



MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SERVICES MEETING
HELD ON THE 10TH FEBRUARY 2022
AT 7.45 pm AT THE RUFUS CENTRE ACCESS

Present:

Cllr A Snape (Chairman)
Cllr G Mackey
Cllr A Lutley
Cllr P Earles
Cllr J Gleave
Cllr I Blazeby (attended virtually)

Stephanie Stanley – Corporate Services Manager (CSM)
Helen Glover - Senior Finance Officer (SFO)
Lisa Cousins – Administration and Bookings Officer (ABO)
Tracy Lester – Catering & Facilities Lead (CFL) – attended virtually
Sarah Burgess – Functions & Events Coordinator (FEC) - attended virtually

Member of the public – 0

1360. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted for Councillor Badham (work commitments).

1361. 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.

1362. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements.

1363. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

1364. INVITED SPEAKER

There was no invited speaker.

1365. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

There were no questions.

1366. MINUTES

- a. For Members to receive and adopt the Minutes of the Business Services Committee held on 13th January 2022.

The minutes of the Business Services Committee held on 13th January 2022 were adopted.

1367. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Business Services Committee 13th January 2022.

Councillor Mackay referred to the question as to whether there was a pecuniary interest in terms of his place of employment, due to the similarities of business and his assistance/guidance at steering groups and the committee. Councillor Mackey welcomed the interest and was happy to discuss this, in order to address any concerns. Councillor Mackey did not feel that his place of employment was in direct competition with the Rendezvous Café and informed Members that there was no personal gain to himself. The Chairman advised that this was not a concern of members, who valued and appreciated the advice Councillor Mackey had given. He informed the Committee that the Town Clerk had taken advice on this matter and had confirmed this was not a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest.

Councillor Blazeby referred to the suggestion of reviewing the current table reservation system in the café, that had been resulting in vacant tables at busy times. The Catering & Facilities lead advised that the café no longer took reservations for smaller tables, and only reserved tables for larger groups. Members were advised that a larger group who booked regularly at the café, pre-ordered their food enabling a faster turnaround. Councillor Mackey asked if staff were utilising empty meeting rooms for customers at busy times rather than turn customers away. Officers informed that this was being done. The Chairman suggested the bookings policy should be stated on the website.

Action: CFL & CSM

1368. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- a. **Test & Learn**

Members are asked to consider formally authorising Officers the ability to trial ideas under a Test & Learn approach. A couple of potential ideas have been circulated as per discussions at SMT.

The Chairman explained the idea behind this was to allow staff to try out different ideas, without the need for Business Services approval for each idea, with the expectation that whilst some would be a success, there may be some that fail. Councillor Lutley advised that this was not new as the Community team already did this, although members felt there was less cost and risk involved with smaller Community events. Councillor Gleave agreed that officers should be proceeding with the Test & Learn approach and asked how the metrics for success would be defined. Councillor Mackey felt the ultimate criteria for success would be the bottom line, unlike community events that would not necessarily expect to make a profit and suggested defining the criteria of failure would be to break even. He felt it was important that officers understood the costs from the start and that the Business Services committee were not there to manage the detail. Councillor Blazeby agreed that the definition of failure would be to break even and that a costings sheet including staffing costs and expected attendance should be produced at the initial planning stage of the event. Members felt there should be accountability after the events, in order to demonstrate the learning aspect with bullet points of what worked and what didn't work.

Members agreed they did not want to discourage innovative or creative thinking, but that due diligence must be done beforehand to establish baseline costs.

It was **resolved** to proceed with option 1, for Members to instruct officers to adopt a Test & Learn approach to new ideas with income generation. This would allow Officers to trial ideas without needing Members' approval. Officers would implement a template for reporting and review for the Committee after the events.

Action: FEC / CFL

b. Rural Match Funding – Integrated Programme 2022-23

Members will have received correspondence and information on the application process for the Highways Improvement Scheme 2022. Members are asked to consider any schemes they may wish to put forward. Any proposed schemes will have to be match funded with a 50% contribution from the Town Council.

This item was discussed at Council on 18th January, and it was agreed after discussion, that each Committee should discuss this opportunity in line with their priorities as the deadline was not until 8th April.

Councillor Mackey informed Members that Ward Councillors had spoken with Central Bedfordshire Council and there were probably no schemes that they would want to be involved with. No proposals from Members were put forward.

c. Friday Nights @ Rendezvous

Members are asked to consider the survey results and discuss the options included in the supporting papers.

The Chairman noted that there were only a few people responded to the survey therefore it was not a great gauge for future events. As Bingo was always popular, members asked if this was profitable, with the opportunity for food sales. The FEC advised that this event did usually bring in a profit. Members asked if music events were viable. The FEC explained that there was a high outlay with music acts, and it was difficult to sell tickets for this for an evening event in the café, when the public could see music acts in a local pub free of charge. Members thought it was not important to restrict events to just being in the café but should be expanded when possible. Members suggested thinking 'outside of the box' to try completely different things, and various suggestions for events were made. Members felt that rather than delay, a decision should be made to enable officers to start planning for future events.

It was **resolved** to proceed with option 3, to continue with the last Friday of the month in the Rendezvous Café and Bar space with alternative months of Bingo and Food events as consistent Friday Nights @ Rendezvous and reserve more profitable events, such as Quiz, to other dates in the Lockyer with officers looking at new ideas for events.

Action: FEC

1369. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Marketing & Communications Plan 2021-22

The Chairman asked that the status of the Flitwick Business Group should be on the agenda to discuss at next month's meeting as it had been in red for some time. Councillor Gleave added there were other Business Groups that the Council could support if the Flitwick Business Group is not to be re-instated.

Action: CSM

b. Marketing & Communications Forward Plan

This was noted.

c. EV Charging Points - Update

Members are asked to note the update from the CBC Officer in relation to the applications for EV charging points situated at the Rufus Centre and the Village Hall.

Members felt it would be good for officers to discuss this with CBC to understand where we are in the order for this, to be earlier on the list. Councillor Lutley advised the Village Hall was keen to be included but did not think they would be on the list as the land is not owned by the Town Council.

Action: CSM

d. Delivery Plan

Members are asked to note the circulated Delivery Plan and Committee Priorities. The Chairman asked what the delay was with the approved contractor list. The CSM advised that officers were working hard to get it up to date, but as it still needed further work officers did not want to present an unfinished document.

Action: CFL / CSM

Councillor Blazeby asked if the repainting of the Lockyer Suite had come to Business Services for approval. The CSM advised that as this was ongoing upkeep, due to the poor state of the walls, there was no requirement to bring it to Business Services.

1370. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

1371. 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) Occupancy Stats and Forecasts – for information

12d) Finance Report on Christmas Offers – 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: 21:25