



**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON 4<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2023  
AT 7:45 PM AT THE RUFUS CENTRE**

**Present:**

Cllr Toinko (Chairman)  
Cllr Thompson  
Cllr Chacko  
Cllr Meredith-Shaw  
Cllr Earles  
Cllr Lutley  
Cllr Dann

Susan Eldred – Community Services Manager  
Zoe Putwain – Community Services Officer  
Sue Quinn – Community Services Assistant

One member of the public attended virtually.

**1077. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr Badham gave apologies due to ill health.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies from Cllr Badham due to ill health.

**1078. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

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

**1079. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made no announcements.

**1080. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

The member of the public did not choose to address the Members at this time.

**1081. INVITED SPEAKER**

No speaker was invited to attend this meeting.

**1082. MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

Cllr Dann expressed concern for the large volume of wild garlic being removed from Flitwick Woods and that the signs that had previously been placed in the woods in other years were currently not being used. Officers confirmed that Central Bedfordshire Council are aware of the situation.

**1083. MINUTES**

- a. Members noted three errors in the 1073 part of the minutes circulated with the incorrect spelling of Biodegradable and the use of Residence rather than resident.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept to receive and adopt the minutes of the Community Services meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023 with the three errors in section 1073 corrected.

*Action Community Services Officer*

**1084. MATTERS ARISING**

The Community Services Manager took the opportunity to introduce Sue the new Community Services Assistant to members.

Cllr Toinko asked if there had been an update on item 1073A in relation to wild flowers on the previous agenda and had requested an item be added to the agenda that hadn't been. The Community Services Manager expressed that this may have been due to the Acting Town Clerk not being present at the meeting to answer the enquiry and that due to the next Community meeting not taking place until June it would be recommended to email the Acting Town Clerk.

*Action Cllr Toinko / Action Acting Town Clerk*

**1085. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Proud AF Movie Night**

Members discussed the proposed event and confirmed that that the film suggestion had come through the LGBTQ+ launch evening as a popular suggestion. It was suggested that the working group, if the event is confirmed contact LGBT Bedfordshire and ask for suggestions of films that have positive LGBTQ+ content.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Officers recommendation as follows-

1. *Members to agree the use of Officer time to organise and host a Proud AF Movie night at The Rufus Centre in June 2023.*

*Action Community Services Manager / Officer*

b. **Job Club**

Members received a report from the Community Services Assistant and considered the recommendations within the report in relation to aiding the community that are seeking to find work. This would be run fortnightly from the Hub building 9.30 am – 12.30pm. Courses could also be offered to people to enhance their skills.

Members received the suggestion with a positive response with confirmation of the funds being allocated from the Cost of Living budget rather than RCF being confirmed by the Community Services Manager.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Officers recommendation as follows-

1. Members are asked to agree the establishment of a Job Club at The Hub to support residents as outlined within the report.
2. Members are asked to allow eight hours per month of Officer time to run the Job Club as part of the Cost-of-Living initiative, this would include the delivery of Job Club and organisation and preparation time.
3. To approve the expenditure of up to £650 from budget code 312/4606 to purchase two laptops and a printer.

*Action Community Services Assistant*

**c. Community Hub**

Members received a report from the Community Services Manager and considered the recommendations within the report in relation to the Community Hub. The Assistant confirmed that the attended of the hub was between 12 -15 people on average with a variety of ages attending. It was also explained to Members that the youth provision would be using the building on Mondays and in addition the Bank Holidays would mean a large break in being able to deliver the service on a Monday. As such it was suggested to move the 'Community Hub' to a Wednesday.

Members discussed the renaming of the Warm spaces to Community hub and the move to a Wednesday from the current Monday of the activity.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Officers recommendation as follows-

- 1 Members to agree opening The Hub as a 'Community Hub', every Wednesday, 9:30am – 4:30pm until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

*Action Community Services Assistant*

**d. RSPCA Food Bank**

Members received a report from the Community Services Assistant and considered the recommendations within the report in relation to the suggestion of adding a provision from the RSPCA to the food bank.

It was confirmed that the working group had discussed the idea of the support from the RSPCA and had looked on the idea favourably.

Members discussed the new launch of a support service by a local vet with the Community Services Assistant confirming that you had to be registered with Medivet to use the provision. However, it was confirmed that the offer from the RSPCA would be available to anyone who needed support. The Community Services Manager also confirmed that Flitwick Town Council would act as a host but that the policies, requesting support from the public would need to be given through the RSPCA as they would be supplying the items.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Officers recommendation as follows-

1. Members are asked to agree for the RSPCA donations to be located at The Rufus Centre, in the foyer alongside the Community Fridge as outlined above and coordinated by RSPCA volunteers.

e. **Cost of Living Crisis Community Survey**

Members received a report from the Community Services Assistant and considered the recommendations within the report in relation to setting up a survey to enable the Community Services Team to better understand the needs of the community.

Members discussed the draft survey and the feedback included -

- The GDPR aspect of the document to be made clearer and to explain why information was being requested along with making it optional.
- That Items 5 and 6 were asking the same thing in a different way and came over very wordy. They needed to be adjusted, made tighter and shorter.
- Item 6 to have a disclaimer specifying to only be completed if the person had a pet to not confuse the results.
- To check the documents overall readability

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Officers recommendation as follows-

1. To go ahead with the Cost-of-Living Crisis survey as outlined in appendix 001, with the items discussed addressed and amended.
2. To allow Officer time to hand deliver and collect the survey from priority, targeted areas.

f. **Nature Park**

It is recommended by the Acting Town Clerk to nominate one Member to assist Officers with taking the lead on progressing this project. The Working Group will start meeting again once detailed plans are in place to be able to move forward.

Through discussion Cllr Thomson was nominated and accepted this role to support the Acting Town Clerk as detailed.

*Action Acting Town Clerk*

g. **Litter Picking and Community Service**

Due to the absence of the Member making the verbal update this item was deferred to the June Community Services Meeting.

*Action Acting Town Clerk*

1086. **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. Officer Update**

Members to note the Officer update.

**d. Public Art Update**

Due to the absence of the Member making the verbal update this item was deferred to the June Community Services Meeting.

*Action Acting Town Clerk*

**1087. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

The public member Sue Livens expressed the disappointment with 1085 g being moved to the next meeting due to the time that has passed since the suggestion being raised. The member of the public also expressed that the list of overgrown hedges previously discussed would now not be actioned until after the nesting season, although due to the confirmation of bylaws CBC had confirmed that action would be taken at that time.

It was discussed that in relation to the overgrown paths and hedges the Acting Town Clerk had done everything possible to move the request forward with the only action would be to chase with Ward Councillors at the next Council meeting.

*Action Acting Town Clerk*

**1088. EXEMPT ITEMS**

No Items were moved to exempt.

*Meeting ended 20.36*