



FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Flitwick Town Council Meeting held on 21st February 2023 at 7:45pm at the Rufus Centre

Present:

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

Also present:

Cllr Gomm -	Ward Councillor
Cllr Bunyan -	Ward Councillor
Stacie Lockey -	Acting Town Clerk
Susan Eldred -	Community Services Manager
Beverley Jones -	Marketing & Communications Officer
Public - 2	

5352. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Chacko – holiday, Cllr Roberts- holiday.

5353. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

- (a) No members declared Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda items.
- (b) Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda items – Cllr Badham declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 12a.

5354. TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor had attended the following Civic events in the past month;

- LGBT Beds Walk in Bedford
- Leighton-Linslade Fundraiser Meal
- Lunch with Cllr Bunyan and PCC Festus Akinbusoye
- Dunstable Charity Dart-a-thon
- Ampthill Civic Service

- Pride of Houghton Regis Awards
- Stotfold Charity Fundraiser
- Stotfold Civic Service

The Chairman thanked Councillors and staff for supporting the LGBTQ+ History reception event organised by Proud AF.

5355. REPORTS FROM WARD MEMBERS

CBCllr Gomm advised Members that snagging works at the Station Interchange were almost complete, they were waiting on bus companies coming forward to discuss final modifications, signs and lining. No official opening date had been set.

A new Leisure Centre and Theatre provider 'Everyone Active' had been appointed by CBC.

A new director of Social Care & Housing had been appointed at CBC.

CBCllr Bunyan advised that he had met with a Flitwick resident and completed a walkaround to discuss possible locations for new waste and dog bins.

Cllr Badham commented that it was good to see the hedges being cut back on the outskirts of Flitwick however, the debris that had been left was a mess and particularly dangerous for cyclists. CBCllr Bunyan had raised this with Officers at CBC.

Cllr Shaw had heard a rumour that the Manor Hotel was going to be used to house refugees. CBCllr Bunyan advised that this was not true.

Cllr Hodges thanked Ward Members for their help with arranging some road repairs in Canterbury Road.

5356. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

A resident commented that the litter at the Station needed to be cleared before the official opening of the Station Interchange. Cllr Badham advised that this had been passed onto CBC.

5357. INVITED SPEAKER

No invited speaker was requested to attend this meeting.

5358. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr Badham commented that at the full Council meeting held on the 17th of January a member of the public, Mr Ian Adams, asked the Council to show some restraint with regards to the proposed precept increase of 13.1%. It was quoted that the Town Council had considered a range of increases from 28% down to 10%.

Members were advised that the information was not in the public domain at the time of that meeting and Members were asked if any Councillor present knew where Mr Adams may have obtained that information.

Cllr Badham advised Members that he had been reliably informed that Cllr Daly had told Mr Adams this information which would be breaking the code of conduct as well as the public bodies Admission to meetings Act 1960. It had also been noticed that there were winks in exchange as well with regards to this.

Cllr Daly denied disclosing this information to Mr Adams and advised Members that he knew him from outside the Council in a social context.

The Chairmen took the opportunity to remind Members under the Code of Conduct that anything discussed under the exempt section of meetings remained exempt until the Town Clerk decides otherwise in terms of publishing minutes.

5359. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. Members moved to exempt the approval of the Extra Ordinary Town Council Meeting minutes for the meeting that took place on **Monday 9th January 2023**.
- b. Members moved to exempt the approval of the Town Council Meeting minutes for the meeting that took place on **Tuesday 17th January 2023**.
- c. Members moved to exempt the approval of the Extra Ordinary Town Council Meeting minutes for the meeting that took place on **Friday 3rd February 2023**.

5360. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Town Council Meeting held on Monday 9th January 2023 - no matters arising.
- b. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 17th January 2023 - no matters arising.
- c. Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Town Council Meeting held on Friday 3rd February 2023 - no matters arising.
- d. Members to receive any updates from Officers - there were no updates.

5361. OUTSIDE BODIES

To receive reports from representatives on outside bodies – there were no reports.

5362. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Councillor Attendance Record

Members were asked to inform the Acting Town Clerk within 24 hours if any attendance information was incorrect or needed to be added.

Members agreed the Councillor Surgeries were to be removed from the Attendance Record.

b. Banking Hub

Cllr Snape and Ampthill Cllr Titman have been in discussions regarding working together to secure a Banking Hub within Flitwick or Ampthill.

In 2019 Ampthill was successful in securing funding for a Banking Hub to be located in Ampthill. This did not go ahead due to not having suitable premises at the time and the COVID pandemic. Ampthill With the Post Office recently closing and Barclays Bank closing in April, it was felt that local Town and Parish Councils working together, would be the best way to secure a Banking Hub for the local Community. If the Banking Hub was not successful, the nearest banks would be in Luton, Bedford and Milton Keynes.

At this stage, Members were asked to allow Officer time where needed for support.

The Chairman had recently held an informal meeting with neighbouring Town & Parish Councils to inform them of the current situation and to gauge their support in making a bid to secure a banking hub in Flitwick or Ampthill.

Cllr Blazeby had attended a meeting with Link to discuss the 'Access to Cash' review. The application criteria was discussed in detail, and a site visit completed by Link in both Ampthill and Flitwick, looking at the Town Centres, transport links, area demographics and requirements of local businesses.

Link advised that it would take approx. 8 weeks to complete the review.

Members reported that a large amount of feedback from the Resident Survey highlighted that residents were concerned about the loss of the Post Office and Barclays Bank within the town. A Banking Hub would meet the banking needs of the community and provided a service that had been removed without much notice.

Members asked if Barclays would be involved in the Banking Hub, and it was explained that Barclays would deliver a 'pop-up' service from The Rufus Centre three days a week. This would be a face-to-face service, although it would also be cashless. Barclays would be required to support a Banking Hub if one were opened, but this was separate from any arrangements put in place around the closure.

It was **RESOLVED** to engage with Ampthill Town Council and surrounding Parish Councils and Link to lobby the banking industry to provide a banking hub in the Flitwick and Ampthill area, including publishing a social media post to inform residents.

c. Election Process

Members were informed that in previous election years, interested residents were invited to speak with the Town Clerk and other Councillors to understand the commitment needed to become a Town Councillor.

Members agreed to hold two open sessions for interested residents. The Acting Town Clerk agreed to send out a Doodle poll of dates for Members' availability. Dates would be picked to ensure different people within the community could attend i.e., holding sessions outside of working hours and the dates with the best member availability would be selected.

Members suggested a leaflet which covered commonly asked questions and scenarios to show residents that anybody can become a Town Councillor.

The Communications and Marketing Manager informed Members that information from NALC would be shared to ensure inclusivity and to ensure that branding is consistent.

Members suggested filming a short video to answer the most commonly asked questions, which could be shared on all social media platforms.

Virtual sessions for interested residents were also suggested, and the Chairman advised Members that it was Councillor responsibility to arrange any surgeries. Officers would help with promotion and logistics.

d. Town Council Strategy

Cllr Blazeby suggested referring this item to the Corporate Services Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** to defer the Town Council Strategy to the Corporate Service Committee for review.

A Member commented that last year Committees had been tasked with setting 5 key priorities, and whilst there had been staffing difficulties recently, it had been noted on the project status report that some new projects were green and older projects were still red.

Members were advised that some projects were more difficult to progress due to different constraints and that Members would be needed to assist in moving some of these forward. Members were pleased to see a detailed document on the status of various projects across the Council.

It was agreed that the Community Services Committee would discuss a way forward for some of the larger projects that were currently not progressing.

e. **Annual Review - Financial Regulations**

Members raised that the page numbering on the content page was incorrect.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Financial Regulations subject to the page numbering on the contents page being corrected.

f. **Annual Assembly**

Members noted the request.

It was **RESOLVED** to move the Annual Assembly from Thursday 27th April 2023 to Tuesday 23rd May 2023.

g. **Key Holder**

Members were informed that at present, members of staff were being paid to stay late to ensure the building was open when returning with food items.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve Cllr Snape and Cllr Roberts as key holders for The Rufus Centre.

5363. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

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

Members noted the Planning Responses including Delegated Decisions.

b. **Planning – CBC Decisions**

Members noted the CBC Decisions on Planning Applications.

c. **Delegated Authority Decision**

Members noted the following decisions made under Delegated Authority:

1. **Health & Safety & HR Support - Worknest**

To confirm a 3 year contract with Worknest for Health & Safety & HR support at a cost of £5,945.00 per annum.

2. **Barclays – Booking**

To approve a block booking of the Warrenfield Room Monday, Thursday, Friday between 9.30am-2.30pm at a cost of £13,497 plus vat per annum.

3. **CCTV**

To carry out a Data Protection Impact Assessment for the installation of the recently installed CCTV cameras in the Town Centre at a cost of £1975.00 allocated from the Rolling Capital Fund.

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

Members noted the RCF summary.

5364. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no items.

5365. 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. Minutes & Recommendations of meeting

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes from the Extra Ordinary Council meeting held on Monday 9th December 2023.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes from the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 17th January 2023.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes from the Town Council meeting held on Friday 3rd February 2023.

b. Pension Update

Members discussed the report that had been previously circulated, and a **resolution was made within the exempt section of the meeting.**

c. Delegated Authority Decisions

Members noted the delegated decisions.

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.