



FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Flitwick Town Council Meeting held on 21st June 2022 at 7:45pm at the Rufus Centre

Present:

Cllr A Snape (Chairman)
Cllr C Thompson
Cllr J Dann
Cllr J Gleave
Cllr I Blazeby
Cllr G Mackey
Cllr K Badham
Cllr B Meredith-Shaw
Cllr P Earles
Cllr M Platt
Cllr J Daly
Cllr H Hodges
Cllr J Roberts
Cllr D Toinko

Also present:

Rob McGregor – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Stephanie Stanley – Corporate Services Manager
Susan Eldred – Community Services Manager (via virtual access)
Mike Thorn – Environmental Services Officer
Derek Kemp – DCK Accounting Solutions

Members of the public – 10 (5 via virtual access)

5243. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted for the following Councillors:

Cllr Lutley – family commitments
Cllr Shaw – unwell
Cllr Chacko – sabbatical leave

5244. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

- (a)** Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – none.

Cllr Daly entered the meeting at 19:47.

- (b)** Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – Cllr Mackey – Chairman of the Church Road Flitwick Local Action Group.

5245. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Ward Members had been asked to submit reports for future meetings to shorten this section of meetings as agendas were getting long. The Chairman requested for Members to ask questions in advance.
- The final fundraising figure for the Town Mayor's Charities last year was £5,908 and the Chairman thanked those who had helped achieve this.
- Thanks were extended to Members who had sponsored the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Flitton Potato Race. £1280 was raised in partnership with Ampthill therefore £640 would be donated to this year's Town Mayor's Charities.
- The Mayor had attended a lunch with the new Reverend of the Parish Church, Lord Lieutenant's Service, family day at Doolittle Yard for a business opening and the Royal British Legion Jubilee Afternoon Tea Party.
- The Murder Mystery event had been a success and the Chairman thanked Councillor Badham and his drama group colleagues.
- The Town Clerk and his team, in particular the Community Services Manager, were thanked for their work in providing the Family Fun Day event. It was a very good day and residents appreciated all the attractions.

The Chairman proposed under Standing Order 1A to move agenda items 10g and 10h higher up the agenda as members of the public had attended the meeting about these matters.

The Environmental Services Officer entered the meeting at 19:50.

5246. REPORTS FROM WARD MEMBERS

A short report had been circulated and this was noted. Councillor Mackey advised that for future months, the three Ward Members would do a combined report.

5247. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Judith Fisher, Honorary Secretary for the Church Road Action Group presented, that the development had sparked reactions from residents, commenting that:

- It was contrary to the National and local Planning policies, Government circulars, orders, statutory instruments, MANOP and more.
- Many studies, largely in objection, had already been undertaken and posted on the CBC Planning portal. The Action Group would be posting their own list before the consultation deadline and were thankful to the CPRE and a planning consultant for their professional advice and guidance.
- The Group were thankful to Councillor Mackey, Ward Member, who was their Chairman and allowed the Group to use his Focus on Flitwick social media page to advance their campaign.
- Engagement had taken place with Greensand, wildlife and highways bodies, as well as the media and there was almost unanimous support for the Group's STOP campaign.
- Arguments against were well documented.
- The 'headline' 166 units was misleading as it was clear from the plans that the applicants planned 228 units and 232 car parking spaces. All matters were unreserved which left a feeling of unease.
- Outside the red line site, the changes proposed to the carriageway, footway, sight-lines, speed tables, narrows, lighting etc. were wrong and technically impossible to achieve without riding over national and local highways planning laws and having a disregard for the safety of all present and future users of Church Road.
- Not all land owners had been served notice and the planning authority could not be assured legal rights had been upheld.
- Allowing a developer of a controversial scheme leeway to place a key element, in this case the highway, outside the application site appeared perverse.

- Thanks were extended to the Planning Improvement Working Group (PIWG) for their recommendations which resonated with the Action Group. The Action Group hoped the Council would support the STOP campaign.
- The Group requested permission to display STOP posters on Council property.

Mandy Wilsmore, a member of the Church Road Action Group, presented that:

- The same individuals (until recently) owned the 3 parcels of land which were part of the Flitwick Manor estate. One had been sold to a developer and the vendors knew they would not get planning permission for housing.
- The Steppingley Road field would have been more suitable as it was flat, was on the main road, 800m from the station, opposite Council offices/facilities, opposite the Leisure Centre and a footpath on both sides of the road already in situ.
- The Church Road field was an attempt to circumvent the planning process and build in the greenbelt by applying for older people's accommodation. It was outside the settlement area, not in the Local Plan, on a dangerous road with constraints that made safe access almost an impossibility, the high gradients, failed to meet MANOP guidelines, and there was no main road frontage.
- Requested for everyone to work together to oppose this application.

Robert Wilsmore, a member of the Church Road Action Group, presented that:

- Councillor Gleave's PIWG report was well written and endorsed his views.
- He showed a plan about swept path analysis highlighting the issues with corners of vehicles. The proposed plans used swept paths of the wheels however once Mr Wilsmore had imposed graphics of vehicles, as they turned, the true swept paths were shown and it highlighted that drivers could not turn round corners without striking a hedge or verge.

Bev Kemp, a local tenant farmer of the surrounding area, commented that there was so much wildlife and asked if there had been impact studies carried out on the area. She mentioned developments in Westoning meant Flitwick and Westoning would soon be joined up. She wanted to protect the rural spaces.

5248. INVITED SPEAKER

There was no invited speaker.

5249. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

There were none.

5250. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

Councillor Thompson mentioned that items 8a (Planning Minutes) and 8b (Planning resolutions) had already been approved at the previous meeting.

- (c)** For Members to note the minutes of the Annual Statutory of the Town Council Meeting held, on **Tuesday 17th May 2022**, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre.

Members adopted the minutes of the Annual Statutory Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 17th May 2022 with three amendments: insert additional name to the Community Services Committee membership, replace Councillor Gleave with Councillor Earles for the election to the Business Improvement & Development Board membership and remove an unnecessary note under item 7(iv).

- (d) For Members to receive and consider **resolutions and recommendations** of the Personnel Committee Meeting, held on **Tuesday 24th May 2022**, this meeting was held at The Rufus Centre **(this item will be moved to Exempt)**.

Members noted the resolutions of the Personnel Committee meeting held on Tuesday 24th May 2022. Members raised a question about resolution 10d which was discussed under exempt.

- (e) For Members to receive and consider **resolutions and recommendations** of the Community Services Committee Meeting, held on **Tuesday 7th June 2022**, this meeting is held at The Rufus Centre.

Members noted the resolutions and recommendations of the Community Services Committee meeting held on Tuesday 7th June 2022.

- (f) For Members to receive and consider **resolutions and recommendations** of the Business Improvement & Development Board Committee Meeting, held on **Thursday 16^h June 2022**, this meeting is held at The Rufus Centre.

This meeting did not take place so there were no resolutions to consider.

5251. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Annual Statutory of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 17th May 2022.

Members commented that under item 6(v) – Joint Committee with CBC – there was an action to elect a Sub at the next Council meeting which was not on the agenda. It was agreed for the Town Clerk to investigate if the Council could have a Sub for the Joint Committee and if so, to put this on the next Council agenda.

- b. Members to receive any updates from Officers - none.

5252. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- a. **Rolling Capital Fund (RCF) Applications**

Members were asked to approve three Committee applications to the RCF as set out on the agenda.

Members discussed the circulated RCF Summary and questioned the figures presented as they did not seem to be correct. The Corporate Services Manager was unable to answer at the meeting how much was left in the RCF but would investigate and update Members with a confirmed figure by email. The CSM advised that prior to this meeting, no applications had been made to the RCF since the new financial year.

- i) It was **resolved** to approve the Corporate Services application of £3,800 from the RCF for the heritage website proposal.
- ii) It was **resolved** to approve the Room 20 office refurbishment application of £4,920 from the RCF.
- iii) It was **resolved** to approve the Community Services application of £4,900 from the RCF for the ditch and bund works to secure the boundary of the Maulden Road Country Park site.

- b. **BATPC Membership**

The Chairman advised on multiple issues with BATPC including being let down by the County Officer with extended delays for arranging Chairmanship training and the 6 weeks delay they contributed to as part of the loan application for the purchase of 3 Station Square. Leighton Linlade and Dunstable Town Councils were no longer members of BATPC. Members were informed that if the Council left the County Association, this would also result in not being members of NALC which would be detrimental since the Council benefitted from being part of NALC. The service had fallen short of expectations and the standard of support given by the previous County Officer had been much better. Councillor Mackey commented that the Council had previously withdrew membership for the same reasons.

It was **resolved** to write to BATPC to state that the Council had reluctantly renewed its membership however were unimpressed with the service provided and were carefully considering whether to renew next year, considering other Councils had withdrawn.

c. Year End Accounts

i) To receive and approve the Financial Statements for 2021/22

Members asked why the Sea Cadets Headquarters remained listed under Information on Assets Held. The CSM advised that the building was listed because the lease had not been completed.

The Accountant agreed to include more detail within the note regarding local organisations' benefit for leasing land for their buildings as agreed in the Corporate Services resolution. The Accountant commented that grant aid was included currently in the body of all other expenditure.

Members requested for the 'Barclays' purchase to be referred to as '3 Station Square' and to include the War Memorial.

It was **resolved** to de-gender Councillors names in the report.

It was **resolved** to approve the Financial Statements for 2021/22 with the amendments discussed relating to grant beneficiaries, Members' names, and 3 Station Square.

ii) To receive and approve the Governance Statement 2021/22

It was **resolved** to approve the Governance Statement 2021/22.

iii) To receive and approve the Annual Return 2021/22

It was **resolved** to approve the Annual Return 2021/22.

iv) For members to receive and consider the final Interim Audit Report for year-end 31st March 2022

It was **resolved** to accept the final Interim Audit Report for year-end 31st March 2022.

Councillor Mackey thanked the staff for the good report.

Derek Kemp left the meeting at this time.

d. Revised Calendar of Meetings

Members requested for the calendar to be for the whole civic year, to include a BI&DB meeting in December and look to move the Corporate Services meeting to week commencing 12th December.

It was **resolved** for Corporate Services Committee to consider an alternative December date to meet and to amend the calendar of meetings to incorporate all dates within the civic year. A BI&DB meeting would be included for December.

e. Appointment to Committees - Corporate Services

From the Annual Statutory meeting 17th May 2022, Councillors Platt, Shaw and Earles have requested that they be considered for membership of the Corporate Services Committee.

Councillors Daly, Platt, Shaw and Earles were proposed and seconded for the vacancies on Corporate Services. As there were only 2 vacancies, Members took part in a written ballot.

It was **resolved** to elect Councillors Platt and Shaw to the Corporate Services Committee.

f. Environmental Audit

Members were asked to consider the quotations circulated for the Environmental Audit and note that the funding from this will be from Rolling Capital Fund (RCF).

Members asked to defer this item to the next Council meeting as Officers were unsure on the current balance for the RCF.

**g. Planning Application - CB/18/01969/OUT
Land between Brogborough, Lidlington and Marston Moretaine**

Members were asked to consider this planning application. A report from the Planning Improvement Working Group (PIWG) was circulated with this agenda.

Members commented it was good to see the planning considerations made in the report stretched beyond the Flitwick boundary and detailed the impact this would have on the town. Councillor Gleave wanted to highlight that the PIWG had a sense of unease about this development considering its size, however they recognised the land was allocated for development. The PIWG looked at its impact on healthcare facilities and highways.

Members were of the view that it was likely for this development to go ahead. Councillor Mackey mentioned that he attended a meeting recently about this and little weight was being given to the traffic impact for Flitwick. The route planning was dependent on assessments made in 2016 before some developments that are in place now, were in situ. He added consideration needed to be made for other developments, e.g. Aldi supermarket and the crematorium. Flitwick was the natural station for the new owners of these homes to travel to, and staffing and frequency of trains had not yet been defined. The S106 contribution was unsuitable, consideration would potentially be given to the Fordfield roundabout for this and Councillor Mackey had raised concern regarding the chicanes in Froghall Road in relation to this.

Councillor Blazeby mentioned that parking had been discussed at the Joint Committee meeting as a main concern for residents currently, without consideration of this development. It was agreed for this to be reported at the next Joint Committee meeting.

Members were asked how they felt about approaching the developer and Councillor Gleave commented the Council should engage with the developers but in an open and transparent way, raising the concerns detailed in the report. This would assist with mitigations for impact and to raise the issue about the little weight being given to the traffic impact on Flitwick.

A discussion took place about the West Mid Beds Health Hub plans but this could add more pressure onto roads. Councillor Badham pointed out that there was a shortage of

medical staff and that there was a proposed development between Barton and Silsoe which would create even more impact.

It was **resolved** to accept the report circulated and object to this planning applications on elements contained in the report that related to traffic, highways, and parking. The PIWG would be tasked with arranging a meeting with the developers and CBC.

**h. Planning Application - CB/22/01575/OUT
Land South of Church Road, Flitwick, Bedfordshire**

Members were asked to consider this planning application. A report from the Planning Improvement Working Group is circulated with this agenda.

The Environmental Services Officer made a correction to the information given on the agenda advising that the consultation period had been extended to 8th July.

Councillor Gleave summarised the PIWG discussions advising that the development was completely unsuitable, was against Greenbelt Policy, the highways impact, the lack of assessment on a county wildlife site – a nationally important habitat next to the proposed development.

Members congratulated Councillor Gleave on the report. Members commented that quantifiable benefit to remove a site from greenbelt had not been shown in the application and that the development was not for local people. There were severe traffic implications in a sensitive area. This accommodation was also not affordable. Councillor Mackey commented that the application referenced a deficit for older people's accommodation, but the assessment had been done quite a few years ago. Members thought it would be interesting to see an updated assessment on this. It was agreed there were other sites available that were less sensitive.

It was **resolved** to strongly object to this planning applications citing the list of objections contained in the PIWG report.

7 members of the public left the meeting at this time.

i. Election of Members to the Heritage Website Working Group & the ALC

Members considered the report circulated.

Heritage Website Working Group

Councillor Blazeby commented that the names put forward for membership to this group at the Annual Statutory meeting were all now corporate members. The formal election to this Group would be done at the next Corporate Services meeting.

Allotment Liaison Committee (ALC)

It was explained that actions were being carried out by the ALC without appropriate authority. The Town Clerk advised that a Working Group set up would be more appropriate than the current arrangements and for the Community Services Terms of Reference to be updated to include the Working Group.

It was **resolved** for the Community Services Committee to review governance arrangements for an Allotments Working Group to ensure decision making was legal. The Community Services Committee were to look at what this Group would do and what their purpose was.

The Environmental Services Officer left the meeting at 21:03.

j. Crime and Disorder Audit

Members were asked to note the circulated crime audit document.

A few typos were mentioned and it was requested for these to be sent by email to the Town Clerk. Members were advised that this was a document to be managed and updated by Officers but it would come back to Council for review.

Members suggested sending this to the CBC Safer Neighbourhood Team, the Community Policing Team and the Police & Crime Commissioner.

A discussion took place regarding the crime figures presented and how these differed to the perception of residents. Councillor Badham commented that some individuals continued to post photo opportunities on social media which did not contribute positively to the public's perception on crime.

It was **resolved** to adopt the Crime & Disorder Audit circulated with the amendments suggested relating to the youth provision item being removed and typos.

5253. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Briefing notes on Biodiversity Net Gain and the Levelling Up Bill

The Chairman commented that the Levelling Up Bill notes were particularly interesting.

Councillor Toinko asked how the PIWG would approach biodiversity net gain, as he was keen to understand how this would be applied. Councillor Gleave responded that the PIWG could consider this at a future meeting.

The documents circulated were noted.

b. Joint Committee

The Chairman gave an overview of the Joint Committee meeting which took place on 14th June with CBC. Both FTC and CBC gave presentations about their Corporate Strategy with CBC's being more generic and FTC's having more detail about planned activities. Members hoped that the more informal set up of the Committee would help to get work done. Councillor Blazeby thanked Councillor Snape for his work on the presentation.

c. Planning – Officer Delegated Decisions

Members noted the Officer delegated decisions circulated. Councillor Blazeby asked about the improved communications that should be implemented since the new planning approach was introduced, including the dedicated webpage and regular publication of CBC planning applications through social media. Members were informed that the webpage had been created and the Town Clerk would check with the Comms & Marketing Manager about the social media posts.

The Chairman asked for Members' thanks to be passed onto the Environmental Services Manager and her team.

5254. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No items.

5255. 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 & Recommendations of Meetings

13a. Youth Provision

13b. Personnel Update

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.