



Flitwick Town Council

Senior Role Applications 2025-2026

Town Mayor

Martin Platt

I have experience in representing Flitwick as Deputy Mayor and have served on the council for 15 years. I would like to continue as either Mayor or Deputy as I feel this is a valuable role representing our town. I have chaired committees and acted as Deputy Chair on both planning and community services and maintain and interest in community activities.

John Roberts

Serving as Town Mayor for the 2024/2025 Civic Year has been a huge honour and I am very grateful for the support and help I have received from fellow Councillors and Officers.

It has certainly been a busy year with lots happening. Highlights of the year have included the 3 Station Road development, the sale of FTC land at Steppingley Road, various improvements to our Green Spaces and the Skate Park developments. The Community Fridge has continued to grow, helping Flitwick residents with the continuing cost of living crisis and now has more than 40 volunteers.

As Mayor, I have attended many events across Bedfordshire, and elsewhere, representing Flitwick. Events have included some 12 Civil Services held by fellow Mayors, various ceremonial functions and a large number of fundraising events.

I have also raised over £5,000 to be split between my chosen charities this year. Working with Officers and Members events I have held include a Flitwick Civic Reception, 2 quizzes at the Rufus Centre (thank you as ever to Cllr Thompson for being a fantastic Quiz Master), a Wreath Making Class and various raffles including one for a Wheelbarrow of Booze. I have also worked closely with Mark Rankine, who has designed two special commemorative badges to mark the 80th Anniversary of WW2 Mosquito HK304 and its Crew being lost in Steppingley Road Field. This has raised almost £2,000 for my charities.

I would like to thank officers and the former Major for their help and guidance in helping me learn the various aspects of the role. It has been a steep learning curve, but there are many parts of the role I have really enjoyed such as meeting Flitwick residents, especially its younger members.

However, there is still a lot I would like to achieve. I would like to engage more with local schools and charities in Flitwick along with local businesses to see how they can, and

do, work together with FTC to benefit the local community. As you know, there are also a number of large projects FTC is looking to deliver for our Community over the next year which I would like to help contribute towards. It is going to be an interesting year.

Serving the Council and the Flitwick Community for a second term would be a huge honour so I respectfully ask that you consider supporting me for the role.

Deputy Town Mayor

Martin Platt

I have experience in representing Flitwick as Deputy mayor and have served on the council for 15 years. I would like to continue as either Mayor or Deputy as I feel this is a valuable role representing our town. I have chaired committees and acted as Deputy Chair on both planning and community services and maintain an interest in community activities.

Community Services Committee Chair

Clare Thompson

I am deeply committed to the community work across Flitwick and having held the role I believe I have worked well with officers and added value.

Finance & General Purposes Committee Chair

Tim Parsons

As a Chartered Accountant I feel I am appropriately qualified for this position. I have enjoyed being in this role for the last year and helping both the officers and members appropriately manage the Council's financial position, and would like to continue doing so for the next 12 months.

Business Improvement & Development Board Chair

Vacancy

HR Committee Chair

Vacancy

Appeals Committee Chair

Vacancy

Planning Improvement Working Group Chair

Vacancy

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Flitwick Town Council

Committee Choices 2025-2026

Members' preferences for Committee Choices and other roles for 2025-2026 are as follows:

Committee	Members
Business Improvement & Development Board (6 Members) VOTE REQUIRED for Cllrs Parsons and Thompson (this Committee is not their 1 st choice)	1. Andy Snape (1 st choice) 2. Ian Blazeby (1 st choice) 3. Fraser Patterson (1 st choice) 4. Howard Hodges (1 st choice) 5. John Roberts (1 st Choice) 6. Tim Parsons 7. Clare Thompson
Community Services Committee (8 Members)	1. Robert Wilsmore (1 st choice) 2. Patricia Earles (1 st choice) 3. Andrew Crawford (1 st choice) 4. Martin Platt (1 st choice) 5. Clare Thompson (1 st choice) 6. Lorraine Bandy (1 st choice) 7. Dan Toinko (1 st choice) 8. Toby Harald
Finance & General Purposes Committee (5 Members)	1. Tim Parsons (1 st choice) 2. Toby Harald 3. Andy Snape 4. Ian Blazeby 5. John Roberts
HR Committee (5 Members)	1. Toby Harald (1 st choice) 2. Andy Snape 3. Ian Blazeby 4. Tim Parsons 5. John Roberts
Appeals Committee (5 Members)	1. Robert Wilsmore 2. Patricia Earles 3. Clare Thompson 4. Dan Toinko 5. Vacancy
Planning Improvement Working Group (6 Members)	1. Robert Wilsmore 2. Patricia Earles 3. Andrew Crawford 4. Martin Platt 5. Fraser Patterson 6. Howard Hodges

Representatives on Outside Bodies

Outside Body	Members
Flitwick Village Hall Management Committee VOTE REQUIRED (1 Member / 1 Sub)	Martin Platt Lorraine Bandy
Patient Group Representative at Flitwick Surgery VOTE REQUIRED (1 Member / 1 Sub)	Andrew Crawford Howard Hodges
Planning Improvement Representative (To attend CBC DMC Meetings)	Martin Platt
Police Priority Setting Representative VOTE REQUIRED (1 Member / 1 Sub)	Fraser Patterson Robert Wilsmore



FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the Flitwick Town Council meeting held on
Tuesday 15th April 2025 at the Rufus Centre at 7:45pm

Present:

Cllr J Roberts (Chairman)
Cllr A Snape
Cllr I Blazeby
Cllr H Hodges
Cllr T Harald
Cllr F Patterson
Cllr P Earles
Cllr T Parsons
Cllr L Bandy
Cllr D Toinko
Cllr A Crawford

John Tizard - Bedfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner
Janine Graham – Inspector, Bedfordshire Police

2 members of the public

Also present:

Stacie Lockey – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Stephanie Stanley – Deputy Town Clerk & RFO

5791. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was **resolved** to accept apologies for absence from Cllrs Platt, Thompson, and Wilsmore (holiday).

5792. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

- (a)** Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – none.
- (b)** Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – none.

5793. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor commented that it had been a busy month of civic engagements, including:

- Flitwick Town Council (FTC) Quiz Night raised almost £600 for the Town Mayor's charities. The event was nearly sold out. The Town Mayor thanked the Officers for their hard work organising it and Cllr Thompson for being the Quizmaster.
- The Cost-of-Living Fair
- Sandy Town Council Civic Service

Tina Connell had resigned as Town Councillor. The Town Mayor thanked Tina for her hard work and wished her the best for the future.

Members were reminded about two upcoming meetings:

- Annual Assembly Meeting on 29th April
- Annual Statutory Meeting on 20th May which will involve the election of the Town Mayor and the Committee Choices process for the next civic year

5794. Leader Update

Flitwick Community Fridge

The Town Mayor's Charity had now fully funded the van project, which was to be discussed later in the meeting. Having the van would change operations, and the Leader was looking forward to doing the Food Hub pop-up sessions at Kingsmoor Lower School and the Roman Way area of Flitwick.

The Regional Director for Fair Share had visited the Community Fridge the previous week, and they had been very impressed and supportive of the initiative. The Director endorsed the project's open access model and the aspiration to continue assisting people in need.

Senior Living Accommodation Development – Steppingley Road

Ward Members Heather Townsend and Ian Adams had been pushing CBC Officers for information about the continued delays to the above development, and they had been advised only this week that the project was now delayed until October 2025. The move of Ferndale residents to the site would begin at this time. The Ward Members were advocating for residents as the construction project was causing a significant impact on the community, e.g., traffic issues on Steppingley Road and noise for nearby residents. The Leader commented that the consistent delays were unacceptable and that CBC needed to look at the performance of this contract and seek compensation. The Leader suggested contacting Farrans and discussing the social value elements of the contract.

5795. REPORTS FROM WARD MEMBERS

There was no report.

5796. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Mr Culman had attended the meeting regarding the report circulated on the Steppingley Field planning application. He read aloud the content relating to the impact on drainage and advised that the flow of water went down the side of the Leisure Centre, the side of Fry Grove, under the footpath and railway, then emerged onto Ampthill Road. He mentioned a blockage between Ampthill Road and the western side of the railway. He said that Cllr Adams was aware of this situation. Mr Culman advised the Council that elements about the flooding impact had been missed in the report circulated for this meeting.

Mr Culman wanted to ask the Council about their objections to the Steppingley Field application and how the FTC development was different concerning the impact of flooding.

Cllr Hodges explained that he had written the Planning Improvement Working Group (PIWG) report but was unaware of the further blockage in the drainage. Mr Culman stated that he could forward evidence of this matter. Cllr Hodges stated that he was unsure

about the second question raised by Mr Culman but assumed that the two developments would undergo separate assessments by the planning officers.

Cllr Snape mentioned that he and Mr Culman had exchanged extensive emails about this matter and that FTC had provided him with a response regarding the flooding impact for the land sale. Cllr Snape reiterated that the Council had contracted professionals to undertake the necessary assessments and that attenuation ponds were being included in the design. Mr Culman commented that when he approached the surveyors on site about this issue, the contractor did not appear to know about the problem.

Cllr Snape was unsure how else to explain FTC's position or clarify this matter further. Cllr Snape reiterated that FTC was going ahead with this application unless a professional contracted by the Council raised something to stop this process from continuing.

The Chairman explained to Mr Culman that he was entitled to his opinions and to continue to share his views with the Council. Mr Culman advised that he would possibly raise further matters in the second public session of the meeting.

5797. INVITED SPEAKER

John Tizard, Bedfordshire's Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), apologised for his late visit to Flitwick and explained that the PCC's role was strategic and included legal responsibilities regarding the Criminal Justice System.

Cllr Crawford entered the meeting at 20:01.

In October 2024, the PCC published a plan to set the direction for the next four years. He explained the PCC's aims and responsibilities regarding seeking greater clarity on Government policy, setting the Police budget, holding the Chief Constable to account, and hearing the public's views.

Members were informed about statistics on court system wait times and reoffending rates for prisoners released.

The PCC's priorities were related to:

- Prevention of crime
- Reinvigorating local policing (including on-street policing)
- Tackling serious crime such as county lines and misogynistic crime against women and children
- Improving the Police service

The PCC stated that Flitwick was not a hotspot, but it did have crime, including antisocial behaviour, issues with cannabis, retail crime, and speeding, to name a few. The PCC asked FTC to explain their police priorities and how the Police could do better or operate differently.

Questions

The Chairman commented on the fundamental issue of Bedfordshire being funded as a shire county. He asked if the funding would address the imbalance. The PCC stated that this had always been an issue as the Home Office deemed Bedfordshire a rural county and therefore had the lowest funding of any police service. This was made up of 60%

Government grant and 40% through Council Tax. The PCC was pushing for a change in the formula and had conversations with the Home Secretary about this. He hoped for change, but there was a political challenge. The PCC hoped that the special grants accessible to Bedfordshire would be extended and rolled into the annual budget instead of being applied for each year.

Cllr Snape looked at the Flitwick crime statistics and cross-referenced these with the community's views in the annual residents' survey. He mentioned that residents feel there are crime issues in Flitwick, and there was a sense that people did not feel safe walking in the town centre at night. Cllr Snape asked about perception and if the PCC had ideas about combating this. Cllr Snape mentioned the improved CCTV had enabled the Police to track crime better, but he asked about the possibility of a combined campaign from the Council and the Police.

Inspector Janine Graham commented that perception was a huge part of this and that the Police's recent move to its Doolittle Mill base would help. She stated that there would be an increased Police presence with more vehicles passing through Flitwick due to this move. Inspector Graham provided some information about the number of officers from different departments who are due to be based at Doolittle Mill, and she explained that the response times for Flitwick crimes would be improved.

Cllr Earles asked if there were plans to increase the Police presence on the streets. Inspector Graham mentioned that the Police often parked up and patrolled areas of the town.

Cllr Bandy asked about the potential for more opportunities to offer young people with the Police cadets. Inspector Graham was unsure about the advertising done for Flitwick, but she would ask about increasing this. Members understood that the cadet sessions operated from Kempston.

Inspector Graham mentioned that the Police had tried to set up a Shop Watch scheme connected to CCTV to prevent and detect crime; however, there had been little interest from shop owners. She stated that the Police intended to try and launch the scheme again, but with a combined approach with Ampthill businesses. Members were informed that the Co-op and Budgens experienced crime, but this scheme relied on shopkeepers buying into the idea.

Cllr Snape asked if there were other areas the Council could look to extend its CCTV coverage. Inspector Graham mentioned that the Brookes Road shops location, Hinksley Road, Park/Roman Way, and St. Peter's Close would be helpful.

Cllr Earles asked about knife crime in Flitwick. Inspector Graham advised that not many instances of knife crime were reported, but there was a real concern about this for Bedfordshire as a whole. The PCC stated that the county was within the top ten knife crime areas (predominantly Luton and Bedford offenses). The statistics showed numbers decreasing, but the severity of attacks was increasing, which was a concern. The PCC commented that the Government needed to address this matter regarding the sale of knives.

The PCC stated that the statistics did not necessarily inform the whole picture, and that the new PCC anti-social behaviour strategy needed to be signed off by the summer. He added that the most significant cause of crime was related to drugs, including retail crime.

The PCC and Inspector Graham left the meeting at 20:34.

5798. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr Hodges asked whether a physical barrier previously separated the Village Hall car park and the Town Council car park beside it. The Town Clerk advised that there used to be barriers, but these kept being damaged or needing repairs. She added that the delineation was now in the form of a white line. Cllr Snape agreed to explain the background to this to Cllr Hodges separately.

5799. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. For Members to approve the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held, on **Tuesday 18th March 2025**, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre.

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 18th March 2025 at the Rufus Centre.

5800. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 18th March 2025 – no items.
- b. Members to receive any updates from Officers – no items.

5801. OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Snape formally requested that the Deputy Town Mayor provide Members with an update on business at the Beds Association of Town & Parish Councils. He mentioned that this could be copies of meeting minutes.

Action: Town Clerk

5802. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- a. **Planning application Land South of Steppingley Road, Flitwick CB/22/04108/FULL**

Cllr Hodges thanked PIWG members for taking the time to read through the information on CBC's website so that he could compose a response to the application. He mentioned that Members knew the application would return, but it had come back with some vigour. Last week, the PIWG met, along with other FTC Members, to discuss several issues with the proposed development.

The new application did not change the pressure on traffic in the area, although a new survey had been completed. There were no concrete plans to make improvements. The FTC's response to this application included an additional point relating to the proposed new leisure site in Stewartby, which aimed to attract eight million visitors per year. Other new subjects introduced related to the loss of agricultural land and the drainage impact.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Hodges for his work on this report.

Cllr Snape advised that he had attended the PIWG meeting to discuss this application, and he fully supported the groups proposed response. He mentioned that the proposed development did not meet the required targets for affordable housing. Cllr Snape had been trying to see a copy of the Head of Terms document between CBC and the developer but this had disappeared from the website. Cllr Snape requested that FTC formally request that the Head of Terms be made accessible as there was a requirement for this for a development of this size. He added that FTC needed to be fully appraised on the situation and that Ward Members had been updated on this.

Cllr Hodges commented that he had seen some information about Section 106 contributions and that it appeared to be quite generous.

It was **resolved** to object to planning application CB/22/04108/FULL as stated in the circulated PIWG report.

b. Governance Review

Members were reminded that an informal conversation had taken place about this item at the previous meeting. Based on that discussion, Cllr Snape had prepared a report that captured the views of all members. Cllr Snape commented that there had been a majority agreement to abolish the two parish wards (East and West) and for Flitwick to be considered one ward. It was proposed that the number of Flitwick Councillors be lowered from 17 to 13 because there was insufficient interest from the community to keep the membership at 17. The final element of the Governance Review related to conversing with Steppingley Parish Council about the boundary line between the two parishes.

Cllr Patterson questioned why FTC would lower its membership to below the current numbers. He also did not see why having vacant positions filled by co-option was problematic, and that reducing the number of Members to 13 would provide less opportunity for other residents to represent their community. Cllr Patterson was also unsure why FTC would want to lower its Membership to force an election.

Cllr Snape responded that the Council had a legal obligation to carry the seats. Cllr Snape was keen on a parish election and commented that the number of members joining the Council by co-option was disruptive and time-consuming, with the induction process, etc. Cllr Snape added that with an election, those interested in joining the Council must 'really' want to do it. He would be happy for FTC's membership to be at 15, but commented that maintaining this number had been challenging over recent years.

Cllr Patterson asked about the relevance of the General Power of Competence (GPC) and the number of current Members co-opted. The Town Clerk advised that this was not a problem currently, but two-thirds of the Members must be elected at the beginning of the next four-year Council term. Cllr Snape commented that without the GPC, FTC would struggle to operate.

Cllr Earles questioned what FTC was doing wrong, unable to maintain its members. Cllr Snape commented that this was a national problem, but mostly it was about work-life balance when people chose to leave the Council. Cllr Blazeby added that the business FTC transacts was beyond the usual scale of a Town Council of Flitwick's size. Cllr Blazeby believed having a membership of 13 would not detract from adequately representing the Flitwick community, but commented that Members did need to give up a significant amount of time to fulfil the role.

Cllr Roberts was concerned about filling the Committees with 13 Members and believed 15 would work better.

Cllr Toinko shared his views:

- He was in favour of Flitwick becoming one ward
- He believed 13 members was insufficient to fill the FTC Committees and added that reducing the membership too low would load more tasks onto fewer members
- He disagreed with the assumption that co-opted Members were more likely to resign, as this related to their personal circumstances at the time changing
- He commented that in recent years, elections were uncontested, and the one in 2019 was not very competitive

Cllr Snape advised that the Council could change the numbers associated with its committees.

Cllr Blazeby added that the frequency of meetings can be altered. For example, business meetings were now quarterly instead of monthly.

Cllr Hodges agreed with Cllr Toinko and mentioned the other roles to be filled, e.g. representatives on the Patient Group and the Police Priority Setting meetings. He asked about considering reducing Committee memberships to an odd number.

The Chairman asked Members to partake in an indicative vote regarding the number of members as part of the Governance Review. This vote showed:

- 6 members in favour of reducing the number to 15 Members
- 4 members in favour of reducing the number to 13 Members

It was **resolved** to ask CBC to do the following as part of the Governance Review for Flitwick:

- i) Abolish the East and West Wards and instate one Flitwick Parish Ward for the town
- ii) To reduce the number of Council Members from 17 to 15.

It was **resolved** that the Town Clerk and the Leader meet with representatives from Steppingley Parish Council to discuss parish boundaries between Flitwick and Steppingley.

Action: Town Clerk

c. Key Holder

Cllr Snape mentioned that Cllr Crawford had volunteered for the Community Fridge initiative for a long time and that having him as a key holder for the Rufus Centre would provide operational flexibility for facilitating food deliveries at weekends.

It was **resolved** that Cllr Crawford be made a key holder for the Rufus Centre.

d. Community Services Committee

It was **resolved** that Cllrs Bandy and Crawford be elected as members of the Community Services Committee.

e. Flitwick Community Fridge

Cllr Snape advised that it had long been a long-standing aspiration for the Community Fridge project to have its own vehicle. He provided Members with some background information about how using the Public Realm Team's trucks was now unviable and the limitations on how much food produce could be collected by volunteers using their own vehicles. This was affecting the project's ability to meet demand.

Fundraising had occurred through the Town Mayor's Charity, and £18,000 had been secured, which could be paid to FTC as a grant to purchase a van and install an electric charge point at the Rufus Centre. Cllr Snape explained the benefits of having an electric vehicle.

Members were informed that this proposal asked FTC to approve this idea and for the Council to pick up insurance and running costs for the van, which amounted to a 10% contingency from the Central Projects Fund (CPF).

Cllr Patterson supported the proposal and asked whether any electrical infrastructure would be required for the charge point. Cllr Snape confirmed that this was not necessary for 'trickle charging'.

Cllr Blazeby asked about where the charge point was to be installed. Cllr Snape believed this was an Officer's decision.

Cllr Earles asked about the make and model of the proposed van. Cllr Snape commented that the best option would be selected at the time.

It was **resolved** to:

- i) Authorise the purchase of a pre-owned electric van and install an electrical charging point at the Rufus Centre for the Community Fridge.
- ii) The project budget would be £18,000 (funded by the Town Mayor's Charity grant) with up to 10% contingency. Any contingency would be funded from the CPF.
- iii) The insurance and maintenance costs would be funded by the Cost of Living Earmarked Reserve in financial year 25-26, and incorporated into the revenue budget for subsequent years.

5803. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Finance Reports

The RFO explained that this item was included on the agenda in error. Finance reports were not due to be discussed at the meeting, as her team needed to complete the Year-End process before presenting any finance reports.

b. Delegated Authority Decision

Cllr Earles asked if she and Cllr Toinko could discuss this item, considering they were allotment holders. The Town Clerk explained that this item was only for noting.

Members noted the delegated authority decision to instruct Smith Jenkins to apply to the Secretary of State for consent to dispose of 'statutory' allotment land for £4,000.

5804. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Mr Culman was disappointed in the advertising the Council put out regarding the allotments site in Steppingley Road and the land sale project. He mentioned that the Council had previously stated that a public consultation would take place, but this consultation was now included in the Annual Assembly meeting. Mr Culman asked if residents would have sufficient time to ask questions about the proposed development if the consultation were done this way.

The Town Clerk stated that Snowdon Homes and Ascent would have a stand at the Annual Assembly, and representatives from both companies would be on hand to answer residents' questions before or during the meeting.

Mr Culman commented that the capital receipt that the Council would receive as part of the land sale would need to be spent to purchase allotment land or improve existing allotment sites. He mentioned that on the Council's paperwork, it was clear that there were intentions to spend this money to make improvements across the town, but he stated that, in his opinion, this would not comply with legislation.

Cllr Snape advised that the Council had sought legal advice from the National Association of Town & Parish Councils on this matter. He told Mr Culman that the Council would discuss possible improvements to the allotments, such as toilets, but these ideas

were yet to be debated formally. Cllr Snape explained to Mr Culman that there would be deductions from the land sale, which would reduce the capital receipt received.

Mr Culman commented that the Council should improve the allotments after receiving this income and that toilets would be welcomed as a start. He explained that allotment holders were losing roadways and plots as part of this project, and there was a bad feeling.

The Town Clerk mentioned that she and Mr Culman had previously spoken about this situation and that she had met with the affected allotment holders. She explained that the Council would be circulating information soon, but no allotment holders had approached Officers with any concerns.

Mr Culman commented that he had researched what Ascent Housing does and explained that, as a company, they do a lot of developments for asylum seekers. Mr Culman referred to the Council's paperwork and asked if the houses would be for local people (as advertised) or asylum seekers. The Town Clerk responded that she had not heard anything about this project being for asylum seekers and that the Council would work with CBC's Housing Team for allocations.

Cllr Snape stated that the split between affordable rent and shared ownership was currently unknown. The marketing would first be sent to people with a familiar link to Flitwick. However, ultimately, the affordable housing was decided by the existing allocation system, which was oversubscribed, and FTC would not have a say on this.

Cllr Snape explained that FTC was responsible for ensuring that the conditional contract detailed exactly what the Council wanted.

Another resident had attended the meeting and advised that she lived on Steppingley Road and was interested in the Council's discussions on the proposed development for Steppingley Field. The proposed flats were opposite her house, and they would encroach on her privacy, which made her want to leave the town she had lived in for over 30 years. The resident explained that Steppingley Road had undergone a significant amount of work during the last 10 years, being dug up multiple times, etc.

The Chairman commented that the Council had voted to object to the latest application for Steppingley Field development and this would be forwarded to CBC.

The two residents left the meeting at 21:26.

5805. 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.

a. Confidential Report

The report was noted.

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 closed at 21:35.

Signed (Chairman)



FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of Flitwick Town Council's Annual Assembly meeting held on Tuesday 29th April 2029 at The Rufus Centre at 7:30pm

Representatives from Snowdon Homes & Accent Housing had attended the meeting to allow residents to view the proposed plans and ask questions about the development on land at the bottom of Steppingley Road allotments.

Present:

Cllr J Roberts (Chairman)
Cllr I Blazeby
Cllr D Toinko
Cllr C Thompson
Cllr F Patterson
Cllr M Platt
Cllr L Bandy
Cllr R Wilsmore
Cllr T Parsons
Cllr A Crawford

Also present:

Snowdon Homes Representative
Accent Housing Representative
Cllr I Adams – Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Ward Member
16 members of the public

Stacie Lockey – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Stephanie Stanley – Deputy Town Clerk & RFO
Mathew Earles – Business & Facilities Manager
Beverley Jones – Communications & Marketing Manager

Cllr Blazeby welcomed residents to the meeting and advised on the order of business for the evening.

Each of the Committee Chairmen were introduced.

The Chairman thanked residents for attending.

1. APOLOGIES

It was **resolved** to accept apologies for absence from Cllrs Snape (holiday) and Harald (work).

2. MINUTES OF MEETING

Mr Culman (resident) advised that he had two corrections to the minutes presented:

- Mr Culman referred to paragraph 3 under item 6 and reminded Members that his question at the time was about ATMs. Therefore, the information about not relocating to 3 Station Road and leases for future tenants was irrelevant, so this should be removed from the minutes.
- The information about a toucan crossing on Dunstable Road (page 6) was incorrect because there was no such form of crossing at the location. This needed to be removed from the minutes. Mr Culman said there was no school crossing control there because CBC had not recruited anybody for this position.

The Chairman mentioned that his apologies for absence needed to be recorded.

It was **resolved** to adopt the minutes of the Annual Assembly Meeting held on Tuesday, April 30th, 2024, at the Rufus Centre as an accurate record with the amendments discussed.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Mr Culman asked if the Town Council could speak to CBC about the need for the school crossing patrol for Dunstable Road. Cllr Adams advised that he had written to CBC about this, but the response was that CBC did not have funds in the budget for this role. Cllr. Adams was happy to continue pushing for this provision, as he believed the role was necessary and felt that a letter from the Town Council would be helpful.

Action: Town Clerk

4. PRESENTATION & ANNUAL REPORT OF FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

The Chairman started the presentation by informing residents about the current membership of Flitwick Town Council (FTC). He advised that there were three vacancies available for residents interested in becoming a Councillor.

The Chairman advised on some of the civic engagements he had attended throughout the year and commented that it had been a privilege for him to serve the people of Flitwick. He added that the year had been positive, and the Council had done a lot to serve the interests of its residents.

The Chairman explained his role as the Town Mayor, including attending civic events, chairing Council meetings, and working with other Members and Officers. He added that he enjoyed attending Flitwick-based events, such as the Car Show, and his involvement in resident Mark Rankine's project, the Airmen Memorial.

Residents were informed that approximately £5,000 had been raised for the Town Mayor's Charities; Keech Hospice and the Town Mayor's Charity CIO. The Chairman commented that the amount could change, subject to remaining income and expenditure for the charity fundraising during April and the first half of May.

The Chairman highlighted the Council's key achievements from the year, including the refurbishment project at 3 Station Road, the Steppingley Road land sale project, and the ongoing work as part of the Community Fridge initiative. He updated residents on improvements to green spaces in the town, the extension of the skatepark project, and the upcoming Family Fun Day. The Chairman also referenced the Council's disappointment at having to cancel the Christmas Lights Switch On event due to adverse weather conditions.

The Chairman reminded residents that representatives from Snowdon Homes and Accent Housing were present to answer any questions about the Steppingley Road land sale.

5. RESIDENTS SURVEY FEEDBACK

Cllr Blazeby introduced the Annual Residents Survey and advised that this was its fourth year. He reminded residents why the Council did the survey and how it linked with the national survey produced by the Local Government Association.

Cllr Blazeby showed residents some statistics based on this year's responses and how these compared to the previous year's survey and responses from the national survey. There were questions about trust in the FTC, residents' satisfaction with the Council's work, and ratings on Flitwick as a place to live.

Residents were informed that the Council sometimes faced challenges in explaining the services it was responsible for and those that fell within CBC's remit. Cllr Blazeby stated that the Flitwick Papers listed the responsibilities in each edition.

Residents were advised that the information received as part of the survey was filtered to each of the relevant Committees. The responses provided insight into what resources the Council should invest in based on residents' wishes. The current survey showed that residents were most satisfied with the green spaces, the Rufus Centre and the Rendezvous Café management, play areas, and community events.

Cllr Blazeby advised that FTC were committed to improving communication with residents.

Improvements made to the Rufus Centre were presented, and residents were reminded that part of the building's purpose was to reinvest any surplus at the end of each financial year in the services of Flitwick.

Cllr Blazeby presented other Rufus Centre priorities, including the tenanted office space refurbishment programme, its community use, and the café.

Residents were informed about the responses relating to perceptions of feeling unsafe at night and how these did not correlate with the town's crime statistics.

The Chairman provided an update on the town's improvements to its green spaces, including the 27,000 trees planted at the Nature Park site. Residents were informed that the Council was waiting for the outcome of this planning application for further site development.

Residents were informed about the Food Hub's dedicated space at the Rufus Centre, which was made available as part of the Council's cost-of-living support.

A brief overview of the Flitwick Living History project was provided.

6. RESOLUTION AND QUESTIONS

A resident asked if Flitwick residents could have priority for the affordable housing as part of the Town Council's land sale project. The representative from Accent Housing explained that a Local Aims Plan included the point of prioritising Flitwick residents first, which was included in the Section 106 agreement. She added that after a period, possibly three months, the eligibility could be extended to Ampthill and other surrounding parishes before cascading. Residents were informed that CBC had advised that a high number of people in need had close connections to Flitwick.

A resident who attended the previous Annual Assembly meeting asked again why Ampthill had a Street Operative and Flitwick did not. This situation frustrated the resident, as Flitwick had a higher need for this service than Ampthill. He went on to

say that the litter gave a bad image for the town. Cllr Adams advised that this matter had been raised with CBC, and CBC had responded that the main road into Ampthill town centre was very narrow, which meant vehicles could not use this road, whereas Flitwick could have a vehicular service. CBC had advised that the service given to Flitwick was equal to the service provided in Ampthill. It was agreed that this matter needed to be challenged further.

The Chairman explained that he had seen the correspondence regarding the request for a Street Operative for Flitwick and that Cllr Adams had attempted to obtain answers. Cllr Blazeby reminded residents that the Council organised litter pick events and asked people to get involved. The resident who enquired about the Street Operative stated that he had helped at the litter pick events. Cllr Blazeby pointed out that the Council's Public Realm Team regularly picks up litter around the town as part of their work.

Mr Culman commented that he agreed with many of the things that FTC did; however, he did not agree with how the Council had handled the land sale project north of Steppingley Road allotments for various reasons:

- He believed that FTC had lied in the press statement in January about the impact this would have on allotment holders. Mr Culman said that when he had pointed this out, the Council stated that this project was going ahead anyway.
- He mentioned that his recollection of the information at the March Council meeting was that anybody on the affordable housing list would be eligible, and that priority was not given to Flitwick people.
- The impact on allotment holders was more significant than FTC had stated, since he believed that several partial and full-size plots would be lost, and parking/vehicle tracks would be reduced.
- He mentioned that FTC believed there would not be an effect on allotment holders; however, the boundary would be right against some plots. Mr Culman felt that the development impacted all 140 allotment holders in some form.
- He had not received a proper answer about the impact of chopping down trees and the effects this would have.
- Mr Culman referenced the Government's view on allotments being good for the environment and questioned FTC's alignment with this. He raised concerns about dust and noise pollution. He added that several FTC Members' website bios included environmental and green spaces interests, but this project did not align with that.
- Mr Culman referred to the sale price and how the figure in the published FTC Frequently Asked Questions document did not match the anticipated capital receipt.
- Mr Culman referenced the legalities with statutory allotment land and asked if the Council planned to improve existing sites or acquire additional land as part of this project. Mr Culman referred to the information given at the previous Council meeting, where he was informed that his understanding of the legalities was untrue. Having re-read the legislation, he believed this legal position remained factual. He requested evidence of the legislation permitting the Council to spend this income on other projects in the town and threatened to take this matter elsewhere if FTC did not provide this.
- Mr Culman referenced that FTC had objected to the Steppingley Field development due to the flooding implications; however, the proposed site for the affordable housing was in the middle of this flood area. Mr Culman mentioned that extensive improvements would be required to improve the water flow and that the railway embankment would be a big issue. Mr Culman did not understand how FTC could object to the Steppingley Field development but then make matters worse in their land sale.

In response to Mr Culman's points, the Chairman acknowledged that he could appreciate the strong feelings expressed regarding the land sale; however, he remained perplexed that Mr Culman continued to ask the same questions for which responses had already been provided. CBC had confirmed there was sufficient need from Flitwick residents, and the representative from Accent Housing confirmed that for someone to be on the CBC register, that person required a connection to Central Bedfordshire. From the beginning of this process, a commitment had been made that the housing would be prioritised and allocated to Flitwick residents first, and that these individuals would be sought out while the building work was underway.

The Chairman was at a loss for what else he could say in response to Mr Culman and mentioned that the capital receipt would bring many benefits to other Flitwick-based projects and services. Mitigation had been carefully considered so that the impact on allotment holders was minimal, and professional advice on factors such as flooding had been sought.

The representative from Snowdon Homes advised that she had met Mr Culman on site and that background work was happening to mitigate the concerns he had raised. Snowdon Homes was actively seeking to determine who owned the ditch.

Cllr Blazeby commented that the two sites Mr Culman mentioned were incomparable. He noted that the Steppingley Field development was a scalable project with a significant negative impact. In contrast, the Council's land was allocated for a much smaller proposal for much-needed affordable housing at a site next to some allotments.

Cllr Blazeby picked up on Mr Culman's point about the legalities and explained to residents that there was a third provision within the legislation about capital receipts funding other projects after improvements are made to the allotment site. Cllr Blazeby advised that the Council had yet to decide what it would spend the receipt on, but explained that it was untrue that the funds could only be used to make improvements to the allotments. Cllr Blazeby highlighted that the Council had sought thorough advice on this matter.

Mr Culman requested information about the mitigation measures included in the development to address the flooding impact. The representative from Snowdon Homes stated that there was a plan in place whereby the site would act like a tank, which would improve the current situation by storing water in pipes. Eventually, Accent Home would own the land and would be on hand to resolve any maintenance issues that arose.

Mr Culman commented that the attenuation pond was at the site's lowest point.

Cllr Blazeby stated that the Council had given Mr Culman answers to his questions on multiple occasions. Mr Culman commented that he would raise his concerns at the planning stage.

A resident enquired about the Council's decision to discontinue the Over 60s Lunch Club and raised concerns about the difficulties older people face with using Ticketsolve, the Council's online booking system. The resident commented on her mother's disappointment at these events stopping, noting that for many regular attendees, the Lunch Club was their only outing. The resident added that the new system incurred an additional booking fee, and that the attendees liked to be able to pay at reception.

Cllr Thompson, Chairman of the Community Services Committee, explained that the numbers for Lunch Club had been decreasing prior to the implementation of Ticketsolve. She added that the activity had become costly for the Council, and the

entry fee was not sustainable. Cllr Thompson commented that the Lunch Club took place in the Lockyer Suite, so there was an associated cost of not being able to utilise the room for conferencing. The Council had undertaken a review of the community events programme, which examined income ratios, social value, and where similar activities were already taking place elsewhere. The Lunch Club had been reviewed as an activity that made a loss, and there were alternative provisions locally offering similar options for residents. For these reasons, Lunch Club had been removed from the Council's activities, which Cllr Thompson stated had been a difficult, but necessary, decision.

The resident who asked the question said that attendees were willing to pay more for the Lunch Club to continue, and that a survey would have been good, to ask members how much they were willing to pay. Cllr Thompson responded that the Council had undertaken surveys.

7. OPEN FORUM – MATTERS RELATING TO FLITWICK

No items.

The meeting closed at 20:51.

**Recommendations and resolutions of the
Community Services Committee 6th May 2025**

The Town Council are asked to note the **RESOLUTIONS** and **approve** the **RECOMMENDATIONS** of the Community Services Committee 6th May 2025

1269. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies for Cllr Platt (work commitment).

1275. MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes from the Community Services meeting held on **Tuesday 4th March 2025** with no amendments.

1277. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Allotment Working Group Terms of Reference

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Allotment Working Group Terms of Reference with no amendments.

b. Flitwick 10k Race

It was **RESOLVED** to reject the request for a fee reduction for this year.

BEDFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF TOWN & PARISH COUNCILS

This body meets approximately 3 times per year and is an opportunity for the parishes and towns in the Bedfordshire region to meet and share their concerns with a mixture of Town and Parish Councillors. The Association has representatives on

- Bedfordshire Bus User Group
- East of England Association of Parish
- London Luton Airport Consultative Committee
- Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership
- National Association of Local Councils.

The Association provides training to new councillors and following the election in May there were a number of new councillor, particularly from the Independent sector who took advantage of the training opportunities.

The new Universal Studios theme park and its impact has dominated the most recent meaning with local councillors looking to explore the challenges and opportunities this large venture will bring to the local area. Many local councils are concerned about infrastructure and the impact on the environment but also welcome the boost to the local economy.

The association provides a forum for the views of the local councils and electorate to be taken into consideration when these large project, e.g Local Strategic Plan, Luton Airport expansion, Universal Theme Park are being considered.

Cllr Martin Platt

Representative of Flitwick town Council



Flitwick Town Council

FLAG FLYING POLICY

1. FTC do not fly flags for which planning permission would be needed, due to the burden upon FTC staff and CBC in processing these requests.
2. That from the list published, FTC fly the Union Flag on the real and official birthdays of the King and Remembrance Day on an annual basis. Then, VE and VJ day every 5th year. Additionally, FTC fly the St George's Cross on St George's Day; That we review this position upon a Royal succession.
3. FTC flies the Union Flag in accordance with guidelines upon death of a Sovereign and any issued special commands.
4. The default position is not to fly a flag.
5. FTC fly the Bedfordshire County Flag on 28th November.
6. The Pride Flag is flown during Pride month of June.

Approved: May 2022

Review: May 2025

14/05/2025

Flitwick Town Council 2025/26: CURRENT YEAR

10:49

Balance Sheet as at 30/04/2025

31st March 2025

31st March 2026

Net Value	Fixed Assets	Cost of Asset	Depreciation	Net Value
0		0	0	0
	Long Term Assets			
0			0	
	0			0
	Current Assets			
92,680	DEBTORS	111,698		
5,599	Burial Grounds & Cemetries	0		
19,462	VAT Control Account	19,280		
28,835	PREPAYMENTS	0		
8,166	Mthly Business Prepays	52,557		
53,989	PrePayment for Land Sale	59,929		
4,532	Accrued Income	0		
3,298	Stock Held - Bar	3,298		
4,346	Stock Held - Food	4,346		
5,569	Current Bank Ac Barclays 009	9,680		
42,231	Barclays Business Reserve 106	114,306		
1,000	PDQ Account	4,897		
46,550	Tenants Deposits Account	46,550		
400	Petty Cash Control (YE)	400		
400	Float - Main Safe (YE)	200		
400	Float - Cafe Safe (YE)	600		
15	Float - Reception Safe (YE)	15		
80	Float - Cafe Till Drawer	80		
1,133,095	CCLA Deposit Fund	1,543,095		
1,450,647				1,970,932
	1,450,647 Total Assets			1,970,932
	Current Liabilities			
15,997	DEBTORS Control: Functions	16,849		
0	Burial Grounds & Cemetries	1,052		
0	Barclaycard	737		
3,441	CREDITORS	112,023		
7,943	ACCRUAL - Loan Interest (YE)	0		
12,119	ACCRUALS (YE)	0		

14/05/2025

Flitwick Town Council 2025/26: CURRENT YEAR

10:49

Balance Sheet as at 30/04/2025

31st March 2025		31st March 2026	
17,763	PAYE/NIC Due	18,034	
10,568	LGPS Pension Control	9,788	
3,128	NEST Pension Control	3,406	
6,400	Income in Advance (YE)	0	
4,722	Past Yr TM Charity (YE)	0	
2,291	Past Yr TM Allow & Civic Recep	0	
77	Past Yr Leader Expenses (YE)	0	
52,188	Tenants Rent Deposits	52,188	
500	Refundable Deposits: Functions	600	
1,079	Barclaycard Year End balance	0	
138,217		214,676	
1,312,429	Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	1,756,255	
	Long Term Liabilities		
0		0	
1,312,429	Total Assets Less Long Term Liabilities	1,756,255	
	Represented By		
397,766	GENERAL RESERVE	800,955	
100	EMR Proud AF Picnic	100	
14,000	EMR Compensation Field 2025	14,000	
92,164	Central Project Fund	141,703	
10,458	EMR Nature Park Annual Grant	5,808	
500,000	EMR Do Not Spend Ops Reserves	500,000	
1,916	EMR IT Equipment Provision	1,916	
17,487	EMR Flitwick Living History	15,907	
10,505	EMR Hinksley Music Park 24/25	10,011	
18,187	EMR Allotments	17,947	
1,048	EMR Summer Programme	1,048	
397	EMR Youth Activities	397	
13,351	EMR Cost of Living	11,888	
57,050	EMR Steppingley Rd Legal Fees	57,050	
133,566	EMR 3 Station Road Development	133,091	
722	PROJ - Flitwick Town Sq Defib	722	
3,800	PROJ - Heritage Website	3,800	
2,000	PROJ - Rural Match Fund Bench	2,000	
1,814	PROJ - Nature Park Planning	1,814	
36,100	PROJ - Skate Park Extension	36,100	
1,312,429		1,756,255	

10:49

Balance Sheet as at 30/04/2025

31st March 2026

Signed :
Chairman

Date : _____

Signed :
Responsible
Financial

Date :

Last Updated: 30 April 2025

Accepted Project budget variance at 5%.

All projects now managed through individual EMRs with budgets drawn from CPF.

NEW Projects:
2025/26