



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON 2<sup>nd</sup> AUGUST 2022  
AT 7:45 PM AT THE RUFUS CENTRE**

**Present:**

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

Stacie Lockey – Environmental Services Manager  
Mike Thorn - Environmental Services Officer  
Susan Eldred - Community Services Manager  
Zoe Putwain – Community Services Officer

John Balham – Greensand Trust

Two members of the public attended the meeting on in the gallery and one remotely.

**1016. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received by Cllr Badham due to personal reasons.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies from Cllr Badham received due to personal reasons.

*Cllr Chacko entered the meeting at 7.49 pm*

**1017. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- (a) Disclosable pecuniary interests – None were declared.
- (b) Non-Pecuniary interests were declared by the Chair Cllr Toinko in relation to item 10d – Share grant update.

**1018. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The chairman had no announcements except to inform members of the move of item 10C Nature Park Masterplan to earlier in the meeting.

**1019. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No members of the public chose to talk to the members at this time.

## **1020. INVITED SPEAKER**

Members received a presentation from Jon Balaam of the Greensand Trust of the Masterplan for Flitwick Nature Park.

After a brief introduction to the Greensand Trust and work in the local area, the invited speaker gave an outline of the site being discussed including information as to the 27-hectare site and identified different aspects of suggested incorporation into the Nature Park. This included a PowerPoint presentation previously circulated to members and displayed on the display screen.

The speaker identified that the land being recently used as arable farmland would mean it does not have a huge amount of existing ecological value. Except for the ground nesting birds.

The impact on the site from the A 507 to the north and the sewage treatment works, were both discussed along with the ways to reduce impact through screening. As was the informal recreational use and existing provision such as the small car park.

An explanation as to the brief given to the trust was relayed to members which included but was not limited to:-

- Developing a master plan for the site following a nature park concept
- Providing informal recreational access, creating a facility for local people primarily with the bulk of access on foot or by cycle
- Retaining that small parking area for disabled access.
- Providing a mix of areas for visitors and wildlife, and with zoning to support the management as such, to include zones reserved for wildlife.
- Restore and reconnect hedges, identify areas for woodland or tree planting, both for habitat value and for carbon absorption and storage.
- Dogs are a major threat to ground nesting birds on a site such as this and the possibly of requiring dogs to be kept on leads across the site, and prohibiting dogs from some areas of the site, will be explored.

Other aspects and potential benefits to the site were identified such as Trees, ponds and hedgerows including benefits to absorption and storing carbon dioxide as well as providing habitat for a variety of species. Access to the site and routes through will include multiuser paths. There should be links from the site to other existing paths such as the green wheel route.

Members addressed the invited speaker (to gain further information) with questions to obtain further information on the degree of impact that different suggestions for the site, could potentially influence the sites environmental impact.

Members queried why the draft plan was almost all meadow and suggested that the plan should be far more ambitious with respect to tree planting and that the proportion of the site given to woodland should be significantly increased to meet the expectations of residents as well as to provide a high quality site for visitors and wildlife.

Members discussed the size of the car park and whether a small number of non-disabled spaces should be provided.

The size of the restricted land was also questioned, along with the option to introduce a community orchard and/or bird hide to the plan.

Through further discussion the possibility of using the spoils from the ponds to create mounds to break up the artificially flat topography was raised.

Discussion took place as to the was available funding, grounds team availability and the site management requirements moving forward and it was recognised that difference habitats (meadows, woods, ponds etc) would have different requirements to maintain which the Council should weigh against its likely future capabilities to provide, though as no comparative costings were available this is to be considered as the plan is formed.

Ecological enhancement of the site by building bat boxes, hedgehog houses or alike was suggested.

The working group was mentioned to help with the development plan of the site moving forward with support by the Greensand Trust to allow more frequent and ad-hoc in person communication with interested members as required.

*The invited speaker left the meeting at 8.37pm*

#### **1021. MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

Members raised that at the top of the agenda the location was mentioned as Rufus and requested that the word Centre was added in addition.

An update was requested for the play area damage at Althorp Close and Millennium Park. The Environmental Services Officer explained that the damage to Althorp close was reported to the police and would be monitored before work was completed to prevent any additional outlay. With the damage at Millennium awaiting the manufactures feedback and the temporary fix being monitored at a higher frequency.

#### **1022. MINUTES**

Members discussed additions to item 1012 c pertaining to the CBC consultation re Forest of Marston Vale.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the Community Services meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022 with the amendment to the summary of item 1012 c to include that Ampthill already have reduced mowing and wildflower patches so the implication of this for Flitwick would not mean that there would be an exception made but would lead to a uniform approach in keeping with Ampthill and potentially other parishes across the District.

#### **1023. MATTERS ARISING**

Clarity was sought from Officers in relation to the wildflower meeting with CBC officers previously mentioned and the time this would take place. The Environmental Manager confirm that this was scheduled for the 12<sup>th</sup> of August.

A time frame was requested for the resubmission of proposal for 3 Station Road. The Environmental services Manager confirmed that there would be an attempt to include in the September meeting but commented that due to annual leave there may be a delay.

#### **1024. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

##### **a. Public Art Strategy & Plan**

Members were asked to consider & adapt the Public Art Strategy & Plan

Comments were made as to the fact that the document followed along the lines of other Councils but as some points it felt like a brief document. Particular attention was brought to section 7 and the lack of detail in this area with only 3 items identified.

Members stated that in its current configuration it would not be suitable to use to go out for tender and suggested that the document be used by the working group to progress.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Public Art Strategy & Plan with the amendment to section 7 of the document and to set up the next meeting of the working group to progress.

##### **b. Family Fun Day Income**

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

Support was received by members in relation to the additional spend to buy a popcorn machine that would better fit the needs of events such as Family Fun Day and the Christmas lights with the possibility of additional revenue through use at weddings.

Discussion took place into the added benefit of the other suggested items and costs involved.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve options one, two and three, totalling up to expenditure of £7,700 as detailed below.

1. To consider allocating the £5,705 income from the Family Fun Day to extend the Christmas Lights Switch on Event 2022.
2. To consider spending up to £1,495 (excluding VAT) on a commercial popcorn machine to be utilised at Family Fun Day, Christmas Lights Switch on Event and other events throughout the year.
3. To consider spending up to £500 on logistical event equipment such as bins, litter picking equipment and gazebos weights.

##### **c. Nature Park Masterplan**

Members considered the masterplan/brief for the development of Flitwick Nature Park as presented by Greensand Trust with questions raised by members to the invited speaker directly after the presentation. The feedback provided and questions raised by members would inform the next draft of the plan to be considered at a future meeting.

## 1025. 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.

### c. Delivery Plan & Committee Priorities

- i) Members noted the Delivery Plan for Community Services but requested amendment previously resolved to update Country Park to the Nature Park as per the resolution.
- ii) Members noted the consolidated list of Committee priorities.

### d. SHARE Grant Update

Members received a verbal update on how the grant that was awarded to the scheme has been used so far.

A member of the public addressed the members with an update of progress in relation to the SHARE project and how similar funding was obtained through Ampthill Town Council and other sources to enable to project to be funded in full for the first year.

Members were informed that the project had opened a bank account and gained charitable status since the grant was issued. Along with progression on buying a domain name, software, and a payment system. With Flitwick Village Hall offering storage space to facilitate and progress being made over the next month of October for a soft launch is currently being worked towards.

*The public member left the meeting at 9pm*

### e. Officers Update

Members received an update from Officers. Clarification was requested as to the spend of 106 funds on fencing and gates at Millenium Park. The Environmental Services Manager confirmed that the funding was required to be used at an earlier than anticipated time scale and would not affect other plans.

Members questioned how Officers arrived a theme for the Scarecrow Festival and requested that this decision be made by members along with the suggestion of a prize being offered. The Community Services Manager agreed to bring a proposal to a future meeting in relation to this enquiry.

### f. CBC - Community Asset Grant Funding

Members received and noted the report from the Community Services Manager on the Skate Park Lighting Project. News of the progress made, was received by members with positive reactions with comments made to support the work being address to members from the public. Members mentioned that they hoped that young people will see it not just

as a public safety, but also that they'll be able to use the skate park in in winter evenings as well. The CCTV and the potential of extending it was felt to be needed for public safety.

**1026. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No members of the public chose to talk at this meeting.

*The public member attending virtually left the meeting at 9.08 pm*

**1027. 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.

12a – Community Resolution Order Update – verbal

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.

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