



**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 6TH JUNE 2023
AT 7:45 PM AT THE RUFUS CENTRE**

Present:

Cllr Meredith-Shaw (Chairman)
Cllr Toinko
Cllr Platt
Cllr Wilsmore
Cllr Connell
Cllr Snape
Cllr Roberts

Stacie Lockey – Acting Town Clerk
Susan Eldred – Community Services Manager
Zoe Putwain – Community Services Officer
John Balaam - Greenland Trust

One member of the public attended virtually.

Members elected Cllr Meredith-Shaw to chair the meeting in the absence of the Chair and with no Deputy duly elected before the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Meredith- Shaw as Chairman for the meeting.

1089. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members received apologies from Cllr Badham due to a Family emergency, Cllr Thompson due to being on holiday and Cllr Gleave due to moving house.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies from Cllr Badham, Cllr Thompson, and Cllr Gleave.

1090. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Members discussed the Vice Chairman position and Elected Cllr Meredith Shaw to the position.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Meredith shaw as vice Chair

1091. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

- (a) No Disclosable pecuniary interests were declared by members.
- (b) A Non-Pecuniary interest was declared by Cllr Toinko due to being an allotment holder.

1092. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reflected on the Pride Picnic event that took place on Sunday 4th June in Ampthill as being a success with over 200 people attending the event. Great feedback had been received by members about the event from those attending.

1093. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

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

1094. INVITED SPEAKER

No speaker was invited to attend this meeting.

1095. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr Snape asked for an update on the installation of lights at the skate park. The Community Services Manager confirmed that the date had been changed by the provider but installation is scheduled imminently.

1096. MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to accept to receive and adopt the minutes of the Community Services meeting held on 4th April 2023 with no amendments.

1097. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Cllr Toinko suggested that the hedge cutting and other problems relating to maintenance by CBC that had been raised by a public member may be helped with the Town Council Signposting people to use 'fix my street'.

The Acting Town Clerk confirmed that CBC had been approached surrounding the issue but would follow up on the matter.

Action - Acting Town Clerk

1098. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- a. **Appointment of Members to Allotment Working Group**

Members were asked to nominate Councillors to join the Allotment Working Group. Ideally three members were requested.

It was suggested to return the consideration to the committee when absent members could be asked.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept Cllr Platt onto the Allotment working group.

Action - Acting Town Clerk

b. Appointment of Public Art Working Group

Members were asked to nominate Councillors to join the Public Art Working Group.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept Cllr Platt, Cllr Thompson and Cllr Badham onto the Public Art working group.

Action - Acting Town Clerk

c. Appointment of Nature Park Working Group

Members were asked to nominate Councillors to join the Nature Park Working Group.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept Cllr Wilsmore, Cllr Toinko, Cllr Thompson, and Cllr Meredith-Shaw onto the Nature Park working group.

Action - Acting Town Clerk

d. Nature Park

Members received a report from the Deputy Town Clerk and consider recommendations within the report. John Balaam from the Greenland Trust attended the meeting and commented that although the planning application being re applied for was frustrating it would open up opportunities such as an increase in funding. He mentioned that he did have knowledge of someone local that would be willing to assist in planning that had competitive rates.

Members commented that having additional funding would be beneficial, but the consensus was that adding some extra trees would be acceptable but the main plan as to the land would be preferred to stay as open.

The access to the site was discussed in depth in relation to accessibility and logistics with members preferring access to the site from the access point already established.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Officer Recommendations as follows –

1. To consider the two options of the Masterplan (parking options) and consider the preferred option. (Appendix 1) with Option A elected.
2. To proceed with utilising the Forest of Marston Vale Trust's 'Trees for Climate Scheme' for Flitwick Nature Park to assist with professional advice/planning and funding for delivery and ongoing management.
3. To investigate costs for a Planning consultant to assist with the process of the planning application.
4. To submit a pre-app planning application to Central Bedfordshire Council for development of the Nature Park

Action – Acting Town Clerk

John Balaam - Greenland Trust left the meeting at 20.12pm

e. Allotment Facilities

Members received a report from the Community Services Manager and considered recommendations within the report in relation to the reinstatement of portaloo toilets at the allotment sites.

Members observed that the cost was reduced from previous years with the Acting Town Clerk confirming that this was due to a reduction of time they would be situated at the site being reduced to April to October. Also, the lack of facilities was identified as a possible accessibility issue.

Clarity was requested as to how feedback about the removal of the provision had been fed back to Officers. The Acting Town Clerk confirmed that the matter had been continually raised by the Allotment reps who worked as liaison with the allotment holders.

Concern was raised as to the implementation and potential removal of the facilities in the future, with members highlighting that the move to compost toilets would need to be clarified as requiring the Allotment Reps and working group to investigate and offer suggestions as moving forward with the action to use these in future.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept Option 1 as follows, with the addition of confirming that the future provision was reliant on the working group investigates and offers suggestions as to compostable toilets.

1 – Members are asked to consider the reinstatement of one port-a-loo at both Station Road and Steppingley Road Allotment Sites, from June 2023 – October 2023. To approve the spend of £1,250 (Plus Vat) from the allotment EMR for this service.

Action – Community Services Manager

f. **Allotment, Burial & Football Fees**

Members received a report from the Deputy Town Clerk and considered the recommendations within the report. Each aspect of the report was reviewed separately for clarity.

Discussion as to the fees for the Allotments being higher than other alike allotment sites was discussed. During this discussion the Acting Town Clerk clarified that the fees being reviewed were for the year 2025- 2026 and there was no increase planned for 2024 – 2025.

Members talked about the possibility of reducing the rates however they also discussed rises in costs that may be incurred in the future due to the long timescale.

It was **RESOLVED** to have no increase or decrease in the cost for the Allotments for the period of 2023 – 2026

Action – Community Services Manager

Discussion as to the fees for Burials was discussed by the committee with the Deputy Town Clerk confirming that the year left for space with Burials, but that ashes space was expected to be full within the next few months.

It was **RESOLVED** to have no increase for the Burial fees for the year 2024 – 2025.

Discussion as to the Fees allocated to the Football pitches was debated in detail due to both the current rates being lower than alike offers and the damage sustained to the Rufus Centre due to the groups using the field.

Members considered the use of charges and contracts for those hiring but identified that policing the issue would not be possible with limited staff time. The effect on the Rufus Centre through the use of the toilets by field users causing damage was discussed as was the possibility of how to restrict the damage caused. It was suggested that this be investigated further by the Rufus Team as it was deemed that the financial cost could be significant.

It was **RESOLVED** to increase the rates by 25% with the exception of bookings made by Flitwick Residents and groups.

Action – Business and Services Manager

g. Litter Picking and Community Payback Service

This item was Deferred from the Community Services Meeting on Tuesday 4th April.

Members received a verbal update from The Community Services Manager in relation to that contact had been made and there may be a possibility of the Payback scheme supporting in future. Dates for Site visits were being discussed in the hope that this would take place in July so that an update could be made in the August meeting.

Members discussed the need for dignity and low-key publicity in any promotions of this potential working relationship along with the provision of welfare needs being met.

The Community Services Manager confirmed that the needs of the people attending, and locations would depend on the duration and activity however these would be addressed.

Action – Community Services Manager

h. Environmental Initiatives

Members considered delegating the following previously agreed initiatives to the Environmental Improvement Working Group;

1. Residents maintained/wildflower verges on CBC areas
2. Glyphosate use by CBC and FTC's ambition to phase this out
3. Reduced mowing schedule and cut and collect mowing
4. Bug life wildlife corridor support
5. Supporting FTC's own wildflower patches/reduced mowing within the Millennium Park, Mount etc.
6. Tree/hedge planting and maintenance for newly planted trees.

It was **RESOLVED** to move items 1 – 6 as previously agreed to the Environmental Improvement working group.

Action – Community Services Manager

1099. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Public Art Update

This item was deferred from the Community Services Meeting on Tuesday 4th April. Due to the absence of Cllr Badham this item was Deferred to the next Community Services Meeting.

Action – Community Services Manager

b. Financial Reports

Members asked why the **Omega** report was not contained in the documents and there was concerns as to the statistics not calculating correctly. The Town Clerk said that they would investigate this further,

Action – Acting Town Clerk

c. Officer Update

Members received and discussed the Officers update. The cost of some of the summer events was questioned. The Community Services Manager confirmed that the cost was to cover the cost and VAT and was running not for profit, with the paid for activities being offered as well as free activities over the summer.

The theme for the Scarecrow festival was also raised as not going to committee. It was established that due to the time frame this decision was confirmed to committee members by email. However, in future it would be brought for decision.

Action – Community Services Manager

The Acting Town Clerk asked members their opinion as to the approach to the problem Ragwort in Manor Park being maintained. They confirmed that last year an action of spotting was used and has seen a very small decrease this year. It was identified that this was a time sensitive issue due to the seeding of the weed being imminent and the need to remove as soon as possible being noted.

An option to use a spray was raised with an anticipated cost of around £1000 with the park being closed for the day. Members wanted to know what chemical would be used but due to this being an enquiry as to opinion, this information was not available. The Acting Town Clerk confirmed that further information would be sent by email.

The Acting Town Clerk confirmed that the Public Realm team did not have the time required to complete the task.

Members suggested a working group of volunteers to be sought with the idea of having lots of people having a large impact on the site and removal. The Acting Town Clerk confirmed that the removal would require the Public Realm team to transport, and they would not be available at the weekend to accommodate.

The Community Services Manager commented that lots of groups would already have their summer events set.

It was confirmed that the subject would be continued by email with the committee, that a risk assessment that could be adapted was available and that Cllr Toinko would approach local groups that may be able to assist.

Action - Acting Town Clerk / Cllr Toinko

In relation to the Community Fridge, it was also confirmed that 6402 Kilos of food had gone through the fridge with 6.3% wastage equating to 200 kilos of CO2 saved. It was also mentioned that there was a collection from Tesco finally received and Waitrose was being actioned. The pick ups from Sofea being twice a week really helping with stock levels with great value items being received.

Members commented that the reduction of Lunch club cost was positive with the Cost of Living Crisis.

d. Cost of Living Crisis Community Survey – Results

Members received a report from the Community Services Assistant which was noted.

1100. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Sue Livens addressed the Members with the following questions, statements and suggestions:-

- Fix my street being a waste of time.
- How to encourage people to attend the Job Club?
- Suggestion of adding another exit off the roundabout, in relation to Country park.
- Suggestion to contact gardeners in relation to Ragwort
- Confirming that she is still on waiting list for fridge volunteer.

Members Suggested that the Job club perhaps if the public member offered to go with the individual that may help. They also confirmed that there had been a high volume of volunteer support and due to the training, there had been a hold on volunteers but with an increase of collections there may be a need for new volunteers to be trained and one of the team would be in touch.

Action – Community Services Assistant

The member of the public left the meeting at 21.20

13. EXEMPT ITEMS

It was **RESOLVED** to move the following items to exempt.

- Youth Provision**
- Crime Statistics**

Meeting ended 9.34pm

