



FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 05th December 2023 AT 7:45 PM AT THE RUFUS CENTRE

Cllr Thompson (Chairman)
Cllr Toinko
Cllr Wilsmore
Cllr Gleave
Cllr Connell
Cllr Livens
Cllr Platt

Stacie Lockey –Town Clerk (TC)
Susan Eldred – Community Services and Amenities Manager (CSAM)
Zoe Putwain – Community Services Officer (CSO) ZP
Sarah Burgess – Amenities Officer (AO) Remotely
Darren Woodward – Forest of Marton Vale

1138 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Badham due to work commitments for this meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies from Cllr Badham due to work commitments.

1139 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

- (a) No Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item were declared.
- (b) No Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item were declared.

1140 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked everyone for the support at the very successful light switch on event. Acknowledging both the volunteers' support and Officers for another great event.

1141 OPEN SESSION

No members of the public attended this meeting.

1142 INVITED SPEAKER

The invited speaker was deferred to talk later in the meeting in relation to the Nature Park item.

1143 **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

Cllr Tonko informed members of free training in relation to Carbon Literacy being offered by CBC. It was agreed that Cllr Toinko would share the details with the committee and Officers present at the meeting.

Action – (Cllr Toinko)

1144 **MINUTES**

- a. Members received and adopted the minutes of the Community Services meeting held on Tuesday 7th November 2023 with no amendments.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Community Services Minutes held on Tuesday 7th November 2023 with no amendments.

Action – CSO (ZP)

1145 **MATTERS ARISING**

- a. No matters arising were raised by Members in relation to the minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 7th November 2023.

1146 **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- a. **Nature Park**

Members received a presentation remotely regarding the Nature Park plan. Darren Woodward from the Forest of Marton Vale explained the plan in detail and addressed questions asked by members.

The Woodland design plan included Broadleaf Woodland, Hazel Coppice, Woodland pasture, hedgerow, and informal paths. These areas were divided into zones. Placement of areas and the design included wildlife, conservation of heritage areas as well as Landscape impact.

Members asked about the Hazel Coppice and the environmental impact of this along with the commercial aspects of using this species of plant. It was confirmed that there was a large need for this crop and that the area would be divided into 8 sections that would run on a revolving basis to allow for cultivation. The impact of the crop would be great for wildlife due to the differing aspects of growth at one time in the area allowing for a moving landscape. A local company based in Gravenhurst called Wassledine had shown an interest in supporting this aspect of the project. [A short introduction to Wassledine](#)

It was suggested that the Hazel Coppice would allow for community engagement and that a volunteer group could be used but that if there was a need then commercial agreements could be put in place to limit expenditure in this area.

The presentation also identified that there were areas on the map that would not be included in the forest area due to the 40% of open access plan being reached due to the requirements to allow for wildlife and heritage conservation.

The grant available from the Forest of Marston Vale for the 20.72 Hectares equated to approximately £205,383.78 which would be used to deliver the Woodland. This would include fencing, trees, protection, and access gates.

An annual grant would also be issued to the Council in the sum of £131.158 over 15 years averaging at £8756 per year to allow for maintenance and repairs.

Members questioned the lack of a car park on the plan that had been included in the previous Greensand Trust Masterplan. It was suggested that the Hazel Coppice area could be reduced to allow for a car park if CBC gave permission due to the architectural historic sites situated in this area and agreed planning permission.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Woodland Design Plan and submit as proposed.

Action – TC /CSAM /AO

Darren Woodward left the meeting at 8.25 pm.

b. Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Consultation

The work by the Planning and Improvement group was complimented as to the informative in detail report received by members.

Members commented about the need for pathways to be in good repair to allow for ease of access, this included both the flooring and overgrown hedges. Also, the impact of calming measures especially around local schools.

Members also commented on the need for routes to other smaller villages on the boundaries of Flitwick.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the report and use it to form our response to the consultation.

It was agreed that Cllr Gleave would approach Ampthill Town Council to discuss whether to set up a working group and bring back a proposal if appropriate.

Action – TC / Cllr Gleave

c. EV Charging

The Cllr representing the Town Council within The Village Hall Committee confirmed to the Chair prior to the meeting that there had been no approach from CBC to the VH committee regarding EV charging points. . The proposed plan included the movement of the gate and the disabled bays.

Members were concerned that the Village Hall had not been contacted in relation to the charging point and the relocation of the disabled bays.

Members discussed the benefits of having the charging points in Flitwick but also concluded that the Village Hall Committee should be contacted, and discussions take place.

It was **RESOLVED** to respond with no Comment but suggest that CBC contact the Village Hall Committee.

Action – TC

d. **Draft 2024/25 Community Services Budget**

Members received and reviewed the Draft Community Services Budget for 2024/25.
It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Draft 2024/25 Community Services Budget.

e. **Community Hub – Warm Space**

The Community Services and Amenities Manager confirmed that due to the large volume of surplus food that had been collected by Fairshare collection, the project would be able to run with or without the funding using donations of food already received.

Members supported the suggestion to open the Hub in the evening and offer hot food.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept option 1 on the report, allowing officer time to open The Hub as an evening Warm Space from 1st January – 31st March 2024

Action – CSO (SQ)

1147 **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Community Financial Report**

Members received and noted the report.

b. **Officer Update**

The Town Clerk confirmed that a meeting was due to take place in relation to the Tiny Forest with the hope that Hinksley Road site be put forward. The report was noted by Members.

c. **Forward Capital Plan**

Members commented on the cost for the Manor Park Bridge and the low priority of the Manor Park Lake. The Town Clerk confirmed that the bridge was a low priority item however now the Amenities Officer was in post, funding would be investigated to deliver such projects and work to implement the Manor Park Management Plan would be able to start.

1148 **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No members of the public attended this meeting.

1149 **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.

No 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.

The meeting ended at 9.02 pm.