



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SERVICES MEETING**  
**HELD ON THE 14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021**  
**AT 7.30pm AT THE RUFUS CENTRE**

Present:

Cllr A Snape - Chairman  
Cllr I Blazeby  
Cllr A Lutley  
Cllr J Gleave  
Cllr K Badham  
Cllr P Earles

Rob McGregor – Town Clerk and Chief Executive  
Stephanie Stanley – Corporate Services Manager  
Tracy Lester – Catering and Facilities Officer  
Helen Glover – Senior Finance Officer  
Sarah Burgess – Events and Functions Coordinator

Member of the public – 0

**1299. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and accepted for Councillors Mackey and Williams (both had other commitments).

**1300. 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.

**1301. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman informed the Committee there would be an informal discussion about tenant rents at the end of the meeting in readiness for the Town Council agenda.

**1302. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

There were no members of the public present.

**1304. INVITED SPEAKER**

There was no invited speaker.

**1305. MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

Cllr Earles asked whether the Business Services Meeting on a Tuesday was an ongoing issue for Cllr Williams. A discussion was had around this and it was noted that the decision was made at Full Council for the meeting to be on a Tuesday; which Cllr Williams was party to but had objected.

It was decided that Cllr Snape would approach Cllr Williams to see if she has a preferred day for the Business Services meeting to enable her to attend for the next calendar year.

**1306. MINUTES**

- a. For Members to receive and adopt the Minutes of the Business Services Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021

The Minutes of the Business Services Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021 were adopted.

**1307. MATTERS ARISING**

- a. Minutes of the Business Services Committee 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

There were none.

**1308. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- a. **Earnie Plus**

Members were asked to consider purchasing Earnie Plus for an approximate annual fee of £480 including VAT to enable the circulation of electronic payslips to staff as part of the payroll process. The cost can only be approximate as it is based on £1.33+VAT per employee, per month on a direct debit basis.

Members were made aware that Earnie will be bringing this in as a requirement in the New Year to enable the system to comply with making tax digital.

It was **resolved** to purchase Earnie Plus at an approximate annual fee of £480 including VAT.

**1309. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

Items for information will be discussed under Exempt.

**1310. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, in respect of any other business of the Town Council.

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **(one) three-minute slot**.

There were no public.

### 1311. **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.

8b Officers updates – noted.

12a Financial Reports – noted.

12b Occupancy Stats & Forecasts – noted.

12c Solar Panels Report – noted.

12d Rufus Centre Steering Group

It was **resolved** that the Terms of Reference be accepted.

It was **resolved** for Councillors Blazeby, Gleave, Mackey and Snape to be appointed to the Steering Group with any member of Business Services joining where appropriate. The Steering Group will be led by the Town Clerk with the Corporate Services Manager and the Catering and Facilities Officer attending with input from other Officers.

12e Offices Refurbishment

It was **recommended** for the Town Clerk to have delegated authority to spend up to £16000.00 to chose a contractor for the refurbishment works once a further two quotes were attempted to be sourced.

12f Cleaning Contract

It was **resolved** that the preferred quotation was from Wixsteed Cleaning however Members requested for the cleaners to be paid at least the National Living Wage of £9.50 per hour. A copy of the revised quotation with the National Living Wage would be re-circulated to the Committee for the next meeting.

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.

Meeting closed: 21.04



## Flitwick Town Council

### Report to Business Services Committee 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021: Kitchen Hire

#### Implications of recommendations

**Corporate Strategy:** Offer an excellent standard of hospitality, with a varied and value menu that offers healthy and sustainable options

**Finance:** Increase in revenue.

**Environment:** Takes forward policy objectives directly.

#### Background

The Rufus Centre has continued to offer the service to hire the kitchen to external caterers for the purpose of customers being able to self-cater their functions. The Rufus Centre, in particular the Rendezvous Café, means that the business dynamics have now changed.

#### Introduction

The Rufus Centre prides itself on being a flexible venue for functions and events allowing clients essentially to tailor make their packages. At present, clients have the option to hire the kitchen at a cost of £265.00 to bring in external caterers of their choosing. All Health and Safety/liability certificates are sought and a damages deposit taken. This level of flexibility is sometimes detrimental to income.

Now we have the Rendezvous Café and Bar with in-house catering team, Officers feel that the kitchen should no longer be a hire option for Functions and that the catering for Functions is provided by the Rufus Centre. The kitchen is currently offered for hire when the Café is closed however this still has implications; such as, Health & Safety, staff time to deep clean the kitchen after an external use & loss of income from in-house catering.

The common use for the hire of the kitchen is for functions that our in-house team cannot cater for, like a traditional Asian meal.

We also have clients that would like to provide their guests with a menu we do not offer, such as a Hog Roast or Traditional Fish & Chip Van. These catering options do not utilise the kitchen and a charge of £200.00 is paid by the client to allow them to provide this. This option requires minimal work from Officers. All suppliers, as mentioned above, must supply compliance certificates.

Currently if clients want to bring in their own bar or drinks, there is a charge of £250 to enable them to do this. Now we have a fully functional stocked and manned bar that we know generates a high-income Officers feel that the option for clients to provide their own bar is unfavourable to the business.

Most clients looking to provide their own bar are those who's cultural, customs and traditions support everything for the guest to be free (they will provide soft drinks; sometimes alcoholic too, on the tables) and not run a bar.

The other most common client's enquiry for supplying their own bar is charity and fundraising events.

### **Options**

**Option 1:** Continue with the kitchen being offered for private hire to external caterers at a cost of £265.00 and to bring in their own bar/drinks at a cost of £250.00 i.e. continue current offer.

**Option 2:** Continue with the kitchen being offered for private hire to external caterers and their own bar (drinks) at an increased cost agreed by Members.

**Option 3:** Discontinue the service to hire out the kitchen to external caterers and provide all the catering in house. Discontinue the bar hire/supplying own drinks and provide all drinks in-house.

**Option 4:** Discontinue the service to hire out the kitchen to external caterers and provide all the catering in house. For Officers to have flexibility to look at individual enquiries where a catering van may be more suitable and what the client wants. It may be that they use the in-house catering for another meal, such as the evening buffet or canapes, in addition to the catering van. Discontinue allowing clients to bring in their own drinks/bar and provide all drinks in-house.

### **Additional Matters**

Members will need to appreciate that the existing offer will be honoured for customers already booked for future functions. I anticipate this will be for 4 functions between now and October 2022 – see below.

The following bookings are confirmed for external caterers to use the kitchen or for clients supplying their own catering:

29/12/21 – Pre-wedding Party  
02/06/22 – Pre-wedding Party  
02.07.22 - Wedding Reception  
08.10.22 – Wedding Reception

### **Recommendations**

The Functions & Events Coordinator recommendation would be Option 4 (shown above).

Sarah Dempsey  
Functions & Events Coordinator