



**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 4th OCTOBER 2022
AT 7:45 PM AT THE RUFUS CENTRE**

Present:

Cllr Thompson (Chair)
Cllr Toinko
Cllr Lutley
Cllr Chacko
Cllr Earles
Cllr Meredith- Shaw
Cllr Snape

Stacie Lockey – Environmental Services Manager
Susan Eldred – Community Services Manager
Rob McGregor – Town Clerk (Virtual)
Mike Thorn – Environmental Services Officer (Virtual)
Member of Public (Virtual)

Members voted to allow Cllr Thompson to Chair the meeting in the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair.

1040. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received by Cllr Badham due to ill health and Cllr Dann due to holiday commitments.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies.

Cllr Toinko entered the meeting at 7.47 pm

1041. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- (a) Disclosable pecuniary interests in any agenda item - None declared.
- (b) Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item - Cllr Toinko declared an interest in relation to item 9E on the agenda.

1042. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman gave thanks to those who helped support the Macmillan Coffee morning at the village hall, through donations and assistance.

1043. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Member of the public - Sue Livens joined the meeting remotely and shared with members that she was very much against the use of weedkillers and other poisons.

1044. INVITED SPEAKER

There were no invited speakers.

1045. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Councillor Meredith-Shaw raised a question from a member of the public regarding the Nature Park and naming of the site. Cllr Meredith-Shaw informed members that the resident had said the site had historically been known as the running waters. Cllr Meredith-Shaw asked if members could consider this at some point when looking at information boards etc.

1046. MINUTES

- a. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the Community Services meeting held on 6th September 2022 subject to the following amendments, Cllr A Snape did not attend the meeting of the 6th September 2022, Cllr Meredith-Shaw's name was wrong and to add a T to LGBTQ+.

1047. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Cllr A Snape raised a question about section 1037 items for information item g, allotment toilets. I note that an item came onto the agenda from the allotment working group to reinstate the field toilets and asked officers what the process would be for bringing that back to the committee as a formal proposal and how it would be funded.

The Environmental Services Manager clarified that the provision of toilets, being placed back within the allotments was being investigated, but had not been confirmed.

Suggestions of compost toilets or only annual openings to reduce costs were also being considered. When asked about funding it was suggested that the income from the allotments could be used to fund this. The ESM confirmed that any decision would be made by the Committee in relation to this subject.

Cllr D Toinko raised a question on item 1036 C promoting call for sites for residents, reference wildflowers planting what the plan was for that.

ESM informed members she had heard back from CBC in the last few days regarding going ahead, so now we can put a call for sites out, that a meeting was being held with the CMM in the morning to look at the promotion around this.

1048. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. **Grant Applications**

Members considered grant applications as circulated with the Community Services Manager confirming that after the Grants issued earlier in the year there was £6850 pounds left in the grant allocation. Members raised the question of a resolution that was made at full Council around hardship funds and the disappointment that nothing had been turned around for the Community Services meeting. The Council resolution;

*Council **RESOLVED** to empower the Community Services Committee to make additional grants to organisations that operate a hardship fund based in Flitwick using any leftover funding from the grants budget as recommended by Officers.*

The Community Services Manager apologised that due to the extremely limited time scale between the Council meeting and the Community Services papers going out (1.5 days)

that there was not the Officer time to add the information to the agenda. It was suggested that additional funding may need to be requested from RCF fund.

Members noted that there was nothing in the policy to exclude people applying through the normal grant scheme for support of hardship funds.

Clarity was sought as to the purpose of the grant budget with members and Officers agreeing that after the allocation of grants there may be a need to apply to RCF to fulfil the need for grants for hardship fund applications, with any funds left over by the Committee being returned to the fund.

Each application was discussed in detail by the members with the following resolutions being reached.

It was **RESOLVED** issue a Grant for £200 for bike locks to the Bedfordshire Police – Community Support Team for bike locks with the addition to include Torches and personal alarms for Flitwick residents.

It was **RESOLVED** to issue a Grant for £500 to CHUMS for use with Flitwick residents.

It was **RESOLVED** to decline the Dunstable Underwater Hockey Club application request for funding

It was **RESOLVED** to decline the application by Little Squirts for the application request with the amendment for the Community Services Manager to have a discussion with Little Squirts re the possible location of the defibrillator in Town.

It was **RESOLVED** to issue a grant of £2000 for the Need project

b. Weed Spraying

Members considered the summary of alternative weed spraying options as presented and consider if alternative options could be trialled out. The Environmental services Manager clarified information circulated after a late discussion with CBC as to what options would be available. They informed members that CBC had confirmed the reduced cuts to allow for wildflowers and that the Council could move forward in seeking possible sites within the town with a meeting planned with the Communications and Marketing Manager.

Members discussed the areas that CBC maintained and other objects such as, road signs and the large areas on which weed killer was previously allocated, with the outlook to reduce the levels or to remove the use entirely. Planting lavender or alike plant were suggested in spaces to alleviate the need for the week killer or cutting in its entirety.

Members thanked the Environmental Services Team for the work on this item and information given and confirmed the feelings of constituents being negative around the use of chemicals within the town boundaries.

Sources of other Councils work to reduce or stop the use of weed killer was discussed, with a three-year plan being in place where there is a reduction of use in the second year of 50%. This allowing the Council to work out any further areas or requirements over the designated time and allow for emergency weeding if the need arose. This type of

resolution was suggested as following the Town Council and CBC's Environmental Policies.

As previously mentioned, the support of Flitwick residents in allowing them to assist with sites and wildflowers to prevent the need for chemicals to be used was discussed and received positively by members. Along with residents maintaining their own fence line.

It was **RESOLVED** to have the aspiration to phase out weed killer glyphosate and similar herbicides use over 3 to 5 years, within open space and verges in Flitwick.

c. Manor Park - Draft Parkland Management Plan

Members considered and adopted the Parkland Management Plan for Manor Park with discussion around the project and document.

The role of Flitwick Manor and the distinction or ownership was sought by members in relation to fences and walls and maintenance performed by Flitwick Manor. The Environmental Services Manager confirmed that the Town Council are not able to enforce recommendations on the Hotel and that the Ha Ha was under ownership of the Manor but may be worth us looking at repair.

The Hydrology of the lake and information in relation to previous work was mentioned with members asking if there may be funding available to support the project. The Environmental Services Manager mentioned funding perhaps from National Lottery and PA2 route with other professional bodies being positive about the possibility of funds being granted.

The filling of the lake and the works that would need to be made to change the pond was raised as the effect on the landscape with the Environmental Manager confirming that they would look into these concerns.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Manor Park – Parkland Management Plan.

d. Annual Skate Competition

Members received a report from the Community Services Manager and considered the recommendation within the report.

Positive feedback was given by members for the benefits for the community. With a well-attended event. The Community Services Manager recommending accepting option one of the report to allow for two skate competitions at Millennium Park in 2023.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept option one from the report

1. To consider holding two Skate Competitions on Millennium Park in 2023

e. Allotment Strategy

Members considered and adopted the Allotment Strategy for 2022-2027. The Allotment Working Group had reviewed the Strategy.

The Environmental Services Manager confirmed that the Allotment Strategy had been reduced. Members addressed if additions would be required to be added re additions of land and the Chair confirmed with the Environmental services Manager that the document was only to be looked on as for use for the maintenance of existing allotments.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Allotment Strategy

f. **Flitwick Town Square**

Members discussed the need to have the Flitwick Town Square working group to hold a meeting. This would be to look at the full range of suggested furniture and for the committee to then make a report detailing evidence and reasoning as to suggestions.

G. **Police Priority Setting**

Concerns were raised by the Members as to having shared targets with other parishes in the area that may have different priorities.

Members discussed a variety of suggestions as to what the priority should be this included, Anti-Social behaviour and Drug use, Harassment, Graffiti, and vandalism.

It was **RESOLVED** to write to the Chief Constable and PCC to express our concerns on the new procedures that have been decided unilaterally by the police.

It was **RESOLVED** to finalize the priority choice for this priority meeting as Antisocial behaviour and drug use around Flitwick Village Hall and the Hub carpark.

H. **Cost of Living Crisis**

Members discussed that there was £4100 left after the earlier grant applications issued, with two late grant applications yet to be viewed. The Community Services Manager expressed that they would contact organisations in relation to hardship funding however due to annual leave this may have to be deferred to the December meeting. Late grants if applicable would be able to meet the November meeting.

The Town Clerk advised members that at any time the allocation of funds could be raised if required.

Members expressed concern over the delay and priorities over the food crisis situation with a meeting with the Town Clerk suggested to work on how to proceed to move the project forward.

I. **Food Extra – Review**

Members discussed the feedback given from the organisers in relation to the attendance of the event being limited. It was agreed by members that the Food Extra provision would investigate and research how to move forward to increase capacity and best use of resources. Problems with Childcare and timing of event were discussed as adding to the lack of participants.

Members expressed the concern over the volume of food poverty in the area and that it was an efficient use of community resources and funding to help to support those in need.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept option 1 –

1. To consider continuing to support the Flitwick Food Extra programme at The Rufus Centre. Using allocated funds to supply food and offering room space free of charge for up to one session a week.

1049. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Marketing & Communications Forward Promotional Plan

Members noted the Marketing & Communications Forward Promotional Plan circulated.

b. Financial Reports

Members noted the budget for Community Committee circulated.

- Burial Ground 4069/301 – Overspend for purchase of vault not accrued at 2021/22-year end.

c. Delivery Plan & Committee Priorities

- i) Members noted the Delivery Plan for Community Services.
- ii) Members noted the consolidated list of Committee priorities. Suggestion was made that the Cost-of-living Crisis may need to be raised to a priority. It was also suggested that having information in relation to the current status of projects and the next steps that will be taken would be helpful to members.

d. The Hub RCF Application Update

Members noted The Hub RCF application for 20213/2022 works had been completed with the value of £3,454.00 of unused funds. These funds had been requested to be returned to the RCF budget by the Community Services Manager

e. Officers Updates Report

Members received an update from Officers. The Community Services Manager confirmed that a Loan application £10,500 for the park lights had been granted. Members asked if the cost of the Naughty Elf was as high as the Snow Globe it replaced. The Community Services Manager confirming that the price was substantially less.

Manor Park gates were confirmed as working.

1050. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Member of the public Sue Livens commented hedges overgrown and access to pathways and the Green at Brooks Road. Officers requested information on the hedges to be sent to Flitwick Town Council so that CBC can be contacted. Obstruction of pathways.

Public member left the meeting at 9.26 pm

1051. EXEMPT ITEMS

The members were asked to move the following items into the Exempt section of the meeting.

12a – Manor Park Heritage Works Tender Update

It was **RESOLVED** to move item 12a to Exempt

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.