



**MINUTES OF FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 19th OCTOBER 2021
AT 7:30PM AT THE RUFUS CENTRE & VIA VIRTUAL ACCESS**

Present

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

Cllr I Blazeby (via virtual access)

Cllr C Gomm – Central Beds Ward Member

Also present:

Rob McGregor – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Susan Eldred – Community Services Manager
Stacie Lockey – Environmental Services Manager (via virtual access)

5155. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Gleave (unwell) and Cllr Chacko (work commitments).

5156. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

- (a)** Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – Cllrs Lutley, Toinko, Badham, Earles and Platt declared pecuniary interests in item 10d – Allotment/Burial/Football Pitch Fees.
- (b)** Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – None.

5157. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor had attended the following Civic events:

- Family Fun Day, special thanks to Cllrs Shaw, Mackey & Gleave for taking part in the stocks.
- Annual PCC Parish Council Conference
- Community Action Day
- Houghton Regis Civic Reception
- Ampthill Town Council Civic Service
- Flitwick Civic Reception – 100 guests attended the event, and it was a great success.

The Deputy Town Mayor had attended the following events:

- Family Fun Day
- Priorities meeting to recruit a Vicar
- Big Beds Clean Litter Pick
- Lord Lieutenant Thanksgiving Service
- Olive Restaurant Opening
- PCC Meeting
- Community Action Day
- Civic Reception
- Houghton Regis Fundraiser at the Circus

The Town Mayor advised that the prize draw had raised a total of £1318.00 for charity and thanked the staff team for supporting this cause.

The Environmental Services Officer had agreed to take some portrait shots of members to update the website. This would be scheduled for the evening of the November Council meeting.

An email had been circulated to Members from the Community Services Officer asking if anybody wished to take part in the parade for Remembrance Sunday.

5158. REPORTS FROM WARD MEMBERS

Cllr Mackey gave an update on the Station Interchange project with various start dates of works. The PCR testing site at the old Leisure Centre site would be closing soon to allow preparations of the new care development to begin.

Cllr Gomm advised that the Station Interchange project was progressing as it should be with November being the key date for works to start. The tenders were currently being assessed for the older peoples care development on the former Leisure Centre site with an anticipated start date for late 2021/early 2022.

Cllr Dodds raised a question about the pedestrian access at the pelican crossing near to the Station once works started on the Station Interchange. Cllr Gomm agreed to take this up with the contractors mid-November once works had started.

Cllr Snape commented that the gate to the Station had been replaced and looked unsightly. Cllr Gomm agreed with this and advised that there were no immediate plans to re-open the gate for public access. Cllr Snape suggested the Town Clerk write to Govia again to address this matter.

Action: Town Clerk

Cllr Toinko asked if an alternative PCR testing station would be set up within Flitwick due to the rising cases of COVID. Cllr Mackey advised that Chicksands would be the nearest site.

Cllr Snape raised concerns about the impact of traffic on Steppingley Road once works on Steppingley Road commenced. Cllr Gomm agreed to raise this with the contractors and would discuss what measures could be put in place to avoid traffic congestion. Cllr Mackey advised that a meeting with all stakeholders would be set up, and Officers would be invited to attend.

Cllr Snape advised of several lamp columns not working, which could affect the Christmas lights display. Cllr Snape had already raised this problem with Cllr Mackey prior to the meeting who had raised this issue with the Highways department.

Cllr Badham asked if there had been an update on the Step Free Access scheme. Cllr Gomm had no update.

Cllr Snape suggested inviting the project manager of the Station Interchange Scheme to the next Town Council meeting as members had lots of questions surrounding the development.

Action: Town Clerk

5159. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no members of public present.

5160. INVITED SPEAKER

There was no invited speaker.

5161. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr Dann advised that signage for the vaccination hub was still up on Steppingley Road and Froghall Road. Cllr Mackey would arrange for this to be taken down.

Cllr Blazeby was disappointed to see that the Environmental Policy had not been included on the agenda. The Town Clerk advised that the document still needed to be developed and would be circulated to all committees before being presented to Town Council for adoption in January.

Action: SMT

Cllr Snape asked for an update on the Country Park. The Town Clerk advised that this had been discussed at the SMT meeting and something would appear on the next Community Services agenda.

Action: Town Clerk

Cllr Badham asked Cllr Mackey if he had heard back from CBC regarding the kebab van and he was advised there had been no further communication on the matter.

Cllr Gomm commented that the ongoing issues with the food van outside of Barclays bank were still causing a problem. Cllr Dann advised that at the Community Action Day it was understood that the licensing department was investigating this matter. Cllr Dodds advised that a licencing application had been considered at a recent Planning committee whereby several concerns were raised. Cllr Snape suggested the Town Clerk writing to the CBC licensing department addressing the matter.

Action: Town Clerk

5162. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. For Members to receive and adopt the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 21st September 2021**, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre and via virtual access.

Members received and approved as a true record the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 21st September 2021 with one amendment: correct minutes numbers in the exempt section.

- b. For Members to receive and consider **resolutions and recommendations** of the Personnel Committee Meeting, held on **Thursday 23rd September 2021**, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre and via virtual access.

This item was moved to EXEMPT.

- c. For Members to receive and consider resolutions and recommendations of the Corporate Services Committee Meeting, held on **Tuesday 28th September 2021**, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre and via virtual access.

Members noted the resolutions and recommendations of the Corporate Services Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 28th September 2021.

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

Members noted the resolutions and recommendations of the Community Services Committee Meeting, held on Tuesday 5th October 2021.

- e. For Members to receive and consider **resolutions and recommendations** of the Planning Services Committee Meeting, held on **Thursday 7th August 2021**, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre and via virtual access.

There were no resolutions or recommendations.

- f. For Members to receive and consider **resolutions and recommendations** of the Business Services Committee meeting, held on **Thursday 14th October 2021**, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre and via virtual access.

Members noted the resolutions of the Business Services Committee meeting held on Thursday 14th October 2021.

- g. Members are asked to note the Planning committee decisions from **7th October 2021**.

Members noted the planning committee decisions from 7th October 2021.

5163. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 21st September 2021.

Cllr Badham referred to item 5152 c and asked if there was an update on the joint committee. The Town Clerk had no update.

Cllr Badham referred to item 5156 and asked if there was an update on this matter. The Town Clerk had no update.

5164. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- a i. **Community Christmas Tree**

Members considered the report previously circulated. Cllr Thompson queried if the groundworks would be a one-off cost as it had not been stated within the report. Cllr Dodds had concerns around the repair to the surfacing once works had taken place and if the surface would be reinstated with yellow stones. The Town Clerk advised that a manhole cover would be fitted flush to the ground.

Cllr Mackey had concerns around vandalism and if we had anything in place to prevent this from happening. The Town Clerk advised that the picket fencing would be difficult to move due to the way it would be built however vandalism cannot be foreseen.

Cllr Dann asked if planning considerations had been considered.

Cllr Dodds asked for clarification of the procurement process to ensure the requirements were being met. Cllr Snape suggested the procurement process be added to the next Business Services agenda.

Action: Corporate Services Manager

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the purchase of a Christmas tree and associated works at a cost of £5,925.32 to be funded by the rolling capital fund. The tree would be situated on the area in front of Barclays bank.

a ii. Christmas Lights Event

Members considered the report previously circulated by the Community Services Manager. Cllr Dodds felt that the event was pre-determined due to the information that had been included within the report in terms of costs etc. Cllr Badham disagreed with this and felt it was appropriate for Officers to produce facts when putting a proposal forward.

Members raised concerns around the short timescale to deliver an event of this size and suggested putting on a low-key event instead such as carols around the tree.

Cllr Blazeby felt strongly against a road closure on Station Road due to other projects in the area causing traffic congestion. The Community Services Manager advised that whether it was a large event or carols around the tree, a road closure would be required for safety reasons.

A proposal was made to not run an event for the lights switch on – this was not carried.

Members commented that COVID rates were rising, and this should be considered when making a decision.

It was **RESOLVED** to hold a Christmas lights switch-on event on Sunday 28th November consisting of a road closure, carol service, limited market stalls and food vendors, allowing up to £1,100.00 for a PA system and Ampthill Town Band funded from the rolling capital fund. Discretion to be given to the Town Clerk under the scheme of delegations to review the scope and suitability of holding the event if COVID rates continue to increase and in accordance with any risk assessments.

b. Rolling Capital Fund (RCF) Applications

Members noted the report.

c. Calendar of Meetings 2021-2022

Cllr Blazeby queried if there was a need for committees to meet every month. Cllr Mackey advised that previous arrangements included meeting less frequently, but due to the needs of the business these were increased.

Members had a lengthy discussion surrounding the days of meetings, and members gave their opinions. It was agreed for the Town Clerk to review the dates and take it back to Town Council in November.

Action: Corporate Services Manager/Town Clerk

d. Allotment/Burial Ground/Football Pitch Fees

Members considered the report previously circulated. Cllr Dodds asked why fees for the allotment rents had to be issued a year in advance. The Town Clerk advised that this was a requirement within the Allotment Act.

Members discussed the rules around the Reigate agreement that the Town Council had worked to in the past when considering fees. The Town Clerk agreed to investigate this further.

Action: Town Clerk

Members considered deferring the item, but due to timescales with the allotment AGM, this was not possible.

It was **RESOLVED** to apply no increase to the Allotment, burial and football pitch fees for 2022/23.

It was **RESOLVED** to increase allotment rents by 5% for 2023/24. Officers to investigate the Reigate agreement before a decision was made on costs for burial and football pitch fees for 2023/24.

e. Notice of Residential Parking Zone

Members noted the public notice to introduce 'parking for resident permit holders in Windermere Close, Flitwick'. Comments could be made to the CBC highways department.

5165. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

There were no items for information.

5166. Public Open Session

There were no members of the public present.

5167. 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) MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

For Members to receive and consider **resolutions and recommendations** of the Personnel Committee Meeting, held on **Thursday 23rd September 2021**, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre and via virtual access.

Members noted the resolutions of the Personnel Committee Meeting, held on Thursday 23rd September 2021, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre and via virtual access.

13a) Community Safety Plan

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Community Safety Plan with a minor amendment to the opening paragraph.

13b) Barclays Bank Building Update

13b) Barclays Bank Building Update

Members were previously circulated a copy of the searches from the solicitors. Members discussed the risk that had been identified within the searches but felt they posed no risk to the purchase of the building.

It was **RESOLVED** to draft a letter of instruction to Barclays Bank to progress with a mutual exchange where the Council and the seller sign and exchange contracts on the same day with the full £850,000 being transferred.

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.

5168. EXEMPT ITEMS