



**DRAFT MINUTES OF FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL ASSEMBLY HELD ON
TUESDAY 23RD MAY 2023 AT THE RUFUS CENTRE**

Present:

Cllr A Snape (Chairman)
Cllr K Badham
Cllr I Blazeby
Cllr C Thompson
Cllr J Gleave
Cllr M Platt
Cllr B Meredith-Shaw
Cllr J Roberts
Cllr D Toinko
Cllr R Wilsmore

Stacie Lockey – Deputy Town Clerk
Susan Eldred – Community Services Manager
Beverley Jones – Communication & Marketing Manager

Also present:

Cat Farrow – Cash Access UK

Members of the public - 7

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted for Councillor Hodges (family commitment) and Councillor Shaw (holiday).

2. INVITED SPEAKER – Cash Access UK

Cat Farrow (Cash Access UK) introduced herself and advised that Cash Access UK was a not-for-profit organisation funded by the top 10 biggest banking providers in the UK. Cat advised that a Banking Hub was opening in Ampthill which would provide a shared community banking space and counter service which would enable residents to deal with day-to-day banking services. The counter service would be run by the Post Office and different banking providers would be available on different days of the week.

The following questions were raised;

What is the average roll out time for a Banking Hub?

On average it takes approximately 12 months to roll out, Cash Access UK were keen to progress the Ampthill Hub asap.

Do the Post Office run the cash access side of the hub?

Post Office Limited is the chosen supplier and runs branches all over the UK. Post

Office Limited is the only supplier that can currently process transactions on behalf of major banks.

Have you identified a site yet?

Yes, a site had been secured but the location could not be announced whilst commercial discussions were taking place.

How does profitability work, who bears the cost of a Banking Hub?

The 10 banking providers who have invested in Cash Access UK bear the set up and ongoing costs; the Banking Hub's run on that budget.

If five banking providers are chosen to use the Banking Hub, will they be appropriate for residents?

Local data is used to ensure the most popular providers use the Banking Hub. Sometimes two providers might use the Banking Hub in the same day.

Do residents have to make appointments to visit their banking provider?

No appointments need to be made, people can just turn up.

Can business banking be dealt with at the Banking Hub?

Yes, businesses can utilise all the services.

Post Office Ltd has an annual cash deposit limit you can make, will this be different for the Banking Hub?

The annual deposit limit will be in place at the Banking Hub, different banks have different limits, but it's a limitation of the regulatory regime. Post Office Ltd would need to address this if they think there is an issue.

Will there be any ATM's?

No. LINK would be responsible for looking at the need of ATM's within a Town and can make recommendations to add additional ATM's.

Flitwick has lost 5 ATM's and a bank, are there any discussions in the background to improve that?

This falls to LINK and the same process applies to apply for an ATM and Banking Hub. Cash Access UK would be happy to facilitate a conversation with LINK.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING

Members received the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 26th April 2023 as a true record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

No items.

5. PRESENTATION & ANNUAL REPORT OF FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Mayor welcomed residents and explained that he would present the work of the Council over the past year through a PowerPoint presentation which would be available online following the meeting. The presentation included the outcomes from the residents satisfaction survey.

The presentation included:

- Overview of the newly elected Members of Flitwick Town Council. There were

currently three vacant seats which would be filled via co-option at the July Council meeting.

- An overview of Civic Events held and attended.
- Town Mayors Charities Fundraising - £7,150 had been raised and split equally between Flitwick Food Extra and Citizens Advice Mid Bedfordshire.
- Highlights from 2022/23 – Flitwick Community Fridge, Proud Ampthill & Flitwick, 2nd free Family Fun Day, developing the Rufus Centre and delivering a £177k surplus, Planning Improvement Working Group, new Environmental Improvement Working group, Banking Hub collaboration.

6. TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGY & RESIDENTS SURVEY FEEDBACK

Cllr Blazeby presented the results of the 2022/23 Residents Survey.

The Town Mayor gave an update on the focus areas and priorities for the Council, which included the following:

- Improving key green spaces – improvements to the south gate and piers had recently been completed at Manor Park, and the Parkland Management Plan had been adopted, advancing plans to deliver the Nature Park at Maulden Road and continuing with reduced mowing and wildflower areas.
- Developing the Rufus Centre as a Community Resource – continued to refurbish the office space, utilizing the dance studio for exercise classes and delivering a £177 surplus.
- Rendezvous Café – aim of the café was to provide a community hub and raise a surplus that can be invested into other projects, offering new services aimed at young families and retained a 5-star Food Hygiene standard.
- 3 Station Road – Community & Commercial Space – installation of benches and bins to be completed in the summer, focal point for community events and markets, despite the closure of Barclays the purchase remains cost neutral in 2023/24, significant ongoing discussions behind the scenes to redevelop the area.
- Supporting Local Organisations – peppercorn rents for land to hoist building for the Scouts, Guides, sea Cadets and Royal British Legion equivalent to £7k per year commercial value, unable to fund Community Grant programme this year, offering free or greatly subsidized use of rooms at the Rufus Centre or The Hub.
- Focusing on Youth Provision – new youth provider 'Dan Gaze Support Services' delivering a range of weekly clubs, successful Skate Jam competition and new activities including Basketball, Football and DJ workshops.
- Cost-of-living Support – Flitwick Community Fridge, weekly Community Hub, Job Club launched and delivering low cost or free events.

The priorities for each Committee within the Council's strategy were shown on the presentation screen, and Cllr Blazeby gave an overview of these.

7. RESOLUTION AND QUESTIONS

A resident advised that the noticeboard at Flitwick Library has been damaged and the noticeboard at Brookes Road had been vandalised. Officers were not aware of this and agreed to follow this up with the Public Realm Team.

8. OPEN FORUM – MATTERS RELATING TO FLITWICK

No items.