



**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 7TH FEBRUARY 2023
AT 7:45 PM AT THE RUFUS CENTRE**

Present:

Cllr Badham (Chairman)
Cllr Toinko
Cllr Thompson
Cllr Chacko
Cllr Meredith-Shaw
Cllr Earles
Cllr Snape

Stacie Lockey – Acting Town Clerk
Susan Eldred – Community Services Manager
Zoe Putwain – Community Services Officer

One member of the public attended virtually.

1065. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Dann gave apologies due to ill health and Cllr Lutley due to being at the Village Hall committee meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies from Cllr Dann due to ill health and Cllr Lutley due to attending the Village Hall meeting.

1066. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- (a) No Disclosable pecuniary interests were declared by members.
- (b) No Non-Pecuniary interests were declared by members.

1067. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The chair thanked Cllr Toinko for being Chair in their absence at the last meeting.

The Chair also expressed to members that the small agenda did not depict the large volume of work being completed by Officers, especially considering the current staffing levels.

1068. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

The member of the public chose to not address Members at this time with the exception of expressing that they attended the meeting for item 9A – Dog waste bags.

1069. INVITED SPEAKER

No Invited speakers were requested to attend this meeting.

1070. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr Thompson commented that the Community Priorities had perhaps shifted with lots of new considerations to be included. A suggestion was made to review at the next meeting.

Cllr Snape confirmed that the Priorities would be taken to the next Council meeting as work had been completed with the Acting Town Clerk to identify the new priorities to steer the Council including dates.

1071. MINUTES

- a. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the Community Services meeting held on 1st November 2022 with no amendments.

1072. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Members did not identify any matters to discuss in relation to the Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting 1st November 2022.

1073. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. **Dog Waste Bags**

Members received a report and considered the recommendations within the report.

Discussions in relation to the volume of Bags purchased by the Town Council at 8000 units at 48 bags a pack which have previously been purchased 3 times a year with a financial outlay of approximately £2,674 annually.

Members had mixed feelings in relation to the purchase of the bags with finding a balance between helping to keep the streets clean by supplying the bags and the difficulty in managing the public's requests for more than one unit at a time. The abuse on Members and staff in relation to not permitting volumes to people was mentioned.

A nominal fee was suggested as an option to cover the cost of the bags so that they became self-funding or the option to donate. It was commented that there are various outlets that have dog waste bags available to purchase within the Town and to add to the sales of these would not add a valued benefit to residents.

Members expressed concern as to if the potential increase in left dog waste on the streets due to the withdrawal of the bags along with the increase in the Precept and the removal of an offered service. However, the misuse of the offer to Flitwick residents and the administrative requirement to ensure that they only went to Flitwick residence was raised. It was identified that if the offer was to continue more restrictions would be required to reduce the risk of the bags going to people outside the Town.

The biodegradable aspect of the bags were commented on with the positive aspect of the bags that were offered.

Members discussed that subsidising dog owners was questionable and that responsible owners would purchase dog waste bags and not expect the Council to subsidise.

The Chair allowed the member of the public to join the conversation at this point. Sue Livens addressed the Committee and said that dog waste was an issue and that she continued to do litter picks to try and reduce the waste left in the town. She suggested that the idea to charge was acceptable.

Members raised about having dog bag dispensers by dog bins as was available in other places. The Community Services Manager commented the this has been raised to the committee previously with the decision to not implemented.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept option 2 to stop providing dog waste bags.

Member of the public left the meeting 8.12pm

1074. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Marketing & Communications Forward Promotional Plan

Members noted the Marketing & Communications Forward Promotional Plan circulated.

Members asked as to the promotions in relation to the LGBTQ+ Launch event with the Community Services Manager confirming that the event had been publicised and a post would be made before and after the event.

An update was requested about the Wildflower verges. The Acting Town Clerk confirmed that the identified areas had been passed to CBC for approval.

b. Financial Reports

Members noted the budget for Community Committee circulated.

c. Officer Update

Members noted the Officer update with the Community Services Manager adding to the information in relation to the fridge. It was reported that 247.03 kg had been donated to the fridge with only 1.64% wastage recorded from this value.

Thanks were given to Cllr Snape and Cllr Roberts for the continued work to complete deliveries for the fridge. This was added to with a thank you to the Community Services Officer for their work in relation to the fridge.

Local businesses donating to the fridge financially was received with positive comments, with Members confirming that Crowd funding was being looked into as was other avenues of support for regular of one off donations. Looking into further donations through the till. Promotions for the companies that had donated on social media was confirmed as being actioned to hopefully enthuse other companies to support.

The possibility of setting up a charity to accept donations in the future was raised to allow for Gift Donation claims.

An update on the feeder pillar was requested with the Community Services Manager confirming that this was pending with the expectation being within the end of the week.

Members commented about the youth provision being very positive with the music workshops. The LGBTQ+ music workshop poster being displayed at the hub although the unfortunate time of timing of the youth events overlapping.

1075. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No members of the public were present at this point of the meeting.

1076. EXEMPT ITEMS

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 at 9.33pm