



**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 7TH DECEMBER 2021
AT 7PM AT THE RUFUS CENTRE & VIA VIRTUAL ACCESS**

Present

Cllr A Snape (Chairman)
Cllr J Dann
Cllr P Earles
Cllr P Dodds
Cllr R Shaw
Cllr J Gleave
Cllr H Hodges
Cllr C Thompson
Cllr J Roberts
Cllr A Lutley
Cllr A Chacko
Cllr D Toinko

Cllr Blazeby (attended remotely)
Cllr Badham (attended remotely)

Also present:

Stephanie Stanley – Corporate Services Manager
Stacie Lockey – Environmental Services Manager

Rob McGregor – Town Clerk & Chief Executive (attended remotely)
Mike Thorn – Environmental Services Officer (attended remotely)

Members of the public - 4

5182. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted for Councillor Mackey (attending another meeting for CBC) and Councillor Platt (unwell).

No apologies received from Councillor Williams.

5183. 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.

5184. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No items

5185. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

(a) Planning Application – Crematorium

Members were asked to consider the CBC Planning Application CB/21/04809/REG3 – Land off Fordfield Road, Steppingley, Beds.

Members discussed the recommendations from the Planning Committee. Councillor Dodds, Chairman of the Planning Committee Chairman advised that the supporting paper did not reflect all of the discussions that took place. He mentioned that the Committee had been working with Steppingley Parish Council as they were keen to consider their views as well as those of other neighbouring parishes.

Councillor Dodds advised that Councillor Mackey had commented that there were no plans at this time for the construction of a Health Hub for the area as nothing had been declared. The Chairman commented that this did not match with the conversations he and other Members had had with the Beds Clinical Commissioning Group who had advised that this idea was very much an active part of their work. The West Mid Beds Hub needed funding allocated but it was within CBC's revenue plan.

Councillor Dodds advised that there was somebody from Steppingley willing to farm the suggested crematorium site but CBC were not allowing this.

Another matter the Planning Committee had discussed related to the potential for more housing development between the proposed crematorium site and the railway.

Members agreed with the Planning Committee recommendation to object to the application however the Chairman was concerned about the differing drivers for objecting from the neighbouring towns and parishes. He added that there was a need to concentrate on Flitwick matters.

The Chairman asked for Members to discuss this application, and the recommendation to commission a Planning Consultant, with a longer view in mind. He reminded Members that this matter had been discussed at the April Council meeting and the view then was to try and pursue the idea of a smaller crematorium at Maulden Road as the Council had not wanted to invest public money on a consultant for a pre-determined CBC application. The Chairman went on to ask Members if they would be willing to commit to a Judicial Review process if the application was approved. He added that the review would need to be from Steppingley but the funding could fall on the Council and Ampthill Town Council.

Councillor Dodds explained that the new application makes reference to consultation being done with other local Councils but this had not been done. CBC had also not looked at alternative sites other than land that they owned.

The Environmental Services Manager advised that the application would go to CBC's Development Management Committee as it was their own application.

The Chairman asked for an indicative vote regarding Members being open to pursuing a Judicial Review – there were 8 in favour and 2 abstentions. Councillor Thompson advised that she had abstained because her view on this would rely on who was contracted to do the study.

A discussion took place about the crematorium being on greenbelt land and objecting on these grounds however Councillor Badham commented that a previous Mayor had championed doing this which could be problematic.

Councillor Dodds advised that the Council's argument for objection would be limited without assistance from a specialist.

Councillor Lutley entered the meeting 7.23pm.

The Environmental Services Manager advised that Steppingley Parish Council were willing to contribute a small amount towards the costs for a Planning Consultant. She

explained that the Council's decision on this application needed to be submitted the following day.

It was **resolved** to endorse the recommendation of the Planning Committee and object to the CBC Planning Application 21/04809/REG for the following reasons:

1. Unnecessary use of greenbelt land - as the land is good farming land and may lead to development creep for housing.
2. Location not appropriate - Close to old peoples homes / care facilities and a hospital site designated for future development to a health hub.
3. Road junction is dangerous for access - Visibility and access arrangements on a small road not acceptable and requires a major upgrade of the road given current use, and potential further use in the future with known developments in Marston Moretaine and the increase in traffic.
4. Implications for worsening traffic congestion through Flitwick at peak times and motorway diversion route
5. The proposed design of the building - Building has a lot of traditional methods of construction. The building could have less of a visual impact by using green technology (Sedum roofs and impact from screening that would not spoil the countryside view from the surrounding area (Countryside and train etc.)
6. Carbon footprint of the building - Given COP26 and the agreements to reduce the use of Fossil fuels this scheme has not looked at alternatives to gas fired cremation, (using electric, water, Nitrogen methods) all have less emissions. The use of fossil fuels goes against CBC own Sustainability Policy, thereby requiring evidence that the carbon footprint is in line with the sustainability targets with evidence of how it would be offset.
7. Lack of consultation - In the documentation it states that consultation has taken place with parish and town councils. This was done at a very basic level in the first application before it was withdrawn for planning. Since then no consultation has taken place on the new planning application/proposal.
8. No consideration of sites in the west of CBC - alternatives should be considered - no alternative sites reviewed in the west of the County, Position, Access etc.
9. CBC have only considered land in ownership by CBC - need to consider other sites - Industrial land between Ampthill and Bedford for example that is not close to villages etc.
10. Contrary to CBC's own policies including sustainability and use of farming and agricultural land.

It was **resolved** to appoint a Planning Consultant to assist with the Council's objection to the application. Members agreed expenditure up to £5,000 from 601/4506 (Professional Fees).

Meeting closed 7.25pm.