

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SERVICES MEETING HELD ON THE 13TH JANUARY 2022 AT 7.45 pm VIA VIRTUAL ACCESS

Present:

Cllr A Snape (Chairman)
Cllr P Earles
Cllr I Blazeby
Cllr K Badham
Cllr J Gleave
Cllr A Lutley – Joined at 8.00 pm

Rob McGregor – Town Clerk & Chief Executive (TC)
Stephanie Stanley – Corporate Services Manager (CSM)
Helen Glover - Senior Finance Officer (SFO)
Tracy Lester – Catering & Facilities Lead (CFL)
Lisa Cousins – Administration and Bookings Officer (ABO)

Members of the public - 0

1348. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted for Councillor Mackey (CBC commitments).

Members considered if a new member was required on the Committee due to the recent resignation of Councillor Williams. Members agreed that as it was not long until the new Committees were agreed in May, they would keep the position vacant.

1349. <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u>

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.

1350. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements.

1351. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

1352. <u>INVITED SPEAKER</u>

There was no invited speaker.

1353. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Councillor Blazeby asked why the delivery plan was not on the agenda. The Town Clerk advised this was an error and would be corrected for the next meeting. The CSM advised that there was a paper for Councillors to consider which related to the delivery plan at Council the following week.

Action: CSM

Councillor Badham requested his question be moved to exempt as it was relating to a member of the Committee. This was agreed.

1354. MINUTES

- **a.** For Members to receive and adopt the Minutes of the Business Services Committee held on 14th December 2021.
- **b.** The minutes of the Business Services Committee held on 14th December 2021 were adopted.

1355. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

1356. <u>ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION</u>

a. Proposed Budget 2022-23

Members were asked to consider the proposed budget for 2022-23 circulated. These papers include alterations from Committee discussions.

Following the Clerks and Chairs meeting on 11th January, the group made two recommendations for the Committee to consider when discussing the proposed budget papers for 2022-23:

- 1. For Planning Professional Fees to be set at £5,000 (not £1,000 as originally presented)
- 2. To recommend a Precept increase of 3.67% to cover external costs imposed (relating to National Insurance Social Care Levy, pension contributions and pay increases)

Members agreed it was important for any increases to be justified. The external pressures which could not be avoided were the Government increase in National Insurance contributions (social care levy), a 1% increase in employers pension contributions and the increase in pay scale rates to be agreed at National level. These would require a precept increase of £31,321. The Chairman advised that the Chairman's group had felt there was a clear and transparent justification for a precept increase of 3.67% to cover the additional costs. The Chairman explained that he personally felt the Council was in a difficult position needing to balance the collective responsibility to ensure financial stability against the current economic issues resulting in the highest inflation in 30 years and a significant impact on residents standard of living.

The Accountant's forecast suggested a reduction to the General Reserve for the year of approximately £38,000. This was a good result considering that we had allocated £50,000 from the General Reserve towards the cost of acquiring 3 Station Road. The Chairman felt

the Reserves were healthy, with the Council carrying approximately 9 months running costs – sensible considering the Council's exposure to the hospitality sector.

Councillor Blazeby raised questions on certain items showing on the budget and these would be looked into further. They related to the reduction for the Corporate budget (Regalia £1000) and the community awards not being progressed as per the recent discussion at community.

It was <u>recommended</u> to proceed with Option 4, setting the Precept at £885,564 with an increase of 3.67%.

b. Café Furniture

Members agreed it was necessary to purchase additional café furniture, to avoid customers being turned away at busy times. Members suggested that Officers should review the current table reservation system, to avoid reserved tables being vacant at busy times. Members were keen for any new furniture purchased to fit in with the current look, comfort and quality of the existing furniture, which had performed well and offered comfort for customers.

It was **recommended** to get samples of the alternative tables and chairs to review them in person as per the previous purchases for café furniture.

Action: CFL

c. <u>Accessible Toilet</u>

Members were asked to consider the plans and costs circulated for works to convert the Denel Wing Ground Floor male toilets into a compliant accessible toilet facility. The report circulated included details on the procurement process followed.

Members agreed that the suggested new location of the accessible toilet, with ample space allowing for left-hand and right-hand transfer, was a good solution. Members also agreed that the opportunity should be taken to modernise this with up-to-date touch free options.

It was <u>recommended</u> to proceed with Option 1, Quote A at £8750.00 to provide a high spec facility with touch free flush and taps.

d. Wi-Fi Proposal

Members were asked to consider extending the Wi-Fi in the Denel Wing to offer this for prospective business owners wishing to rent flexible office space.

Members agreed this should be done, in order to extend the offering for office space hire by the day or half day.

The Town Clerk had obtained an indicative cost from the Town Council's IT provider, which would be £299.40 including VAT, plus cabling and installation costs.

It was <u>recommended</u> that officers obtain the full costs for wi-fi installation in the vacant office, including cabling and installation, for a proposal to be considered at the next Business Services Meeting.

Action: TC

1357. <u>ITEMS FOR INFORMATION</u>

a. Marketing & Communications Plan 2022-23

Councillor Blazeby noted the Approved Contractor List status had not been updated, and asked for this to be updated. Councillor Blazeby noted there was a link on the Rufus Centre website to the Flitwick Business Club, which was not currently active. The copy also needed to be updated.

Action: CMM

b. <u>Marketing & Communications Forward Plan</u>

This was noted.

1358. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

1359. 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) Officers Update for information
- 12b) Financial Reports for information
- 12c) Credit Control Summary for information and consideration

Credit Control

It was **recommended** to proceed with Option 1, to make use of credit checking services when necessary.

Debt Recovery Process

It was <u>recommended</u> to proceed with Option 1, to charge daily interest on invoices not paid within 30 days. Officers would work on a Policy for debt recovery which would be discussed at the next meeting.

12d) Occupancy Stats and Forecasts – for information

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 21:17



Report to Business Services 10th February 2022: Test & Learn Approach

Implications of recommendations

Corporate Strategy: The Rufus Centre provides the opportunity for the Council to deliver many of its economic, environmental and community goals, as well as enabling a range of commercial activities that can keep down the cost of the council precept.

Finance: Rendezvous Events

Background

The Covid-19 pandemic has seen a decline in income for the Council's traditional commercial operations, such as conferencing and events. Customers, like everywhere else, have been preferring to hold online meetings and the Government have created rules and regulations around social gatherings since March 2020. Understandably, this means the Council and its staff are constantly needing to think of other ways to generate income to be able to continue the high-quality service provision and keep the Precept rise to a minimum.

The Vaccination Hub which occupied the Lockyer Suite during 2020-21 assisted significantly with income generation and contributed to allowing the Council the ability to not rise its Precept to residents for this financial year.

The success of the Rendezvous café has meant that the community have still been coming to the Rufus Centre and the Council has been generating some income from traditional room hire, but the occupancy rates remain low. During less restricted times, Officers have seen a steady but 'cautious' trend in customer bookings.

Introduction

At a few offline meetings, for example the Rufus Working Group and recent discussions about potential online booking systems, staff and Councillors have mentioned the possibility of adopting a Test & Learn approach to trial new ideas. Three of the current discussions being investigated via the SMT are:

1. Soft Play Sundays

These could tie in with the upcoming Sunday Brunch offering from the Rendezvous café. There is not a venue locally that provides this opportunity for young families, and an onsite, quality café would be attractive. Officers also feel that the Brunches could take some time to develop substantial interest, therefore having an offering already there, could assist with takings and attract new customers. It is envisaged the best route would be to have Soft Play Sundays once a month. Details around the cost to hire the soft play equipment needs to be gathered and the Council's insurers need to be contacted about possible implications. There are two options for Soft Play, either put it in the Lockyer Suite with seating for parents around the edge or look at the Dance Studio. It is important to consider existing regular customers who would perhaps enjoy a relaxing Sunday breakfast when making these decisions.

2. Roller Skating Event

The SMT discussions for a roller-skating event are in the early stages. Roller skating is very popular currently and again, there is not anything like this offered locally. Talks are being held with a business to see if there is potential to link-up with them which would attract their following of skaters. It is envisaged to have different sessions throughout the day, with an evening slot for adults who could also have the bar open.

3. Small Businesses Using the Foyer

Having local small businesses use the foyer at the Rufus Centre on a Saturday morning free of charge, to assist local businesses with a temporary venue perhaps once a month with a view to attracting more customers to use the Café.

Exact details for how the above suggestions would operate are not confirmed as Officers want the Committee to discuss the Test & Learn approach formally before a significant amount of work goes into these ideas.

Additional Matters

The Rufus Working Group could come up with other ideas for Test & Learn. This Group will be looking at the business plan following the Council's decision not to recruit a Business Manager.

Options

- 1. For Members to instruct Officers to adopt a Test & Learn approach for new ideas with income generation. This would allow Officers to trial ideas without needing Members' approval. Officers would update the Committee after the events.
- 2. For Members to opt not to adopt a Test & Learn approach and instead request Officers produce proposals for consideration before acting.

Recommendations

For Members to instruct Officers to adopt a Test & Learn approach for new ideas with income generation. This would allow Officers to trial ideas without needing Members' approval. Officers would update the Committee after the events.

Stephanie Stanley Corporate Services Manager

Flitwick Town Council - Marketing & Communications Plan 2021/22 Status - February 2022 Business Services

COMMITTEE	ACTIVITY	PURPOSE	TARGET AUDIENCE	ACTIONED BY	REGULARITY	STATUS	NOTE	
INFORMATIVE								
Council/ Community/ Corporate/ Business/ Planning	FTC/Committee Meeting Agenda and Minutes	Publish link to documents for each meeting - agenda, minutes, supporting papers, draft minutes	Residents/Local Organisations/ Businesses	CMM/RT	Pre and Post each meeting		Document links shared on website. Tie in with committee meeting previews and post meeting summaries on social media under 'Engagement'	
Business	Spotlight on Rufus Centre Tenants	Feature on who we rent to in The Rufus Centre and what they do (note: some tenants do not want publicity). Highlight benefits of basing business at The Rufus Centre. Tie in virtual office availability	Residents/ Businesses	СММ	Quarterly		Tenant vacancies included in Winter Flitwick Papers. Social media push for new tenants/virtual office promotion. To include in Spring edition of Flitwick Papers	
Business	Spotlight on Local Businesses	Feature on Local Businesses listed in the FTC Business Directory and what they do. Provide businesses with low cost platform to raise awareness in the local community	Residents/ Businesses	СММ	Quarterly			
Community/ Business	Promote what the Town has to offer - facilities, schooling infrastructure, health & wellbeing	Joint promotions and guide to facilities to help attract new residents and businesses to the town and build the local economy, and inform residents of the range of services and attractions in Flitwick	Residents/Visitors Businesses	CMM/CSM	Annual		Investigating options and content. Timing not yet agreed but will be 2022	
Community/ Business	Direction & Help with Council Q's	Signpost residents to the people who can help. Identify the different local authority responsibilities and contact details e.g. Road repair, Planning, Health, etc. Promote website Service Finder.	Residents/ Businesses	CMM/RT	Ongoing			

PROMOTIONAL							
Community/ Business	The Rufus Centre led Events	Promote events at the Rufus Centre once confirmed in the calendar i.e. Comedy Nights, Outdoor Cinema, Regular Friday Nights@Rendezvous	Residents/ Visitors	CMM//CSM	Ongoing		
Business	Flitwick Business Group	Promote the benefits of joining the local business group and their activities and events working together with the founding group members. Provide networking opportunity for businesses in Flitwick and surrounding areas to share their knowledge and provide a platform for business partnerships	Businesses	CMM/CSM	Linked to set meeting dates		Flitwick Business Group not currently active – FTC website updated to reflect this
Business	Sponsorship Opportunities for Council Events	To engage with local businesses and promote sponsorship opportunities of FTC events to help promote awareness of their business in the community.	Businesses	CMM/CSM	As required		Family Fun Day sponsorship available - promotion
Business	Destination Rendezvous	Promote opening hours, special offers, sample menus, seasonal menu changes, takeaway service, homemade specials, themed promotions i.e. Mother's Day, Christmas, etc., and Friday Nights@Rendezvous events	Residents/ Businesses/ Visitors	CMM/CFO/REC	Weekly		
Business	Event Space For You!	Promote council facilities available to hire including The Hub, outdoor space, 25% discount for room hire at The Rufus Centre for registered charities, free use of Stockwood Room for local clubs, groups, organisations and 10% discount for residents for room hire for event functions	Residents/Local Organisations	CMM/ESM/CSM	Quarterly		Promotional push for conference and meeting availability/flexibility – short hire, twilight sessions. Flitwick Papers Spring edition - push for party bookings in 2022 – resident discount 10%. Wedding package promotion . Full day/half day pass work space promotion once Wi-Fi in place
ENGAGEMENT							
Council/ Community/ Corporate/ Business/ Planning	FTC/Committee Meeting Previews and Summaries	To promote greater awareness of the subjects being discussed at next planned meeting and post meeting to confirm recommendations. Create a better understanding of each committee's responsibility. Encourage residents to attend meeting if subject is of interest to them and make them aware of the opportunity to speak.	Residents	CMM/Committee Chair (Except Personnel)	Pre/Post each meeting		Continue to push agenda items & post meeting outcomes of public interest. Ties in with document links on website under 'Informative'.

COLLABORATIV	COLLABORATIVE								
Business	Approved Contractor List	Create visibility of, and application to, the list of FTC Approved Contractors	Local Businesses	CMM/CFL	Annual/6 monthly		List being finalised and will be uploaded to FTC website		
Business/ Community	Building the Business Directory	Contact local businesses (direct + virtual) to encourage them to be included in the Business Directory. Explore regular feature to spotlight individual businesses - Flitwick Papers Incentive to join Business Directory with draw for free advertising. Working with Flitwick Business Group when active again.	Businesses	CMM/CSM	Bi monthly				



MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MONTHLY FORWARD PROMOTIONAL PLAN

Month: February 2022

DATE W/C	COMMITTEE	ACTIVITY	MEDIUM		
31 st Jan	Community	Big Knit at Flitwick Market 4 th Feb	Social media, website, flyers, noticeboards		
	Community	Wool donations – we need your help	Social media, website		
	Community	What's on at the Youth Hub – drop ins and sessions for all ages – 4YP – share activities that have taken place	Social media, website		
	Community	Come and see us at Flitwick Market 4 th Feb	Social media		
	Community	Community Engagement Morning – multi agency 4 th Feb	Social media, website, noticeboards, flyers		
	Community	Dance Fitness – Thursday class push	Social media, website, noticeboards, flyers		
	Community	Over 60's Lunch Club – 8th Feb menu, everyone welcome	Social media, website, noticeboards, flyers		
	Community	Committee Meeting 1 st Feb – any agenda highlights of public interest	Social media		
	Business	Homemade specials, cakes, national/international food days Rendezvous Café	Social media, website		
	Business	Office space/tenant vacancies	Social media, website, flyers, online platforms, Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce		
	Town/Business	Recruitment – Rendezvous Café & Bar vacancies	Social media, website, noticeboards, flyers		
7 th Feb	Community	Family Fun Day 11 th June — stall/food court online bookings open	Social media, website, noticeboards, flyers, Stall Finder		
	Community	What's on at the Youth Hub – drop ins and sessions for all ages – 4YP – share activities that have taken place	Social media, website		
	Community	Forget Me Not Group Feb meeting – 14 th Feb Valentine's theme	Social media, website, noticeboards, flyers		
	Community	Committee Meeting 1 st Feb – any outcome highlights of public interest	Social media		
	Community	CBC Tree Grant success	Social media, website		

	Business/Community	Comedy Night push – 5 th March	Social media, website, flyers, noticeboards, What's On listings, Eventbrite
	Business/Community	Lionel Richie Tribute Night now on sale – 23 rd April	Social media, website, flyers, noticeboards, What's On listings, Eventbrite
	Business	First exhibition of the year – Antiques Fair - Rufus Centre promotion – perfect exhibition and fair venue	Social media, website, flyers, online platforms, Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce
	Business	Homemade specials, cakes, national/international food days Rendezvous Café	Social media, website
	Business	Virtual offices push	Social media, website, flyers, online platforms, Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce
	Business	Committee Meeting 10 th Feb – any agenda highlights of public interest	Social media
	Planning	Neighbourhood Plan – next steps following promotion for residents to get involved	Social media, website
	Town/Business	Recruitment – Rendezvous Café & Bar vacancies	Social media, website, noticeboards, flyers
	Town	Murder Mystery Evening – in aid Town Mayor's charities limited tickets available	Social media, website, noticeboards, flyers, What's On listings
	Town Council	Outcome of Casual Vacancy for Councillor – period ending for interest 1st Feb	Social media, website
14 th Feb	Community	Men's Club – drop in – first session free	Social media, website, flyers, noticeboards
	Community	Manor Park new footpath – P3 work progress with images	Social media, website
	Community	What's on at the Youth Hub – drop ins and sessions for all ages – 4YP – share activities that have taken place	Social media, website
	Community	Explore Flit Valley Walk this half term	Social media, website, new Flit Valley leaflet
	Community	Beds Police Bike Marking session 17th Feb	Social media, website, flyers, noticeboards
	Community	Come and see us at Flitwick Market 18 th Feb	Social media, website
	Business/Community	Lionel Richie Tribute Night – 23 rd April on sale now	Social media, website, flyers, noticeboards, What's On listings
	Business	New inclusive Wedding package	Social media, website, flyers, online platforms

	Business	Valentine's treats in the Rendezvous Café	Social media, website, flyers
	Business	Committee Meeting 10 th Feb — any outcome highlights of public interest	Social media
	Business	Homemade specials, cakes, national/international food days Rendezvous Café	Social media, website
	Business	Bring the family to Rendezvous Café this half term	Social media, website
	Planning	Committee Meeting 17 th Feb – any agenda highlights of public interest	Social media
	Town	Outcome of Councillor vacancy notice – period ending 11 th Feb	Social media
	Town	Town Council Meeting 15th Feb— any agenda highlights of public interest. Public welcome to attend all Council meetings	Social media
	Town	Chat to a Councillor session at Flitwick Market 18 th Feb	Social media, website
	Town	Murder Mystery Afternoon Tea – in aid Town Mayor's charities still chance to book	Social media, website, noticeboards, flyers, What's On listings
21 st Feb	Community	Painting Circle – spaces available	Social media, website, flyers, noticeboards,
	Community	What's on at the Youth Hub – drop ins and sessions for all ages – 4YP – share activities that have taken place	Social media, website
	Community	Eyes down for bingo – 25 th Feb	Social media, website, flyers, noticeboards
	Business	Homemade specials, cakes, national/international food days Rendezvous Café	Social media, website
	Business	Tenant Vacancies – further push – highlight any success – welcome new tenants	Social media, website, flyers, online platforms, Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce
	Town Council	Committee Meeting 15 th Feb – any outcome highlights of public interest	Social media
28 th Feb	Community	What's on at the Youth Hub – drop ins and sessions for all ages – 4YP – share activities that have taken place	Social media, website, flyers, noticeboards
	Business	Friday Nights@Rendezvous – survey outcome – next events planned	Social media, flyers

Business	Homemade specials, cakes, national/international food days	Social media, website
	Rendezvous Café	

Note:

Timings to be confirmed once additional information received for the following:

Community:

Green Wheel

Queen's Green Canopy – resident trees initiative

Planning:

Speedwatch update/training session completed?

Business:

Rendezvous Sunday Brunch opening Works passes – half day/day Sunday Play Day

Committee meeting agenda highlights/outcomes – content dependent on agenda items

This an evolving document. There will be activities for promotion that arise during each month, and additional promotional opportunities for sharing to support third party activities. In addition, some activities may move w/c allocation. Each time this document is an agenda item for a committee meeting it will have the latest version.

V3

Hi Rob,

I hope you are well

I'm pleased to say that last week we awarded the ChargePoint contract to bp pulse. They will cover both the on-street residential provision and public charging network (carparks etc). It's mainly the latter that overlaps with the locations FTC put forward.

We are now working with bp pulse as they review the long list of locations with respect to technical feasibility etc. Once this is complete, we will have a programme for installs, that we will then be able to put a date against. We are looking at a this being more of a rolling programme over the next 2 years.

We are also working on the agreement that needs to be put in place where the ChargePoint location is on land owned by a Town and Parish Council – more details will follow on this.

I'm expecting rapid progress to be made over the next month so aim to write out with another progress update towards the end of February.

Stephen Mooring MIEMA C.Env Head of Sustainability

Delivery Plan 2021-22 - Strategy Deliverables

Main Tasks agreed in bold Checklist items relating to main headings in italics

	Committee or		Target		
Tasks	Council	Lead	Date	Status (RAG)	Notes
Produce a Procurement Policy including					Draft on BSC agenda Feb 2022. Marked amber in RAG status
Approved/Preferred/Ethical Contractor List	Business	DTC	2022		as Councillors were expecting this sooner.
Produce high level policy governing the Approved Contractors List with delegation to Proper Officer	Business	TC	Complete		Standing Orders for Contracts adopted March 2021.
2. Review of existing performance of suppliers before they are added to the list.	Business	CFL	Feb-22		Agenda item Feb 2022. All companies contacted, waiting for renewal documents.
3. Standing Orders for Contracts to be amended to require review by Business Services annually.	Business	тс	Feb-22		Review due March 2022.
To provide excellent meeting and office facilities at the Rufus Centre including expanding available space	Business	TC/DTC	2022		The refurb works had a big impact to modernise but there is work still to be done. Lockyer Suite has been repainted Jan 2022 but there are options to be explored. Virtual office space due to be promoted and more flexible office space options are being explored. Work to be done to upgrade upstairs corridoors.
Produce and maintain a business plan to best develop the Rufus Centre business to provide					
community benefit and generate profit for reinvestment in the town	Business	TC/DTC	2021- 2022		Rufus Working Group meeting scheduled 9.2.22 to discuss the business plan.
1. Working Group to be transitioned to standing sub- committee for Business Development Strategy	Business	TC/DTC	2021-22		Approved at BSC.
Documented strategy to be produced by lead officer including costing and capital investment plan	Business	TC/DTC	2022		Officers are in talks with Pete Cooper and the accountant about setting an initial capital investment plan meeting. Finance Team are aware that budgets process needs to include capital investment planning for budget prep 2022-23.

3. Performance monitored by Business Services through the measurement of key KPIs	Business	DTC	2022	Will be actioned when suitable.
4. Focus on value add items including internet access feasibility	Business	тс/ртс	2022	WiFi options being explored. Value being looked at financially and socially. Team know food and drink the focus. Team working smarter in terms of offering more flexibility on pricing and consideration being given to upselling.
5. Adopt a standard for the menu(s) based on recognised quality standard or a leading competitor	Business	CFL	Apr-22	New menus being worked on. Investigating options for outsourcing design work to match a new menu board.
Work with local businesses to encourage networking, investment and job creation	Business	TC/CSM	2022	Flitwick Business Group not operating. Officers have been liaising with the Green Network and they are due to start meeting at Rufus Centre. Good connections with Chamber of Commerce who host their annual Christmas networking here.
Provide a car charging point at the Rufus Centre and secure cycle parking	Business	TC/CFL	2022	EV charge point - CBC appointed contractor. It is a two year list. Site visit to take place first. Secure cycle parking to be investigated. Supporting paper under items for information at business 10.2.22.
Support and help develop the Flitwick Business Group	Business	CSM	2022	The original members of the Business Group are no longer operating. FTC Officers do not have the capacity to run this in-house currently, especially as no Town Business Support Officer in post.