



## FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

### Minutes of Flitwick Town Council Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at 7:45pm at the Rufus Centre

Present:

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

Also present:

Rob McGregor – Town Clerk & Chief Executive  
Mike Thorn – Corporate Services Manager  
Susan Eldred – Community Services Manager  
Stacie Lockey – Environmental Services Manager

Member of the Public – Mr Duncan Round

#### **9274. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was **RESOLVED** to accept apologies from:

Councillor J Dann – Family Matters.  
Councillor A Chacko – Unwell.

#### **9275. 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.

**9276. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Mayor thanked everyone for coming to the end of summer barbecue as it was important for unity to spend time with officers and to thank them for the hard work on behalf of the Town.

To remind members to RSVP for the Civic Reception as this is a good opportunity to meet with people from different organisations across the Town.

The Town Mayor attended the following events:

Fundraising meal - Leighton Linslade  
Bedford River Festival Civic Reception  
Young Carers Fete  
Lunch with Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Skate Jam  
HM Lord Lieutenant Thanksgiving  
Met with Farrans with Cllr Mackey  
Proclamation of Accession of King Charles III  
HM Lord-Lieutenant's Commemorative Service for Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II  
Flitwick Commemorative Service for Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II  
High Sheriff's Justice Service with Deputy Mayor

**9277. REPORTS FROM WARD MEMBERS**

Members received the written reports from ward members.

The Chairman asked members if they would like to move the first item of business after the public open session Post Office Exempt item 13a into the open session and reminded members if we do so that we should be careful on the narrative around this item.

**Post Office**

It was proposed and **RESOLVED** that item 13a Exempt be moved into the open session and dealt with after the public open session.

**9278. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, pertaining to matters listed on the Agenda.

Mr Duncan Round addressed Members.

Flitwick is a hub to the surrounding villages and many different things, one of which is the post office,  
Seven or eight years ago, maybe even longer, we had a post office in Pulloxhill, when this closed it had an impact on the village, which forces people to go further afield to get their services.

I find it really concerning that Flitwick is going to lose the post office at the end of March early April. I appreciate it's not the responsibility of Flitwick Town Council and

I believe it will close due to a break clause being exercised on the lease following Morrisons taking over the building.

I believe there's insufficient square footage for the building to be upscaled into something more than it is, which is a great shame. Maybe Morrisons have got a pot of money to develop retail but that's another discussion. So, with regard to the post office closing, I spoke, with Andy Snape on occasion and I'm grateful for him to make time with me, I have also spoken to quite a number of different other parties.

I would really like to know if the Council are battling to try and keep the post office open in some sort of guise and I wonder whether there has been any move by the Council. I wondered if Council have been able to approach maybe Morrisons, who are the ultimate business operator owner of the building to seek a stay of execution on that lease.

As an example, we see transport hub that's been brought into Flitwick at the moment. There's more use of Flitwick in terms of the services and the surrounding areas. To me it seems logical that there has to be some sort of focus on trying to maintain access to the Post Office to cater for residents and small businesses, appreciate there is not a quick fix.

**9279. Post Office**

Members were asked to consider a report on the Post Office Closure.

The Chairman highlighted that there was a lot of discussions going on in the community at the moment regarding the closure of the Post Office.

The Chairman reminded members, that in discussing the Post Office in the open session we would need to be wary around contractual issues, that there is an element of risk.

The Chairman introduced the circulated report and informed members on how he became involved with the situation surrounding the post office.

Morrisons did not want to take on the post office and were still reviewing their situation in retail. The Chairman and Town Clerk had met with the Post Office and discussed what alternatives there might be to site the post office.

It was agreed that it is not a Council role to be a sub postmaster because of the significant risk this may carry. The Post office are currently investigating possible sites within the Town Centre which would be the preferred option.

Discussions touched on the post office moving to the Rufus Centre to form part of the Town Councils retail offer. There was some concern about the commercials of this adding up, the pressure on the existing portfolio already having to be delivered. Members also felt that if Council were to consider this, they would need to consider a business case and setting up a community interest company.

It was **RESOLVED** under the public bodies admission to meetings act 1960 to move the item to exempt.

**9280. INVITED SPEAKER**

There was no Invited speaker.

## 9281. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Councillor Badham raised three questions for CBC ward Councillors.

### 1. Cllr Allowances and Cost of Living Crisis.

In the light of our new and improved working relationship between FTC and CBC, I was heartened to hear that Cllr Bunyan and Gomm had volunteered their Additional Ward Councillor Grant Scheme for the cost-of-living crisis towards our community fridge project as we will see elsewhere on the agenda, and it was good to see Cllr Mackey adding his grant to this project too at the recent cost of living crisis meeting that we hosted, and I had the privilege to chair. It was encouraging also to see Cllr Mackey's impassioned speech at the last full CBC meeting last week with regards the cost-of-living crisis and measures being taken all over Central Bedfordshire to try to make a difference.

One of the suggestions was for CBC Councillors allowances to be frozen during the cost-of-living crisis, which I heartily applaud, and I think it would be an excellent message from CBC councillors to send out to the community at large.

A). Would our Ward councillors be willing to voluntarily freeze their allowances and donate any agreed increase this year to the Need project or similar and

B) Given the fact that CBC councillors basic and IT allowances have increased from £10,787.73 to £12,543.24 over the last three years, would the ward councillors review the fact that whilst their allowances have increased by 15% over the last three years, and the fact that the average inflation rate during that time was 1.7% and therefore they have received around £1,500 over and above the inflation rate would ward Councillors consider donating that as well. If every CBC Councillor, did it, that would be £88,500, could our Ward Councillors lead by example, after all, and to quote Cllr Mackey, "***Instead of feeding our own egos, lets feed a few children who need it more than we do***"

C) Lastly, Cllr Steve Dixon mentioned a report that outlines which councillors actually claimed which allowances, and implied that some allowances were not claimed and that this info was easily attainable, I wonder if we might be sent a copy, with details of what happened to the unclaimed allowances.

Cllr Mackay informed members that he could not speak for colleagues but certainly anything extra that we would receive, we have already agreed within our group at least that we would donate to the charities of our choosing.

The Town Clerk was asked to write to CBC for a copy of the report Councillor Dixon mentioned that referred to certain Councillors who already do not claim all of their allowances.

### 2. Meeting of 19th April follow up

We discussed the crematorium and agreed that we would lobby CBC over using and electrical cremator, which Cllr Gomm agreed to support. Have we got anywhere with that.

Meeting with Cllr Wenham

- A. Any Update on CCTV from CBC
- B. Any Update on the Streetlights
- C. Any update on extending the cycle paths to Centre Parcs

The Town Clerk informed members that he had received a response on the streetlights to confirm all but one were repaired. That the ESM was dealing directly with CBC on CCTV. And no update had been received on the Centre Parcs Cycle path.

### **3. Police Priority Settings**

As the FTC representative, we have been asked to set a single priority for policing in our area, This priority must be a shared priority agreed with Ampthill, Clophill, Malden, Houghton Conquest, Haynes, Silsoe, Gravenhurst, Shillington, Tingrith, Steppingley, Litton and Greenfield, Pulloxhill, Harlington and Westoning.

- A. Are we happy to proceed on the basis of “the Policing of Youth issues.

It was **RESOLVED** that this matter should be dealt with by Community Services under Delegated Authority.

#### **9282. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. Members were asked to approve the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held, on **Tuesday 10th May 2022**, the meeting was held at the Rufus Centre.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Planning Committee Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

- b. Members were asked to approve the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held, on **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022**, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

- c. Members were asked to approve the minutes of the Extra Ordinary Town Council Meeting held, on **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022**, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Extra Ordinary Town Council meeting 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

- d. For Members to receive and consider **resolutions and recommendations** of the Corporate Services Meeting, held on **Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022**, this meeting was held at The Rufus Centre.

Members noted this item.

- e. For Members to receive and consider **resolutions and recommendations** of the Community Services Committee Meeting, held on **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2022**, this meeting was held at The Rufus Centre.

Members noted this item.

- f. For Members to receive and consider **resolutions and recommendations** of the Personnel Committee Meeting, held on **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2022**, this meeting is held at The Rufus Centre (this item to be taken under exempt).

Members noted this item.

- g. For Members to receive and consider **resolutions and recommendations** of the Corporate Services Meeting, held on **Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2022**, this meeting was held at The Rufus Centre.

Members noted this item.

- h. For Members to receive and consider **resolutions and recommendations** of the Community Services Committee Meeting, held on **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022**, this meeting is held at The Rufus Centre.

Members noted this item and asked Community Services Committee to clarify at their next meeting some points that were raised in the minutes.

**9283. MATTERS ARISING**

- a. Minutes of the of Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022 and Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

Cllr Blazeby asked for an update on the publication of CBC planning applications on the Town Council website, along with the accompanying planning guide.

For officers to send a written update to members.

Cllr Badham asked for an update on ward Councillors attending Council meetings.

Members were informed that there is no formal action that can be taken to insist that ward Councillors attend Town Council meetings.

- b. Members received an update from Officers:

The Town Clerk informed members that there were some issues over a number of days with the Wi-Fi at the Rufus Centre which had an impact on operations, however this was being dealt with by officers as promptly as possible.

**9284. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- a. **Flitwick Scout Group**

For some time, Flitwick Scout Group (FSG) has been discussing the potential of extending and refurbishing its building on Station Road to allow the group to expand and meet demand. This building expansion involves roughly doubling the size of the land, and the Council previously agreed to this in principle and to a longer 15-year lease to allow FSG to raise funding.

The Council is the freeholder and does not own the building. All plans have been drawn up by FSG by an Architect who has volunteered his time free of charge after receiving approval in principle from the Council. The Council previously resolved not

to allow any group to fence in public land, and the Committee felt that there was a large amount of land (circa 3m) around the back of the building that was being fenced in unnecessarily. The Corporate Services Committee could not approve the design in August because the drawings did not show the exit ramps.

FSG would like the security fence to the rear and side of the building to improve the security and safety of young people and to address anti-social behaviour.

FSG has provided updated outline drawings that include the exit ramp design. Both designs include additional hedge planting to be maintained by FSG to improve site aesthetics and to benefit local wildlife,

1. Members are asked to consider increasing the new lease term for Flitwick Scout Group from 15 to 25 years.
2. Members are asked to consider approving the circulated outline extension plans for Flitwick Scouts' building in Station Road and to empower Officers to progress the lease.
  - Option 1 – footprint to include perimeter fence to improve security and safe entry/exit from the field.
  - Option 2 – a smaller footprint without a perimeter fence at the rear and side of the building

This matter had been referred to the Council from the Corporate Services Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that option 1 - footprint to include perimeter fence to improve security and safe entry/exit from the field be accepted along with an extension to the lease making it 25 years, with officers to add any relevant protections in the lease.

**b. 3 Station Road**

The working group for 3 Station Road had an on-site meeting to discuss phrase one of the developments of the area.

Members were asked to consider naming the area. The following options were suggested by the working group.

- Station Square
- Market Square
- Flitwick Town Square

It was **RESOLVED** to name the area in front of 3 Station Road – Flitwick Town Square.

**c. Flitwick Nature Park – Masterplan**

Members were asked to consider and adopt the revised draft masterplan for the Nature Park.

Members raised some questions around the preferred option on the position of the car park, the number of trees, positioning of ponds and orchard. It was agreed that the plan will probably develop as it moves on.

It as **RESOLVED** to adopt the Flitwick Nature Park Master Plan

**d. External Audit for the year ended 31st March 2022**

Members were asked to receive and approve the Audited AGAR, year-end 31st March 2022 and consider the external auditor's certificate and report.

Members raised disappointed in the admin errors that were highlighted in the certificate, the matter of the errors to be discussed at a future meeting of the Corporate Services Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the audited AGAR and external auditors certificate, year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

**e. Cost of Living**

Members were asked to consider a report on the cost of living and approve the recommendations within the report.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council will facilitate a monthly 'cost-of-living' community meeting chaired by Cllr Badham during the autumn and winter as needed to allow the Council to monitor the impact on our community closely, collaborate on further initiatives and respond rapidly should further support be required.

It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with the Community Fridge proposal as stated, delegating all further work and decisions to the Town Clerk with oversight from the Community Services Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** to request the Marketing & Communications Manager & Corporate Services Manager to produce a dedicated page on the website to signpost residents to relevant information.

It was **RESOLVED** to establish and coordinate a network of 'warm spaces' across the Town.

It was **RESOLVED** to request 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.

It was **RESOLVED** to request that the Business Improvement & Development Board works with the Community Services Manager to investigate the viability of a Pay it Forward scheme for the Rendezvous Café.

**9285. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**a. Planning – Responses to CBC including Officer Delegated Decisions**

Members were asked to note the Planning Responses including Delegated Decisions.

Members Noted the planning responses and delegated decisions.

**b. Planning – CBC Decisions**



Members were asked to note the CBC Decisions on Planning Applications.

Members Noted the CBC decisions on Planning applications.

**c. Rolling Capital Fund (RCF)**

- i) Members were asked to note the RCF Summary circulated.
- ii) Members were asked to note the update given at Community Services regarding the Hub Refurb RCF project.
- iii) Members were asked to consider the Community Services Committee recommendation to use £21,705.21 from the RCF for the skate park lights project.

Members Noted the RCF summary and update given at Community Services regarding the HUB refurbishments.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the Community Services recommendation to use £21,705 .21 from the RCF for the skate park lights project.

**d. Delegated Authority Decision**

Members were asked to note the decision made under Delegated Authority to carry out initial research in response to the cost-of-living crisis so that the gaps and needs in the community may be understood and look at what opportunities there might be to work with partners.

This item was Noted.

**e. Joint Letter - A507 Toucan Crossing**

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of August 2022, Ampthill and Flitwick Town Councils wrote jointly to Councillor Dalgarno at Central Bedfordshire Council, raising concerns about the postponement of the installation of a Toucan Crossing A507 - 101 roundabout.

The Joint Letter and response were attached in the supporting papers.

This item was Noted.

**9286. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, in respect of any other business of the Town Council.

There were no members of the public present.

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **(one) three-minute slot**.

**9287. EXEMPT ITEMS**

The following resolution was **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

- a. **Post Office** – To consider a report.
- b. **Land off Steppingley Road Delegated Authority Decision** – For consideration.
- c. **Contracts** – Tender Documents.
- d. **Contacts** – Interim Arrangement.
- e. **Rolling Capital Fund – Application** - For Consideration.
- f. **Delegated Authority Decision** – For information.
- g. **RFO** – For consideration

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolved** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.