Dixon had not taken place but feelings were made clear. There was no update at this time.

- b. Members to receive any updates from Officers – no updates.

5068. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Grounds Team Lease Vehicles

Members discussed the information provided in the report. Councillor Dodds asked a question about the purchase price.

It was **resolved** to extend the current leases on the Grounds Team vehicles for a period of two years.

b. Proposed Budget 2021-22

This proposed budget was welcomed by all Councillors.

Councillor Blazeby believed it would be sensible to have a statement prepared to explain why the Council had agreed the budget. The Mayor would work with the Communications & Marketing Manager on PR regarding this, in particular the Precept Report. Councillor Mackey added that it would be worth publishing it prior to the consultation period ending for CBC's budget.

Members **resolved** to approve the proposed 21/22 budget and note the proposed increase to the precept is 0%.

c. Health & Safety

Councillor Dodds, as the current Member on the Health & Safety Panel, commented that it was beneficial to have an external pair of eyes looking at matters in addition to managers and thought the Panel should remain.

The Business & Facilities Manager explained the advice he had received and advised that he was the competent Officer with regards to health and safety. Managers would be responsible for managing the health and safety within their areas, but that Councillors would be updated on any relevant matters at Committee meetings when required.

It was **resolved** to disband the Health & Safety Panel for reasons explained in the report circulated.

5069. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Planning Decisions

Planning decisions from the 7th January 2021 were noted. It was agreed for future Planning Decisions paperwork to be included under the Minutes & Recommendations item on the agenda for future meetings.

Action: Deputy Town Clerk

b. Councillor Surgeries/Public Enquiries Feedback

Members noted the form circulated.

The Chairman advised that he would be hosting the next Surgery on Zoom with Councillor Thompson.

The Chairman referred to the comment regarding the pavement on Dunstable Road between The Glebe and The Old School. He thought this had been resolved. Councillor Mackey had been in touch with Highways and they had advised it was on their schedule of works.

Councillor Dann agreed to report the pothole mentioned to highways.

Action: Town Mayor

c. Wayleave Agreement – Mast at Station Road

Councillor Lutley referred to the map circulated and questioned if the plans showed a portacabin on the roadway in the allotments. The Town Clerk agreed to investigate this.

Action: Town Clerk

Councillor Lutley asked whether the financial terms were included in the document. Members were informed that this was part of the agreement already agreed at a previous meeting regarding the lease for the mast. Members noted the information circulated regarding the Wayleave Agreement for the Mast at Station Road.

5070. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No items.

5071. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

(12a) Asset Review

Members discussed the updates presented in the reports regarding the Asset Review.

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolve** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.