



## FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

**DRAFT** Minutes of the Flitwick Town Council meeting held on  
Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at the Rufus Centre at 7:45pm

Present:

Cllr J Roberts (Chairman)  
Cllr A Snape  
Cllr C Thompson  
Cllr M Platt  
Cllr H Hodges  
Cllr R Wilshire  
Cllr L Bandy  
Cllr P Earles  
Cllr A Crawford  
Cllr T Parsons  
Cllr I Blazeby  
Cllr T Harald  
Cllr F Patterson  
Cllr D Toinko  
3 members of the public

Also present:

Cllr I Adams – Central Bedfordshire Council Ward Member  
Stacie Lockett – Town Clerk & Chief Executive  
Stephanie Stanley – Deputy Town Clerk & RFO  
Beverley Jones – Comms & Marketing Manager

### **5806. ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR FOR THE YEAR 2025-2026**

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Roberts as Town Mayor for the civic year 2025-26.

### **5807. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

Cllr Roberts gave his Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Town Mayor.

### **5808. ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR FOR THE YEAR 2025-2026**

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Platt as Deputy Town Mayor for the civic year 2025-26.

### **5809. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

Cllr Platt gave his Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Deputy Town Mayor.

### **5810. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies.

**5811. 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.

**5812. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Cllr Roberts thanked the Members for re-electing him as the Town Mayor for the ensuing year. The following civic engagements had been attended:

- Mayor of Luton's Civic Service
- Community Café Morning at Flitwick Market – fundraising for the Community Fridge
- The Chiltern Youth League Under 14's Trophy Final
- Remembrance Service at Flitwick War Memorial – VE Day

The Deputy Town Mayor thanked the Members for their support in re-electing him to the role. He had attended the following civic events:

- Lord Lieutenant's Evening of Shanties, Sea Songs and Laughter
- Remembrance Service at Flitwick War Memorial – VE Day

**5813. LEADER UPDATE**

Local Plan Call for Sites

Cllr Snape referred to the correspondence received about the Local Plan and commented that Flitwick would likely have some large-scale development. Cllr Snape was meeting with Ward Members this week, and the Local Plan would be one of the topics discussed. Following communication with Cllr Baker at CBC, the Town Council and Ward Members could write a joint list of infrastructure projects to be prioritised, which would be a significant step forward.

Cllr Snape had reviewed the Head of Terms agreement for the Steppingley Road field development and was disappointed that some matters were not included. However, there was an opportunity to influence this list. There were some challenges around Section 106 funding, as the infrastructure development plan was outdated.

Following an action from the previous meeting, Cllr Snape was scheduled to meet with the Chairman of Steppingley Parish Council later this week, which was timely considering the Call for Sites announcement. Cllr Snape would keep the Council updated on the discussions surrounding this matter.

Cllr Snape requested a point of order to suspend Standing Order 8b – voting on appointments will be conducted by secret ballot.

It was **resolved** to suspend Standing Order 8b and progress with public votes for appointments at this meeting.

**5814. REPORTS FROM WARD MEMBERS**

## Call for Sites – Local Plan

Cllr Adams emphasised that the Council should not overreact to the information provided in the Call for Sites. He explained that anyone could submit a site for consideration, even if they were not the landowner. At the same time, Cllr Adams highlighted the importance of not including sites in the Local Plan without proper engagement.

2026 would focus on a consultation on the procedure, including a strategic suitability assessment, and 2027 would focus on the details behind this, specifically what the list of sites includes.

Cllr Adams mentioned that some sites would be removed, and he had noticed that other sites had been reinstated to the list from previous years. Cllr Adams explained that he was elected to represent the interests of residents, but stood by his earlier stance of agreeing to 'appropriate' development.

Cllr Adams commented that it was right to engage in the Section 106 discussions and that there was an opportunity to challenge the agreement. Members were informed that there was an interactive map on CBC's website showing the land put forward, as well as a list of rejections. Cllr Adams had posted on social media about the sites in Steppingley and Flitwick that Members could refer to.

Members were informed that the Development Management Committee (DMC) were due to consider the Steppingley Field application on 4<sup>th</sup> June. Cllr Adams said that someone from FTC could attend and he would encourage this to happen, as well as wider attendance from Flitwick residents.

## Questions

Cllr Hodges asked if Cllr Mackey was the Chairman of the DMC and whether he would have a vote on the application. Cllr Adams responded that Cllr Mackey remained the Chairman of DMC. However, Cllr Mackey had sought legal advice since he could be considered predisposed. The outcome from this was unknown, but Cllr Adams informed Members that if Cllr Mackey did not chair the meeting, he would join the other Ward Members and the Vice Chairman of the DMC would chair the meeting.

Cllr Adams left the meeting at 20:02.

IA left meeting 20:02.

## **5815. MEMBERSHIP OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **a. For Members to determine membership of the Town Council's Standing Committees, Boards and Working Groups that report to Council.**

#### Business Improvement & Development Board (BIDB)

Cllr Roberts withdrew his interest in being a member of the BIDB.

It was **resolved** to elect the following members to the BIDB: Cllrs Snape, Blazeby, Thompson, Parsons, Hodges, Patterson.

#### Community Services

It was **resolved** to elect the following members to the Community Services Committee: Cllrs Thompson, Wilsmore, Earles, Crawford, Platt, Bandy, Toinko and Harald.

### Finance & General Purposes (GP)

It was **resolved** to elect the following members to the Finance & GP Committee: Cllrs Parsons, Snape, Blazeby, Harald and Roberts.

### HR Committee

It was **resolved** to elect the following members to the HR Committee: Cllrs Roberts, Harald, Snape, Blazeby and Parsons.

### Appeals

It was **resolved** to elect the following members to the Appeals Committee: Cllrs Wilsmore, Thompson, Earles, Toinko and Hodges.

### Planning Improvement Working Group (PIWG)

It was **resolved** to elect the following members to the PIWG: Cllrs Hodges, Wilsmore, Earles, Crawford, Platt and Patterson.

## **b. For Members to appoint Chairmen for Standing Committees.**

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Thompson as Chairman of the Community Services Committee.

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Parsons as Chairman of the Finance & GP Committee.

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Snape as Chairman of the BIDB.

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Roberts as Chairman of the HR Committee.

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Toinko as Chairman of the Appeals Committee.

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Hodges as Chairman of the PIWG.

## **5816. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

### **a. Police Priority Setting Representative**

Cllr Patterson commented that he would be willing to be the Sub for the Police Representative role and leave Cllr Wilsmore as the elected representative.

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Wilsmore as the Police Priority Setting Representative.

Cllr Patterson was proposed and seconded as the Sub for the Police Priority Setting Representative; however, this vote was not carried.

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Roberts as the Sub for the Police Priority Setting Representative role.

### **b. Flitwick Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC) Representative**

Cllr Thompson advised that the Flitwick VHMC meetings took place during the daytime.

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Bandy as the VHMC Representative.

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Platt as the Sub for the VHMC Representative role.

### **c. Planning Improvement Representative to attend CBC Development Management Meetings**

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Platt as the representative to attend CBC DMC meetings.

d. Patient Group (Flitwick Surgery) Representative

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Hodges as the Patient Group Representative.

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Crawford as the Patient Group Representative Sub.

**5817. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No items.

**5818. INVITED SPEAKER**

No items.

**5819. MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

No items.

**5820. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. For Members to approve the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held, on **Tuesday 15th April 2025**, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre.

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at the Rufus Centre as a true record.

- b. For Members to note the minutes of the Annual Assembly meeting held on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at the Rufus Centre.

Cllr Thompson suggested a minor amendment to the wording in item 6 about surveying the attendees of the Lunch Club. She stated that this sentence should state that the Council had explored the option of surveys, but that this process did not seem to be effective, which led to the Officers speaking directly to attendees of the Lunch Club instead.

Cllr Roberts noticed a typo in the date for the minutes.

Members noted the minutes of the Annual Assembly meeting held on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at the Rufus Centre and the above amendments would be made.

- c. For Members to receive and consider the resolutions and recommendations of the Community Services Committee meeting, held on **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025**, this meeting was held at The Rufus Centre.

The resolutions and recommendations for the Community Services Committee meeting held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at the Rufus Centre were noted.

**5821. MATTERS ARISING**

- a. **Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025.**

Cllr Hodges advised that Mr Culman, a resident, had reached out to show him the drainage issues in the Steppingley Road area, but he had not agreed to meet with him. Cllr Hodges planned to walk the route with Cllr Adams soon, and he would keep Members informed.

- b. **Members to receive any updates from Officers** – no items.

**5822. OUTSIDE BODIES**

Cllr Platt advised that he had circulated an update on the Beds Association of Town & Parish Council business. Cllr Snape requested copies of the minutes, and Cllr Platt stated that he would obtain them when he attends the next meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> June.

Cllr Thompson had attended the VHMC Annual General Meeting and updated Members that the committee was continuing its fundraising efforts and making repairs to the building as and when possible. Cllr Thompson reported that the committee were struggling with membership numbers and that there seemed to be a new energy to rectify the Wi-Fi issues. There were some discussions about the delineation of the car park, and the Town Clerk commented that she had received an email regarding this matter.

**5823. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Flag Flying Policy**

Cllr Wilsmore asked why the policy was being discussed, and he was informed that it was due for renewal. Members discussed the situation and agreed that the policy should be upheld until the end of the calendar year so that all occasions are marked with a flag flying. Cllr Toinko suggested reviewing the policy in September or October, so that any amendments would be in place by December.

It was **resolved** to continue with the existing Flag Flying Policy and review this in October or November so that a new policy was in place within the calendar year.

b. **Town Mayor's Allowance Budget**

It was **resolved** to add the unspent budget of £1,988.88 from the Town Mayor's Allowance/Civic Reception nominal code (4209/102) to the amount raised for the Town Mayor's Charities for the Civic Year 2024-25.

**5824. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Finance Reports**

- i) **Balance Sheet** – noted.
- ii) **Project Fund Summary**

Cllr Thompson commented that the sum for the Central Project Fund (CPF) for 2025-2026 looked healthy, but that no capital projects had been suggested yet. She referred to the 3 Station Road refurbishment project, noting the Council's awareness of the substantial works involved. Cllr Thompson asked about seeing a list of capital projects that may need to happen over time.

The RFO advised that a list of suggested future capital projects was discussed at the Finance and GP Committee meeting the previous evening, with the priority being the installation of replacement boilers at the Rufus Centre. Members were informed that capital projects and their fund allocations would need to be considered differently this

year, and a further update on this would be provided within the 3 Station Road Officer Update in the exempt section of the meeting.

**5825. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No items.

Three members of the public left the meeting at 20:33.

**5826. 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.

It was **resolved** to adjourn the meeting at 20:34.

It was **resolved** to restart the meeting at 20:40.

**a. Confidential Report – noted.**

**b. 3 Station Road**

It was **resolved** to accept one of the offers discussed and instruct the Town Clerk to continue negotiations with the preferred retailer, proceeding with the Heads of Terms and contract, with consultation from the Leader.

It was **resolved** to continue negotiations with two proposals for the restaurant unit and bring future proposals to a Council meeting for a decision. Alternative proposals received in the meantime would also be considered.

**c. Post Office**

It was **resolved** that Officers produce a Business Case for the discussed proposal, which will be considered at the next meeting.

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.

Signed ..... (Chairman)



## FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

**DRAFT** Minutes of the Extraordinary Flitwick Town Council meeting held on  
Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at the Rufus Centre at 7:45pm

Present:

Cllr M Platt (Chairman)  
Cllr A Snape  
Cllr C Thompson  
Cllr I Blazeby  
Cllr P Earles  
Cllr R Wilsmore  
Cllr A Crawford  
Cllr D Toinko

Also present:

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

### **5827. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was **resolved** to accept apologies for absence from Cllrs Parsons and Harald (work commitments), and Roberts, Harald, Patterson, and Bandy (holiday).

### **5828. 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.

### **5829. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No items.

### **5830. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

No items except under exempt.

### **5831. 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. **3 Station Road** – for consideration.



It was **resolved** to accept the revised proposal from one of the offers.

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.

Meeting closed at 19:49.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

## **Recommendations and Resolutions of the Finance & General Purposes Committee 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

The Town Council are asked to note the **RESOLUTIONS** and **approve** the **RECOMMENDATIONS** of the Finance & GP Committee 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025

### **29. Apologies for Absence**

It was **resolved** to accept apologies from Cllr Blazeby (family emergency).

### **33. Minutes**

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes of the Finance & GP Meeting held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at the Rufus Centre as a true record.

### **35. Items for Consideration**

#### **a. Purchase Order**

It was **resolved** to accept the proposal of digitised Purchase Orders at a cost of £744 one-off implementation fee followed by £222 annual software costs.

#### **b. Council Surplus**

It was **resolved** to transfer £850 from General Reserves to EMR (328) for future fixed wire testing works.

It was **resolved** to transfer £94,596 from General Reserves to 3 Station Road EMR (332) to cover future expenditure related to the project.

It was **resolved** to consider community and business-focused project fund applications on a case-by-case basis to be financed from the FTC Operations Reserves EMR(319).



# Flitwick Town Council

## **Financial Statement Year End 2024-2025**

(Not Subject to Audit)

*Flitwick Town Council  
The Rufus Centre, Steppingley Road, Flitwick, Bedfordshire, MK45 1AH  
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## Contents

Council Information.....	1
Introduction .....	2
Council & RFO Responsibilities .....	5
Income & Expenditure .....	6
AGAR .....	8
Balance Sheet .....	9
Supplementary Information for Year End .....	11
1. Budgets & Actuals Compared.....	11
2. Surplus/Deficit 2023-24 .....	11
3. Flitwick Town Council Employees .....	12
4. Pension Costs .....	12
5. Town Mayor's Fundraising & Allowance .....	12
6. General Power of Competence .....	13
7. Asset Register .....	13
8. Debtors .....	14
9. Investment & Loans .....	15
10. Creditors & Receipts in Advance .....	16
11. Spreading the Cost .....	16
12. Earmarked Reserves .....	17
13. Central Projects Fund .....	18
14. Grant Aid - Benefit in Kind .....	19

## **Council Information**

### **Council Members for the Financial Year 2024-2025**

Town Mayor – Cllr John Roberts

Deputy Town Mayor – Cllr Martin Platt

Other Members:

Cllr Andy Snape – Leader

Cllr Ian Blazeby – Deputy Leader

Cllr Clare Thompson

Cllr Tim Parsons

Cllr Howard Hodges

Cllr Andy Crawford

Cllr Dan Toinko

Cllr Fraser Patterson

Cllr Lorraine Bandy

Cllr Patricia Earles

Cllr Robert Wilsmore

Cllr Toby Harald

Town Clerk & Chief Executive – Stacie Lockey

Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) – Stephanie Stanley

Auditors – Mazars LLP (Smaller Authorities External Audit Team)

Internal Auditors – Auditing Solutions Limited

## 1. Introduction

Flitwick Town Council (FTC) has maintained a stable financial position this year, as demonstrated by the clean audit reports published on the website. The operational accounting procedures have been meticulously followed, with budget holders carefully considering revenue budget spending throughout the year.

As per statutory requirements, the Financial Regulations and associated policies were reviewed within the financial year to ensure compliance with legislation and to reflect current ways of working.

At the beginning of the 2024-25 Civic year, the Council chose to move on from the Finance Scrutiny Working Group and instate a Standing Committee for Finance & General Purposes (GP). This has been beneficial as all Members elected to this Committee provide valuable feedback and input into the accounts, helping operations to run smoothly and efficiently. Following the adopted Scheme of Delegations, the Finance and GP Committee has streamlined the decision-making process and assisted with the financial management of major capital projects.

FTC is not an average Town Council. It prides itself on providing its community with various statutory and discretionary services, as well as operating a traded service from the Rufus Centre. New initiatives are established, business needs are considered, and current services are continually re-evaluated in response to community needs, while balancing these with day-to-day accounting requirements.

Due to this forward-thinking ethos and the fact that it provides more services than an average Town Council, FTC's financial operations are vast. This includes the necessary financial operations of the Town Council services and its traded services (the Rufus Centre and Rendezvous Café) while complying with governance and legal responsibilities.

### *Key Decisions*

In addition to day-to-day accounting operations, cash flow has been a prime focus over the last 12 months, as this has been a big year for capital project investment. The stand-out project relates to the refurbishment of the former bank, located at 3 Station Road, in the town centre. Expenditure for this project spans over two financial years, with a significant proportion of 2024-25's spending being funded by grants (totalling £384,000) from the Community Ownership Fund, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and the building's dilapidations settlement. For 2024-25, the Council utilised minimal reserves to fund the project; however, the project itself generated extensive activity for both receipts and payments, resulting in a significant variance in income and expenditure for this year compared to the previous year. Full explanations about this have been provided to the External Auditors.

The Council has a robust plan for recouping the reserves that will be spent in the next financial year. The ongoing project for the sale of Steppingley Road land will enhance the Council's financial position once the capital receipt is received, and this is anticipated for Quarter 4 of 2025-26, albeit subject to change. The Council will remain cautious about capital expenditure for the upcoming year until the receipt is received.

Another key decision for 2024-25 was the revenue budget savings generated mid-year. This process saved £52,400 and assisted with financing the refurbishment of 3 Station Road. Operational service provision remained at a high standard regardless of these decisions.

### *Social Value*

During the year, the Council committed to prioritising a social value assessment of its community activities. This aimed to ensure that the community calendar achieved the most social, environmental and economic value when Council funds were spent. Social value looks beyond price alone to the collective benefit of a community.

When assessing community activities, it became apparent that some long-standing events and activities were either being provided similarly by external providers that residents could access, or they had a low social value score. FTC is always keen to fill any service provision gaps where possible, offering its residents the best possible opportunities.

Social value is measured by the following:

- Inputs – resources of all kinds
- Activities – what FTC does
- Outputs – direct result of an activity
- Outcomes – longer-term change it wants to see in the community/area
- Expected impact – the value it holds

Over the past 12 months, the Council has begun mapping the impact of the budgeted funds for its activities. With the Council's investment of staff time, resources, and facilities for its activities, shown below, residents were able to access these provisions free of charge:

- Easter Egg Hunt
- Pumpkin Carving Drop-In Session
- Summer Programme Activities
- Cookery Courses
- Forget Me Not Group (A Group for people with memory loss or Dementia and their carers)

The opportunities were either not already offered locally or at an affordable cost (or free). For the activities above, investment was provided by private businesses through sponsorship or donations, and/or volunteers were on hand to support the activities.

External grant funding was secured to support specific activities, which significantly contributed to the social value.

For example, the Pumpkin Carving drop-in session held at the Hub attracted 275 attendees. From examining other local pumpkin carving opportunities available as part of the assessment, it was clear that the admission fees were approximately £8 per person. If the 275 people who attended the Council's session had participated in one of these external events, this would have cost the community £2,200. With the Council's free activity, people were given an alternative option locally that was inclusive in the current cost-of-living crisis.

Similarly, the Community Fridge initiative was assessed. This provision relies heavily on volunteers, and it has been established that if the Council paid for staff to cover this service, it would cost approximately £60k per year. The leverage also comes from local businesses donating food produce to provide much-needed provisions for residents in need and to reduce waste.

The Council's commitment to social value and assessment will continue into the next financial year.

### *Priorities for 2025-26*

As we progress into 2025-26, financial priorities include:

- Maintaining a stable financial position whilst making the remaining substantial payments for the 3 Station Road refurbishment
- Replenishing the Council's General Reserves
- Financing new boilers for the Rufus Centre
- Proactively seeking grant funding
- Securing Section 106 funds for Flitwick
- The development of the Nature Park project
- Continuing with the Steppingley Road land sale
- The implementation of digital purchase orders
- Ensuring the new Corporate Strategy achieves best value



## 2. Council & RFO Responsibilities

The Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and the Corporate Risk Register document the Council's responsibilities. These are reviewed annually, and any revised model versions published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) are reviewed when released to ensure the Council's documents adhere to any changes.

The Council is responsible for:

- Planning for the proper administration of its financial affairs.
- Appointing one of its Officers to be responsible for administering those affairs. At this Council, that Officer is Stephanie Stanley (Deputy Town Clerk & RFO), and Stacie Lockett (Town Clerk & Chief Executive) has been appointed Deputy RFO.
- Managing its financial affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguarding its assets.
- Approving the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).
- Approving the Financial Statement (not subject to audit).

The RFO has a range of responsibilities, but for the Year End Accounts, they are responsible for:

- Preparing the Unaudited Financial Statement following Part 4 of the 'Governance & Accountability for Local Practitioners – A Practitioner's Guide (England)', so far as applies to this Council.
- Presenting a true and fair view of the Council's financial position at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and its income and expenditure for the year.
- Preparing the AGAR to reflect the Council's financial position and the associated income and expenditure.
- Facilitating a public consultation, known as a Notice of Public Rights, for 30 working days for members of the public to view the unaudited accounts from within the following timescale: 3<sup>rd</sup> June to 11<sup>th</sup> August.
- Keeping proper accounting records up to date.
- Taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

### RFO Certificate

I certify that the Financial Statement fairly presents the Council's financial position as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 and its income and expenditure for the year ended 2024-25.

*SCStanley*

**Stephanie Stanley**

RFO

17<sup>th</sup> June 2025

## Income & Expenditure

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total
<b><u>FINANCE &amp; General Purposes</u></b>				
Income	43,330	530,744	900	(529,844)
Expenditure	132,440	1,040,688	530,584	(510,104)
Net Income over Expenditure	(89,110)	(509,945)	(529,684)	(19,739)
plus Transfer from EMR	0	4,541	0	(4,541)
less Transfer to EMR	1,386	1,386	0	(1,386)
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(90,496)	(506,789)	(529,684)	(22,895)

## **BUSINESS Impro & Develop Board**

Income	80,387	870,189	860,300	(9,889)
Expenditure	82,500	830,069	760,661	(69,408)
Net Income over Expenditure	(2,113)	40,120	99,639	59,519
plus Transfer from EMR	12,497	40,000	0	(40,000)
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	10,385	80,120	99,639	19,519

## **COMMUNITY Services**

Income	5,505	174,251	46,210	(128,041)
Expenditure	43,880	655,384	591,732	(63,652)
Net Income over Expenditure	(38,375)	(481,133)	(545,522)	(64,389)
plus Transfer from EMR	280	7,875	0	(7,875)
less Transfer to EMR	30,071	54,909	0	(54,909)
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(68,166)	(528,167)	(545,522)	(17,355)

## **PROJECTS & Precept Management**

Income	9,783	1,189,498	1,031,242	(158,256)
Expenditure	24,950	121,950	55,675	(66,275)
Net Income over Expenditure	(15,167)	1,067,548	975,567	(91,981)
plus Transfer from EMR	24,950	121,950	0	(121,950)
less Transfer to EMR	0	139,215	0	(139,215)
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	9,783	1,050,283	975,567	(74,716)

Grand Totals:- Income	139,006	2,764,681	1,938,652	(826,029)
Expenditure	283,770	2,648,091	1,938,652	(709,439)
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(144,764)</u>	<u>116,590</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(116,590)</u>
plus Transfer from EMR	37,727	174,366	0	(174,366)
less Transfer to EMR	31,457	195,510	0	(195,510)
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(138,494)</u>	<u>95,446</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(95,446)</u>

## Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR)

The Council must submit its Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2024-25 to the External Auditor by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025. The accounts contained in this return present fairly the Council's financial position, are consistent with the underlying financial records, and have been prepared based on Income and Expenditure.

The Annual Return Summary for 2024-25 is shown below:

		<u>Last Year £</u>	<u>This Year £</u>	<u>General Notes for Guidance</u>
1	Balances brought forward	1,045,268	1,195,839	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of the previous year.
2	(+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,001,205	1,031,242	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3	(+) Total other receipts	1,091,625	1,733,439	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4	(-) Staff costs	929,651	1,044,794	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5	(-) Loan interest/capital repayments	76,647	55,911	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6	(-) All other payments	935,961	1,547,386	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7	(=) Balances carried forward	1,195,839	1,312,429	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. [Must equal (1+2+3)-(4+5+6)]
8	Total value of cash and short term investments	1,205,617	1,229,740	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9	Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	7,127,652	7,289,466	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10	Total borrowings	810,787	773,365	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

## Balance Sheet

31st March 2024

31st March 2025

	Current Assets	
35,906	DEBTORS	92,680
447	Burial Grounds & Cemeteries	5,599
0	VAT Control Account	19,462
39,477	PREPAYMENTS	28,835
5,345	Mthly Business Prepays	8,166
47,844	PrePayment for Land Sale	53,989
4,733	Accrued Income	4,532
3,886	Stock Held - Bar	3,298
4,953	Stock Held - Food	4,346
5,018	Current Bank Ac Barclays 009	5,569
136,295	Barclays Business Reserve 106	42,231
1,000	PDQ Account	1,000
41,209	Tenants Deposits Account	46,550
400	Petty Cash Control (YE)	400
400	Float - Main Safe (YE)	400
400	Float - Cafe Safe (YE)	400
15	Float - Reception Safe (YE)	15
80	Float - Cafe Till Drawer	80
1,020,800	CCLA Deposit Fund	1,133,095
<b>1,348,208</b>		<b>1,450,647</b>
<b>1,348,208</b>	<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>1,450,647</b>
	Current Liabilities	
8,693	DEBTORS Control: Functions	15,997
1,902	VAT Control Account	0
23,904	CREDITORS	3,441
8,493	ACCRUAL - Loan Interest (YE)	7,943
18,438	ACCRUALS (YE)	12,119
18,645	PAYE/NIC Due	17,763

31st March 2024

31st March 2025

11,886	LGPS Pension Control	10,568	
2,619	NEST Pension Control	3,128	
2,973	Income in Advance (YE)	6,400	
5,009	Past Yr TM Charity (YE)	4,722	
1,591	Past Yr TM Allow & Civic Recep	2,291	
0	Past Yr Leader Expenses (YE)	77	
45,751	Tenants Rent Deposits	52,188	
1,500	Refundable Deposits: Functions	500	
963	Barclaycard Year End balance	1,079	
<u>152,369</u>		<u>138,217</u>	
<b>1,195,839</b>	<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>	<b>1,312,429</b>	
	<b>Long Term Liabilities</b>		
<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>	
<b>1,195,839</b>	<b>Total Assets Less Long Term Liabilities</b>	<b>1,312,429</b>	
	<b>Represented By</b>		
453,445	GENERAL RESERVE	397,766	
742,394	Earmarked Reserves	914,664	
<u>1,195,839</u>		<u>1,312,429</u>	

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the authority as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 and reflects its income and expenditure during the year.

Signed Chairman

*JRoberts*

Date 17.6.25

Signed Responsible Finance Officer

*SCStanley*

Date 17.6.25

## Supplementary Information for Year End

The following sections have been compiled as supplementary information to be viewed alongside the Council's AGAR submission. The FTC aims to provide residents with clear financial information for transparency and openness.

### i) Budgets & Actuals Compared

		25/26 Budget	24/25 Actual	Variance +/-
<b>Finance &amp; General Purposes</b>	Income	900	530,744	529,844
	Expenditure	530,584	1,040,688	-510,104
	<i>EMR Transfer</i>		-3,155	
	+/-	-529,684	-506,789	<b>-22,895</b>
<b>Business Improvement &amp; Development</b>	Income	860,300	870,189	9,889
	Expenditure	760,661	830,069	-69,408
	<i>EMR Transfer</i>		-40,000	
	+/-	99,639	80,120	<b>19,519</b>
<b>Community Services</b>	Income	46,210	174,251	128,041
	Expenditure	591,732	655,384	-63,652
	<i>EMR Transfer</i>		47,034	
	+/-	-545,522	-528,167	<b>-17,355</b>
<b>Flitwick Town Council</b>	Income	1,938,652	2,764,681	826,029
	Expenditure	1,938,652	2,648,091	-709,439
	<i>EMR Transfer</i>		21,144	
	+/-	<b>0</b>	<b>95,446</b>	<b>24/25 FTC Surplus</b>

### ii) Surplus/Deficit 2023-24

The Council is pleased to announce that its surplus for 2024-25 is £95,446. The Rufus Centre's traded service is the driving force behind this surplus. Members have decided to earmark most of the surplus achieved to assist with financing the remaining expenditure relating to the 3 Station Road refurbishment. A small proportion of the surplus has been earmarked for fixed wire testing works at the Rufus Centre, which is a requirement every five years.

The Rufus Centre made a profit of £80,117, but the Rendezvous Café made a loss of £20,603. Whilst the café has struggled to remain profitable consistently, a plan has been developed to address the situation, and it is pleasing to see that some of the immediate actions have already had a positive impact. The Council aspires for the café to at least break even for the ensuing financial year.

Last year, the Council earmarked some surplus funds for capital upgrades to the Rufus Centre; however, due to the commitment to complete the 3 Station Road refurbishment, this year, Members have no option but to reassess this approach. For 2025-26, none of the surplus from 2024-25 will be earmarked for Rufus Centre capital works. Other than the completion of the 3 Station Road refurbishment and urgent projects, capital expenditure will be kept to a minimum until the capital receipt for the Steppingley Road land sale is received. Operationally, the revenue budget for service provision is protected and funded by the precept.

The Precept received from Central Bedfordshire Council for the year ended 2024-25 was £1,031,242.

### **iii) Flitwick Town Council Employees**

The Council employed 28 employees during 2024-25 (11 part-time). All staff were paid according to the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services pay scales.

Due to the business team (Rufus Centre/Rendezvous) needing assistance with hospitality for private functions and to cover annual leave/busy periods in the Rendezvous Café, several casual staff are included in FTC's monthly payroll.

### **iv) Pension Costs**

The pension contributions paid by FTC during 2023-24 amounted to £138,630. The Council operates two pension streams for its employees:

- The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)
- NEST Pension Scheme

Casual staff are not entitled to pension benefits with FTC.

### **v) Town Mayor's Charity Fundraising & Allowance**

#### *Town Mayor's Charity Fundraising*

Throughout the Civic Year, from May 2024 to May 2025, the Town Mayor fundraised for his chosen charities (Keech Hospice & The Town Mayor's Charity CIO). The amount raised was £6,705.14, which has been split evenly between the charities.

During 2023-24, the Council created a separate charity for the Town Mayor's fundraising, complete with a constitution of Trustees (the Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chairman of the Community Services Committee, and Ex-officio Trustee—the Town Clerk). This decision allows for crowdfunding, gift aid benefits for corporate



responsibility requirements for business support and additional access to grants, which positively impacts any Town Mayor's charities selected going forward. The Town Mayor's Charity also fundraises for other community initiatives and projects.

FTC will continue to support the Town Mayor's Charity and provide general administrative assistance required. FTC has agreed to support the charity with its bank charges.

### *Town Mayor's Allowance*

The Town Mayor's Allowance is a budget set by the Council annually. A policy is adopted (and subsequently reviewed) that details the expenditure that can be coded to this budget throughout the year. It covers expenses such as mileage costs and ticket entry to civic engagements as the Town Mayor represents the Council as part of their role. The Town Mayor is required to provide receipts for any claim, as available. The Town Mayor's Allowance budget (including the Civic Reception event) for 2024-25 was set at £4,000. Since there was £1,988.88 unspent during the year, the Council chose to top up the charity fundraising by this amount at the Annual Statutory Meeting.

#### **vi) General Power of Competence (GPC)**

The GPC gives Councils the freedom to act when there is no specific power. Under the Localism Act 2011, under the GPC, 'a local authority has the power to do anything that individuals generally may do.' The criteria for any Council to adopt the GPC is:

- To have a CiLCA Qualified Clerk
- Two-thirds of Members need to have stood for election

For FTC and the purpose of the year ended 2024-25, there were two qualified Clerks (Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk), and the Council satisfied the criteria of having two-thirds of its Members elected to the Office of Councillor.

The Council's decision to adopt the GPC was accurately recorded at the first meeting of FTC following the elections in May 2022.

#### **vii) Asset Register**

FTC is required to have an Asset Register, which the Internal Auditor asks for as part of the Year End process. The Council's Asset Register accurately reflects fixed assets owned in the following categories:

- Land & Buildings
- Vehicles, Plant & Machinery
- Catering Equipment
- Equipment & Tools

- Furniture & Office Equipment
- Playground & Community Assets
- Civic Regalia
- Figures relating to investment and loans are listed separately

For 2024-25, FTC started utilising a separate feature of the accounting software to digitalise the Asset Register. As capital purchases were made throughout the year, these were added to the system and show an increased Asset Value of £7,289,466 (£161,814 increase from the previous year). The main purchases for the year, which contributed to the increased value, related to:

- £74,500 Skatepark Extension
- £15,800 Upgrades, modernisation and equipment purchases for the Rufus Centre
- £8,100 Nature Park Development
- £7,500 CCTV Upgrade for the Rufus Centre

The Digital Asset Register also has the function to replace or remove assets from the record and feeds this information through to the Annual Return, rather than manually inserting this figure at year-end.

#### **viii) Debtors**

Debtors include all organisations, suppliers, customers, etc., who owe the Council money as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. Debtors at year-end can be explained as follows:

	<b>31.03.24</b>	<b>31.03.25</b>
Debtors (including for functions & burial ground)*	£27,660	£82,282
VAT	-	£19,462
Accrued CCLA Interest	£4,733	£4,532
Stock held (Food & Drink)	£8,839	£7,644
Prepayments (including land sale project)	£92,666	£90,990
<b>Total</b>	<b>£133,898</b>	<b>£204,910</b>

\*When initially looking at the differences from debt at 2023-24 compared to the end of 2024-25, there seems to be a significant uplift in debtors. However, this amount reduces to £65,193 during April 2025. £62,000 of this relates to grant payments due for the skatepark extension and the music park at Hinksley Road. Both 'debts' will clear in the first part of the next financial year. The money due for private functions also inflates the figure, but the Council will not receive the balance for these until the event takes place.

At year-end 2024-25, the Council was owed VAT, whereas at the end of the previous year, this was not the case.

The Council operates a robust Debt Management Policy, and Officers hold regular credit control meetings.

## **ix) Investments & Loans**

### *Public Sector Deposit Fund*

The Council opened an investment bank account with Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) in 2021.

Since the Council qualifies as a 'Super Council' as its Precept exceeds £1m and has significant self-generated income from its traded service of the Rufus Centre, it is prudent to have a CCLA account. Through this Public Sector Deposit Fund, the Council benefits from competitive interest rates, and the funds are easily accessible, with withdrawals appearing in the Council's bank account within 24 hours.

CCLA investments qualify as Revenue Investments, and deposits/withdrawals do not fall within the classification of Income and Expenditure on the Annual Return. The end-of-year balance is included in the Bank & Cash Balances (as a Short-Term Investment) in the Annual Return. This year's figure is £1,133,095, which is £112,295 more than the closing balance at the end of 2023-24.

### *Loans*

For the year ended 2023-24, the Council had two loans from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) for the following purchases:

- Manor Park
- 3 Station Road purchase

During the year, the loan balance for the purchase of the Rufus Centre was repaid by July 2024.

The outstanding balances for the loans are listed below:

- Manor Park £48,000 (final payment July 2029)
- 3 Station Road purchase £725,365 (final payment April 2047)

**x) Creditors & Receipts in Advance**

	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>
<b>Creditors</b>		
VAT	£1,902	£-
Creditors Control	£23,904	£3,441
Accrued Loan Interest	£8,493	£7,943
General Accruals	£18,438	£12,119
PAYE/NIC	£18,645	£17,763
Pensions	£14,505	£13,696
Rent Deposits	£45,751	£52,188
Refundable Deposits	£1,500	£500
Barclaycard YE Balance	£963	£1,079
<b>Receipts in Advance</b>		
Income in advance	£2,973	£6,400
Town Mayor Charity, Town Mayor Allowance & Leader Budget YE Balance	£6,600	£7,090
<b>Total</b>	<b>£143,674</b>	<b>£122,219</b>

**xi) Spreading the Cost**

The Council needs to spread the cost of its traded service annual expenditure items, including business rates, utility costs, and a selection of annual contract costs (for example, security alarm system, CCTV contract, and kitchen/bar equipment maintenance contract).

Typically, local Town and Parish Councils would not ‘spread the cost’ of this type of expenditure as there is usually no traded service to Council operations, particularly not on the scale of the Rufus Centre. For these Councils, it is immaterial when this expenditure leaves the bank account. However, for FTC and their need to understand the traded service performance of the Rufus Centre and the Rendezvous Café month by month, these annual fees must be spread over 12 months.

For 2024-25, FTC’s accruals have been reduced due to spreading the costs further since the previous financial year.

## xii) Earmarked Reserves

Separate from the General Reserves, the Council has Earmarked Reserves (EMRs), which can be attributed to different projects and initiatives. It also includes separate reserve funds for the statutory service of allotments, as it is a legal requirement for any income received for allotments to be re-invested within the service.

EMRs are set aside for a specific purpose, as approved by the Council, at any given time.

Below is a list of EMRs as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025:

Account	Opening Balance	Net Transfers	Closing Balance
313 Proud AF Picnic	0.00	100.00	100.00
314 EMR Compensation Field 2025	0.00	14,000.00	14,000.00
315 Central Project Fund	106,432.40	-14,268.39	92,164.01
316 EMR Election Costs	3,703.95	-3,703.95	0.00
317 EMR Nature Park Annual Grant	0.00	10,458.08	10,458.08
319 EMR Do Not Spend Ops Reserves	500,000.00		500,000.00
320 EMR IT Equipment Provision	6,457.00	-4,541.48	1,915.52
321 EMR Flitwick Living History	0.00	17,486.56	17,486.56
323 EMR Hinksley Music Park 24/25	0.00	10,504.50	10,504.50
324 EMR Allotments	25,088.22	-6,901.54	18,186.68
325 EMR Summer Programme	0.00	1,048.40	1,048.40
327 EMR Youth Activities	0.00	397.13	397.13
330 EMR Cost of Living	13,159.60	191.20	13,350.80
331 EMR Steppingley Rd Legal Fees	57,050.00		57,050.00
332 EMR 3 Station Road Development	0.00	133,565.82	133,565.82
335 EMR Community Events	3,000.00	-3,000.00	0.00
350 Capital Receipts Reserve	14,600.00	-14,600.00	0.00
800 PROJ - Nature Park	1,687.00	-1,687.00	0.00
801 PROJ - Flitwick Town Sq Defib	722.00		722.00
802 PROJ - Heritage Website	3,800.00		3,800.00
803 PROJ - Rural Match Fund Bench	2,000.00		2,000.00
804 PROJ - Lockyer Suite Works	524.00	-524.00	0.00
805 PROJ - Hub Car Pk Delineation	800.00	-800.00	0.00
806 PROJ - Office Room 28 Refurb	3,370.00	-3,370.00	0.00
808 PROJ - Nature Park Planning	0.00	1,814.37	1,814.37
814 PROJ - Skate Park Extension	0.00	36,100.00	36,100.00
	<b>742,394.17</b>	<b>172,269.70</b>	<b>914,663.87</b>

Introduced during 2023-24, as part of the Council's General Reserves Policy, an EMR that amounts to 50% of the annual Precept from Central Beds Council (£500,000) has been created. This ensures that six months of net expenditure is ringfenced for contingency funds. As we approach 2025-26, the Council will utilise some of this funding for urgent capital projects, approving spending on a case-by-case basis.

EMR movements at year-end included protecting grant funding for specific projects, for example, 'Flitwick: A Living History', Summer Programme activities and the Music Park at Hinksley Road.

### **xiii) Central Projects Fund (CPF)**

Throughout the year, proposals can be submitted to the Council for consideration for new projects. The Scheme of Delegations states that the Full Council must approve project expenditure, not individual Committees. Projects can be for any area of Council operations, including Community Services and the Business Improvement & Development Board.

For some projects, grant funding will likely be secured to assist with or entirely finance the capital projects. For this financial year, grants have been secured from various funding sources, including Central Beds Council (Section 106, Planning Obligation Green Infrastructure Fund, Youth Provision), Lottery Funding and Hubbub. These grants have assisted with Council projects, including the Community Fridge initiative and the Nature Park.

The accounting process for agreed Council projects changed during 2023-24. Projects and their approved budgets were accounted for within the revenue budget as expenditure codes. During the year-end process for 2023-24, the Council was advised to account for projects within its EMRs, and this has been pursued for 2024-25 as well. This simplifies the accounting processes, allowing projects to span over two or more financial years.

For 2024-25, the CPF opening balance was £106,432, with an additional £55,675 contribution from the Precept.

The closing balance was £92,164.

The following projects were completed using the CPF during 2024-25:

- Lockyer Suite Modernisation/Upgrades
- The Hub Car Park Delineation
- Office Space Room 28 Refurbishment
- Replacement Windows for Rufus Centre Flat
- Burial Ground Wall
- Stocksfield Room Refurbishment facilitating Community Fridge Space
- IT Station in Rendezvous Café
- Replacement Dishwasher for Rendezvous Café
- Signage for Road Closures
- Rufus Centre CCTV Upgrade

The following projects will continue into the next financial year:

- Nature Park
- Skatepark Extension
- Heritage Website (linked to Flitwick: A Living History project)

This shows that the Council has continued to commit significant investment to improving the town's facilities and upgrading the Rufus Centre and its on-site Rendezvous Café.

#### **xiv) Grant Aid - Benefits in Kind**

##### *Local Organisations*

The Council is committed to supporting local not-for-profit organisations and charities. It supports several local organisations by providing Council land for their buildings and having a peppercorn rent agreement for these sites (ground leases).

Subsidised ground rent for local organisations is listed below:

Flitwick Girl Guiding - £1,750 per annum

Flitwick Scout Group - £3,500 per annum (original valuation doubled as an estimated new value since the site has been extended)

Flitwick & Ampthill Sea Cadets - £2,500 per annum

Flitwick & District Royal British Legion - £1,000 per annum

Flitwick Gardeners' Association shares a building with the Council's Tractor Store and, like the above organisations, has a lease agreement to occupy the space on Council land for their group.

##### *The Rufus Centre*

As a Community Hub, the Rufus Centre offers free space for charity organisations or not-for-profit groups to meet. The Stocksfield Room is the Council's designated room for this purpose, and for the year ended 2024-25, it has accommodated 426 bookings. These bookings were made up of 25 different organisations, and based on the commercial hourly rate for this room (£35.62), the Council provided a benefit-in-kind valued at £27,178 in the 2024-25 financial year.

The Council has continued with the license for SHARE: Flitwick & Ampthill to occupy space in the building and a container on site. This well-used community initiative acts as a 'Library of Things', offering the option to borrow items rather than buy something new.

## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

Flitwick Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.			<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.			<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.			<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.			<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.			<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.			<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.			<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.			<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			<i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>

**\*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

17/06/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

Clerk

[www.flitwick.gov.uk](http://www.flitwick.gov.uk)



## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

### Flitwick Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	1,045,268	1,195,839	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,001,205	1,031,242	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	1,091,625	1,733,439	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	929,651	1,044,794	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	76,647	55,911	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	935,961	1,547,386	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,195,839	1,312,429	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	1,205,617	1,229,740	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – <b>To agree with bank reconciliation.</b>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	7,127,652	7,289,466	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	810,787	773,365	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

**Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval**

Date

17/06/2025

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

17/06/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

## **Flitwick Town Council**

*Internal Audit Report 2024-25: Final*

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*Sally King*

*For and on behalf of Auditing Solutions Ltd*

## **Background**

All town and parish councils are required by statute to make arrangements for an independent internal audit examination of their accounting records and system of internal control and for the conclusions to be reported each year in the Annual Return. Auditing Solutions Ltd provides this service to Flitwick Town Council.

This report sets out all the work undertaken in relation to the 2024-25 financial year during our visits on 25th September 2024, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025 & 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

## **Internal Audit Approach**

In undertaking our review for the year, we have had regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential mis-recording or misrepresentation in the year-end Annual Governance and Accountability Return. We have employed a combination of selective sampling techniques (where appropriate) and 100% detailed checks in several key areas to gain sufficient assurance that the Council's financial and regulatory systems and controls are appropriate and fit for the purposes intended.

Our programme of cover has been designed to afford appropriate assurance that the Council's financial systems are robust and operate in a manner to ensure effective probity of transactions and to afford a reasonable probability of identifying any material errors or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework. The programme is also designed to facilitate our completion of the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' in the Council's Annual Return, which requires independent assurance over several internal control objectives.

## **Overall Conclusion**

We have therefore concluded that, based on the programme of work undertaken this year the Council has again maintained a sound, pro-active approach to risk management and corporate governance issues, together with the development and management of effective internal controls and procedural documentation. Once again pleased to acknowledge the quality of records maintained by the Clerk and the Finance Officers and thank them for their assistance, which has ensured the smooth progress of our review process.

Consequently, we have completed and signed the 'Internal Audit Report' as part of the year's AGAR process having concluded that, in all significant respects, the internal control objectives set out in that report were achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Council.

# Detailed Report

## Review of Accounting Arrangements & Bank Reconciliations

The Council's accounts are maintained with Rialtas accounting software reporting on an Income and Expenditure basis.

Our objective here is to ensure that the accounting records are being maintained accurately and currently and that no anomalous entries appear in cashbooks or financial ledgers. To that end, we have:

- Confirmed closing balances from 2023-24 AGAR and statement of accounts have been correctly brought forward to the current financial year.
- Checked to ensure that a comprehensive, meaningful, and appropriate nominal coding schedule together with cost centres remains in place. The Council in conjunction with Rialtas reviewed its coding structure in the previous financial year.
- Checked and agreed transactions (both receipts and payments) in the Council's main Current and Business Saver account cashbooks to the relevant Barclays Bank statements for April 2024, December 2024 & March 2025 including the daily "sweep" transfers to retain a level of £5,000 in the current account.
- Checked and agreed the relevant bank account reconciliations for each account as of 31st March 2025 to ensure that no long-standing, uncleared cheques, or other anomalous entries exist.
- Ensured the accurate disclosure of the combined bank balances and the CCLA account in the year's detailed Statement of Accounts and AGAR.
- Confirmed with officers the arrangements for backing up the computer system.

### Conclusions

*We are pleased to report that there are no issues in this area of our review process warranting formal comment or recommendation. We have verified the accurate disclosure of the combined year-end bank and cash balances in the AGAR.*

## Review of Corporate Governance

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council has a robust regulatory framework in place; that Council and Committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders; those financial transactions are made in accordance with the extant Financial Regulations and that we have a reasonable chance of identifying any actions of a potentially unlawful nature that have been or may be considered for implementation. Consequently, we have: -

- Concluded examination of the minutes of the Full Council and its various Standing Committees for the year to March 2025 to ensure that no issues affecting the Council's financial stability exist in the short, medium, or long-term, also that no legal issues appear to be in existence whereby the Council may either be considering or have taken decisions that might result in ultra vires expenditure being incurred.

- We note that the Council have reviewed and readopted Standing Orders at its meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025 (minute ref. 5787 d.).
- Financial Regulations were reviewed and readopted the meeting held in February 2025 (minute ref. 5771 di.).
- We have reviewed the external auditor's report, issued since our last visit; to confirm they are raising no matters regarding the Councils accounts and governance.

### ***Conclusions***

***We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area, warranting further comment.***

## **Review of Expenditure**

Our aim here is to ensure that, in addition to confirming that sound financial control procedures are in place: -

- Council resources are released in accordance with the Council's approved procedures and budgets.
- Payments are supported by appropriate documentation, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and / or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available.
- An official order has been raised for all purchases and service delivery where one would be expected.
- All discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount.
- The correct expense codes have been applied to invoices when processed.
- There is a satisfactory process for the approval of grants and donations (where no invoice is appropriate) and that they have been approved for payment by members under the correct expenditure code; and
- VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery. We note that the Council continues to engage the services of a VAT consultant to conduct a review of VAT management on annual basis. VAT returns have been submitted up to March 2025.

We have reviewed this area selecting a test sample for compliance with the above criteria comprising all payments individually more than £5,000 plus every 50<sup>th</sup> cashbook transaction, irrespective of value for the financial year. Our test sample comprised of 49 payments, totalling £573,129 which equates to 44% of non-pay expenditure for the year, with all the above criteria met.

Finally, we have reviewed the process for the approval of grants and donations (where no invoice is appropriate) and that they have been approved for payment by members under the correct expenditure code. The Council has resumed issuing grants for the 2024-25 financial year after suspending the previous year.

## ***Conclusion***

***We are pleased to report that no matters have arisen in this area of our review process warranting formal comment or recommendation.***

## **Assessment and Management of Risk**

Our aim here is to ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

- Noted that the Corporate Risk Register has been reviewed and readopted at the Town Council meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024 (minute ref. 5696 g).
- Reviewed the Council's insurance policy underwritten by Aviva which commenced in September 2024 noting that it includes public liability cover of £10 million and employers' liability cover of £10m.

## ***Conclusions***

***We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area warranting further comment.***

## **Review of Income**

In considering the Council's income streams, we aim to ensure that robust systems are in place to ensure the identification of all income due to the Council from its various sources; to ensure that the income is invoiced in a timely manner and that effective procedures are in place to pursue recovery of any outstanding monies due to the Council.

In addition to the annual precept the Council has a variety of income sources arising mainly from the Rufus Centre lettings and rentals, allotment income, café, cemetery fees, also the letting of sports pitches, grants, and bank interest.

The Allotments are managed using Rialtas software, there are 2 sites containing 58 plots. New tenancy agreements are issued each year in January along with the invoices and chased if not returned with payment. We are pleased to note that the Council reviews allotment fees on an annual basis.

The Council manages the Cemetery income stream using the Rialtas software module. On our second interim visit we examined the Cemetery income procedures included the Burials Register and Exclusive Rights of Burial records, examining a sample of entries relating to each area for April to December 2024 to ensure that each is supported by all relevant and legally required documentation and that the appropriate fees have been levied in accord with the published scales and recovered within a reasonable period.

## ***Conclusions***

***We are pleased to report that no matters have arisen in this area of our review process warranting formal comment or recommendation.***

## Petty Cash Account & Credit Cards

We are required, as part of the annual Internal Audit Certification process in the Annual Return, to indicate the soundness of controls in this area of the Council's financial activities. The Council has an imprest style petty cash scheme it also holds floats for various activities. We confirmed this was within the limits set in Financial Regulations and confirmed controls over access to the safe where the money was kept. A physical check of cash held was undertaken at our visit on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

The Council uses a Barclaycard, and we are pleased to note that robust procedures are in place including provision of receipts and reconciliation of the statements. As part of our payment review, we examined the April 2024 Barclaycard reconciliation, with no issues arising.

We are pleased to note that receipts are attached to the invoices received from the fuel card supplier.

### **Conclusion**

*We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in the areas examined warranting further comment.*

## Asset Register

The Governance and Accountability Manual requires all councils to develop and maintain a register of assets identifying detail of all land, buildings, vehicles, furniture, and equipment owned by the Council.

We are pleased to note that the Council holds a digitised asset register on Rialtus which has been updated in the 2024-25 financial year.

### **Conclusion**

*We are pleased to report that no matters have arisen in this area of our review process date warranting formal comment or recommendation. We have ensured appropriate recording of the assets in the AGAR.*

## Precept Determination and Budgetary Control

We aim in this area of our work to ensure that the Council has appropriate procedures in place to determine its future financial requirements leading to the adoption of an approved budget and formal determination of the amount of the precept placed on the Unitary Authority, that effective arrangements are in place to monitor budgetary performance throughout the financial year and that the Council has identified and retains appropriate reserve funds to meet future spending plans.

Confirmed that the budget and precept of £1,062,179 was approved by Council at their meeting held on 21st January 2025, (minute ref. 5756), representing an annual increase of 3% or £5.92 for a Band D household. Although we confirm extensive working papers were

presented to the Council, we have advised that the amount of the precept needs to be quoted in the minutes.

### ***Conclusion***

***We are pleased to report that no matters have arisen in this area of our review process warranting formal comment or recommendation.***

## **Investments and Loans**

Our objectives here are to ensure that the Council is investing “surplus funds”, be they held temporarily or on a longer term basis, in appropriate banking and investment institutions and that the Council is obtaining the best rate of return on the funds held, with any interest earned brought to account correctly and appropriately in the accounting records, also that any loan repayments due to or payable by the Council are transacted in accordance with the relevant loan agreements.

We are pleased to note the Council has an Investment Management Policy in situ; this was reviewed and readopted at the Town Council Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024 (minute ref. 5608 g.).

During our visits we test repayments of PWLB loans as recorded in the Council’s accounts to independent PWLB statements. We have agreed the repayments to the bank statements as in relation to our work on accounting and bank reconciliation. We have also verified the accurate disclosure of the residual year-end loan liability in the year’s AGAR.

### ***Conclusions***

***We are pleased to record that no issues have currently been identified in this area and have verified the accurate disclosure of the residual year end loan liability in the AGAR***

## **Statement of Accounts and Annual Return**

The Accounts and Audit Regulations require all Councils to prepare annually a Statement of Accounts in the AGAR, which now forms the statutory Accounts subject to external audit scrutiny and certification.

We have checked and agreed entries in the Statement of Accounts generated by the accounting software to the underlying Trial Balance and other documentation provided. Similarly, we have checked and agreed the financial data reported to the AGAR.

### ***Conclusions***

***No issues have been identified in relation to the verification of detail in the Statement of Accounts and AGAR this year.***

***Based on our detailed work during the year on the Council’s systems of financial control and content of the detailed Statement of Accounts and that summarised detail set out in the AGAR, we have signed off the Internal Audit Report of the AGAR assigning positive assurances, in each relevant area.***





## FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

### INFORMATION & DATA PROTECTION POLICY.

~~Adopted by Council: 15 September 2020.~~ Review Date: October 2022

#### Scope

This Policy consists of a suite of inter-linked policies:

- Information and Data Protection Policy
- Appendix 1-Information Security Policy
- Appendix 2- Data Breach Notification Policy
- Appendix 3- CCTV Policy
- Appendix 4- Subject Access Policy

#### Introduction

In order to conduct its business, services and duties, Flitwick Town Council (FTC) processes a wide range of data, relating to its own operations and some which it handles on behalf of partners. In broad terms, this data can be classified as:

- Data shared in the public arena about the services it offers, its mode of operations and other information it is required to make available to the public.
- Confidential information and data not yet in the public arena such as ideas or policies that are being worked up. (*unlikely to be personal or sensitive data under GDPR, but confidential never the less*)
- Confidential information about other organisations because of commercial sensitivity. (*All Confidential information which is also Personal information comes under GDPR*)
- Personal data concerning its current, past and potential employees, councillors, and volunteers. (*GDPR applies*)
- Personal data concerning individuals who contact it for information, access its services or facilities or to make a complaint. (*GDPR applies see definition of personal data in 7 below*)
- Data passed to a third party (data processor) who undertakes a service or task for FTC, or we have a legal obligation to inform, or we need to share information with (e.g. Pension provider, HMRC). (*GDPR applies*)
- Data processed on behalf of another organisation such as a Trust of which the Council is a trustee, or community partner. (*GDPR applies if that is personal data*)

Flitwick Town Council will adopt procedures and manage responsibly, all data which it handles and will respect the confidentiality of both its own data and that belonging to any other organisation which it works with and to members of the public. In some cases, it will have contractual obligations towards confidential data, but in addition will have specific legal responsibilities for personal and sensitive information under data protection legislation.

This Policy is linked to our ~~Quality Policy~~, Digital and ICT Policy ~~and Data Management Policy~~ which will ensure information considerations are central to the ethos of the organisation.

The Town Council will periodically review and revise this policy in the light of experience, advice from its Data Protection Compliance Officer (DPCO), comments from data subjects and guidance from the Information Commissioners Office.

The Council will be as transparent as possible about its operations and will work closely with public, community and voluntary organisations. Therefore, in the case of all information which is not personal or confidential, it will be prepared to make it available to partners and members of the Town's communities. Details of information which is routinely available is contained in the Council's Publication Scheme (on our Website) which is based on the statutory model publication scheme for local councils.

**Protecting Confidential or Sensitive Information**

Flitwick Town Council recognises it must at times, keep and process sensitive and personal information about both employees and the public. It has therefore adopted this policy not only to meet its legal obligations but to ensure high standards.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 'which became law on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and the Data Protection Act 2018, will, like the the Data Protection Act 1998 before them, seek to strike a balance between the rights of individuals and the sometimes, competing interests of those such as the Town Council with legitimate reasons for using personal information. The policy is based on the premise that Personal Data must be:

- Processed fairly, lawfully and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject.
- Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes.
- Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed.
- Accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
- Kept in a form that permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed.
- Processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures.

**Data Protection Terminology**

Data subject means the person whose personal data is being processed.

That may be an employee, prospective employee, member or prospective member of FTC, or someone volunteering to work with it. It may also be someone transacting with it in some way, or an employee, member or volunteer with one of our clients or partner organisations, or persons transacting or contracting with one of our clients or partners when we process data for them.

Personal data means any information relating to a natural person or data subject that can be used directly or indirectly to identify the person.

It can be anything from a name, a photo, address, date of birth, an email address, bank details, posts on social networking sites or a computer IP address.

Sensitive personal data includes information about racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or other beliefs, trade union membership, medical information, sexual orientation, genetic and biometric data or information related to offences or alleged offences where it is used to uniquely identify an individual.

Data controller means a person who (either alone or jointly or in common with other persons) (e.g. Town Council, employer, company) determines the purposes for which and the manner in which any personal data is to be processed.

Data processor, in relation to personal data, means any person (other than an employee of the data controller) who processes the data on behalf of the data controller.

Processing information or data means obtaining, recording or holding the information or data or carrying out any operation or set of operations on the information or data, including:

- organising, adapting or altering it
- retrieving, consulting or using the information or data
- disclosing the information or data by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making it available
- aligning, combining, blocking, erasing or destroying the information or data. regardless of the technology used.

Consent is a positive, active, unambiguous confirmation of a data subject's agreement to have their data processed for a particular purpose. Consent must be easy to withdraw and must be freely given, provided on an opt-in basis rather than opt-out

Privacy Notice is a notice from a data controller to a data subject describing how personal data will be used and what rights the data subject has.

Flitwick Town Council processes **personal data** in order to:

- fulfil its duties as an employer by complying with the terms of contracts of employment, safeguarding the employee and maintaining information required by law-
- pursue the legitimate interests of its business and its duties as a public body, by fulfilling contractual terms with other organisations, and maintaining information required by law-
- monitor its activities including the equality and diversity of its activities
- fulfil its duties in operating the business premises including security
- assist regulatory and law enforcement agencies
- process information including the recording and updating details about its councillors, employees, partners and volunteers-
- process information including the recording and updating details about individuals who contact it for information, or to access a service, or make a complaint-
- undertake surveys, censuses and questionnaires to fulfil the objectives and purposes of the Council-
- undertake research, audit and quality improvement work to fulfil its objects and purposes-
- carry out Council administration-

Where appropriate and governed by necessary safeguards we will carry out the above processing jointly with other appropriate bodies from time to time.

The Council will ensure that at least one of the following conditions is met for personal information to be considered fairly processed:

- Processing is necessary for the performance of a contract or agreement with the individual
- Processing is required under a legal obligation
- Processing is necessary to protect the vital interests of the individual
- Processing is necessary to carry out public functions
- The individual has consented to the processing
- Processing is necessary in order to pursue the legitimate interests of the data controller.

Particular attention is paid to the processing of any **sensitive personal information** and the Town Council will ensure that at least one of the following conditions is met:

- Explicit consent of the individual
- Required by law to process the data for employment purposes
- A requirement in order to protect the vital interests of the individual or another person

#### **Who is responsible for protecting a person's personal data?**

The Town Council as a corporate body has ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Data Protection legislation. The Council has delegated this responsibility day to day to the Town Clerk.

- E mail: stacielockey@flitwick.gov.uk
- Phone: 01525 631900
- Correspondence: The Town Clerk, The Rufus Centre, Steppingley Rd, Flitwick, Bedford MK45 1AH

The Town Council has also appointed another senior member of staff, the Communications and Marketing Manager, as a non-statutory Data Protection Compliance Officer to ensure compliance with Data Protection legislation.

- E mail: [beverleyjones@flitwick.gov.uk](mailto:beverleyjones@flitwick.gov.uk)
- Phone: 01525 631900
- Correspondence: Communications & Marketing Manager, The Rufus Centre, Steppingley Rd, Flitwick, Bedford MK45 1AH

FTC has thought carefully about whether or not it wishes under DPA & GDPR to appoint a formal Data Protection Officer (DPCO) on a voluntary basis. In reaching its conclusion it has considered the guidance issued by Article 29 Working Party and considers that if it were a similar sized private business that it would **not** need to appoint a DPCO for the following reasons:

- Data processing is not a core activity of the Council.
- Its data processing is not of 'large scale', when considering the number of data subjects concerned, the population and number of electors in the town, the volume of data or range of data items, the duration of the processing; and the geographical extent of the processing.
- The Council does not undertake regular or systematic monitoring of data subjects with little infringement on their data subject rights.
- It rarely processes sensitive data and only then on a small group of data subjects.

FTC, as data controller and indeed data processor, remains responsible for compliance with the data protection legislation including the GDPR. All Councillors and staff are expected to apply data protection legislation in their work.

FTC has appointed its Communications and Marketing Officer as '**Data Protection Compliance Officer**' (DPCO). This title is used to avoid confusion with the GDPR required DPCO, to which specific responsibilities are attached under the legislation.

#### Diversity Monitoring

Flitwick Town Council may monitor the diversity of its employees, and councillors, in order to ensure that there is no inappropriate or unlawful discrimination in the way it conducts its activities. It may undertake similar data handling in respect of prospective employees. This data will always be treated as confidential. It will only be accessed by authorised individuals within the Council and will not be disclosed to any other bodies or individuals. Diversity information will never be used as selection criteria and will not be made available to others involved in the recruitment process. Anonymised data derived from diversity monitoring will be used for monitoring purposes and may be published and passed to other bodies.

#### Privacy Notices-Employees and Councillors

The Council will always give guidance on personnel data to employees, councillors, partners and volunteers through a Privacy Notice and ensure that individuals on whom personal information is kept are aware of their rights and have easy access to that information on request. This will be available on our website.

#### Data Security and Overseas Transfers

The Town Council will ensure the security of personal data. We will make sure that your information is protected from unauthorised access, loss, manipulation, falsification, destruction or unauthorised disclosure. This is done through appropriate technical measures and appropriate policies.

We will only keep your data for the purpose it was collected for and only for as long as is necessary. after which it will be deleted.

Appropriate technical and organisational measures will be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data. Personal data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Areas unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

#### Information provided to us

The information provided (personal information such as name, address, email address, phone number) will be processed and stored so that it is possible for us to contact, respond to or conduct the transaction requested by the individual. By transacting with Flitwick Town Council, individuals are deemed to be

giving consent for their personal data provided to be used and transferred for that purpose in accordance with this policy and our Privacy Notice, however in other cases specific written consent will be sought. It is the responsibility of those individuals to ensure that the Town Council is able to keep their personal data accurate and up to date. The personal information will be not shared or provided to any other third party or be used for any purpose other than that for which it was provided.

We will not process any data relating to a child (under 13) without the express parental/ guardian consent of the child concerned.

#### Privacy Notices-General

The Council will always give guidance on personnel data to members of the public or businesses who transact with us, through a Privacy Notice and ensure that individuals on whom personal information is kept are aware of their rights and have easy access to that information on request. This will be available on our website.

#### Privacy Notices-Website

The Council will always give guidance on personnel data to anyone using its website or transacting with it by digital means through a Privacy Notice and ensure that individuals on whom personal information is kept are aware of their rights and have easy access to that information on request. This will be available on our website.

### **Rights of a Data Subject**

#### 1) The right to access personal data we hold on you

- At any point you can contact us to request the personal data we hold on you as well as why we have that personal data, who has access to the personal data and where we obtained the personal data from. Once we have received your request, we will respond within one month.
- There are no fees or charges for the first request but additional requests for the same personal data or requests which are manifestly unfounded or excessive may be subject to an administrative fee.

#### 2) The right to correct and update the personal data we hold on you

- If the data we hold on you is out of date, incomplete or incorrect, you can inform us and your data will be updated.

#### 3) The right to have your personal data erased

- If you feel that we should no longer be using your personal data or that we are unlawfully using your personal data, you can request that we erase the personal data we hold.
- When we receive your request, we will confirm whether the personal data has been deleted or the reason why it cannot be deleted (for example because we need it for to comply with a legal obligation).

#### 4) The right to object to processing of your personal data or to restrict it to certain purposes only

- You have the right to request that we stop processing your personal data or ask us to restrict processing. Upon receiving the request, we will contact you and let you know if we are able to comply or if we have a legal obligation to continue to process your data.

#### 5) The right to data portability

- You have the right to request that we transfer some of your data to another controller. We will comply with your request, where it is feasible to do so, within one month of receiving your request.

#### 6) The right to withdraw your consent to the processing at any time for any processing of data to which consent was obtained

- You can withdraw your consent easily by telephone, email, or by post (see Contact Details).

*You may access these rights by contacting the Town Clerk*

7) The right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office.

- You can contact the Information Commissioners Office on 0303 123 1113 or via email <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/email/> or at the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

The Council will always give guidance on personnel data to employees through the Employee handbook and through a privacy notice.

The Council will ensure that individuals on whom personal information is kept are aware of their rights and have easy access to that information on request.

### **Making Information Available**

The Publication Scheme is a means by which the Council can make a significant amount of information available routinely, without waiting for someone to specifically request it. The scheme is intended to encourage local people to take an interest in the work of the Council and its role within the community.

In accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this Scheme specifies the classes of information which the Council publishes or intends to publish. It is supplemented with an Information Guide which will give greater detail of what the Council will make available and hopefully make it easier for people to access it.

All formal meetings of Council and its committees are subject to statutory notice being given on notice boards, the Website and ~~social media~~<sup>to the local media</sup>. The Council publishes an annual programme in May each year. All formal meetings are open to the public and press and reports to those meetings and relevant background papers are available for the public to see. The Council welcomes public participation and has a public participation session on each Council and committee meeting. Details can be seen in the Council's Standing Orders, which are available on its Website or at its Offices.

Occasionally, Council or committees may need to consider matters in private. Examples of this are matters involving personal details of staff, or a particular member of the public, or where details of commercial/contractual sensitivity are to be discussed. This will only happen after a formal resolution has been passed to exclude the press and public and reasons for the decision are stated. Minutes from all formal meetings, including the confidential parts are public documents.

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 requires written records to be made of certain decisions taken by officers under delegated powers. These are not routine operational and administrative decisions such as giving instructions to the workforce or paying an invoice approved by Council but would include urgent action taken after consultation with the Chairman, such as responding to a planning application in advance of Council. In other words, decisions which would have been made by Council or committee had the delegation not been in place.

The 2014 Regulations also amend the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to allow the public or press to film, photograph or make an audio recording of council and committee meetings normally open to the public. The Council will where possible facilitate such recording unless it is being disruptive. It will also take steps to ensure that children, the vulnerable and members of the public who object to being filmed are protected without undermining the broader purpose of the meeting.

The Council will be pleased to make special arrangements on request for persons who do not have English as their first language or those with hearing or sight difficulties.

### **Disclosure Information**

The Council will as necessary, undertake checks on both staff and Members with the the Disclosure and Barring Service and will comply with their Code of Conduct relating to the secure storage, handling, use, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure Information. It will include an appropriate operating procedure.

## Data Transparency

The Council recognises their responsibility to act in accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code (February 2015). This sets out the key principles for local authorities in creating greater transparency through the publication of public data and is intended to help them meet obligations of the legislative framework concerning information.

“Public data” means the objective, factual data on which policy decisions are based and on which public services are assessed, or which is collected or generated in the course of public service delivery.

The Code will therefore underpin the Council's decisions on the release of public data and ensure it is proactive in pursuing higher standards and responding to best practice as it develops.

The principles of the Code are:

Demand led: new technologies and publication of data should support transparency and accountability.

Open: the provision of public data will be integral to the Council's engagement with residents so that it drives accountability to them.

Timely: data will be published as soon as possible following production.

The Council will display at least the amount of data prescribed in the Code on its website and will often voluntarily exceed this requirement.

## Appendix 1

### FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL: INFORMATION SECURITY POLICY

Formatted: Centered

#### Principles and Purpose

This Policy sets out the Council's commitment to information security within the Council and provides clear direction on responsibilities and procedures.

Flitwick Town Council is a Data Controller, as defined under the Data Protection Act 2018, and pays the appropriate annual fee with the Information Commissioner's Office.

#### PROTOCOLS

##### System Security Processes and Procedures

The Council will provide and maintain security processes and procedures for all key information systems.

The procedures will uphold the principles of confidentiality, integrity, availability and suitability and be assessed for their impact upon other systems and services.

The security procedures will provide preventative measures to reduce the risks to the system, the information held within the system and the service it supports.

A Continuity plan will be developed and maintained for each system to ensure the principles are sustained and enable the continuation of services following failure or damage to systems or facilities.

The Town Clerk will be responsible for the implementation and promotion of the procedures.

##### Physical Security

Adequate and practical access controls will be provided in all areas in which personal and business data is stored or used. Unattended rooms should be secured at all times with locked doors as a minimum security requirement.

All documents disclosing identifiable information will be transported in sealed containers e.g. envelopes.

Within their level of authority, staff will be responsible for minimising the risk of theft or vandalism of the data and equipment through common-sense precautions. In particular high value equipment such as, laptop computers, notebooks or mobile phones containing personal or confidential information, should not be left unattended or unsecured and paper records should not be left in public view.

The physical environment in which data and equipment is stored will be suitable and fit for purpose to ensure the safety of the data and equipment.

##### Logical Security

All computerised information and systems will be regularly backed up to a secure environment.

All computerised information systems will be password controlled and all passwords will be treated with the strictest confidence and users will not divulge their password to any unauthorised person. All sensitive data will be password protected.

##### Copyright and licences

The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring all computer software packages and non-electronic media for use within an information environment are used in accordance with the terms and conditions of use as set out in the license agreement.

##### Disposal and movement of equipment and media



Any media or IT equipment disposed of by the Council will not contain any data or codes that could allow an individual to be identified from it or other confidential information to be accessed. The disposal of equipment will be made under a controlled and documented environment satisfying the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR.

The disposal of media such as disks and memory sticks must ensure that data cannot be recovered. Disposal of such media through the "everyday" waste collection is not permitted. The Council will implement processes to ensure appropriate disposal of such media.

An inventory of all Council computer equipment will be maintained. Details of any equipment or media disposed of or relocated (other than portable equipment) must be recorded.

#### **Personal Computers**

Computer users have responsibility for the security of the equipment in their care and shall not commit any act to compromise the data or Information Security Policy.

Computer users will be made aware of their responsibilities through this policy.

#### **Staff and Councillors' Responsibilities**

The Council will make every reasonable effort to ensure that staff and councillors are aware of their responsibilities for the security of information. However, each councillor or member of staff is responsible for ensuring that this Security Policy is adhered to and report any breaches of security.

#### **Incident Reporting**

Incidents affecting security must be reported to the Town Clerk as quickly as possible.

## Appendix 2

### FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL: DATA BREACH NOTIFICATION POLICY

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#### Aim

Flitwick Town Council is aware of the obligations placed on it by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in relation to processing data lawfully and to ensure it is kept securely. One such obligation is to report a breach of personal data in certain circumstances and this policy sets out our position on reporting data breaches.

#### Personal Data Breach

A personal data breach is a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data transmitted, stored or processed.

The following are examples of data breaches:

- a) access by an unauthorised third party;
- b) deliberate or accidental action (or inaction) by a data controller or data processor;
- c) sending personal data to an incorrect recipient;
- d) computing devices containing personal data being lost or stolen;
- e) alteration of personal data without permission;
- f) loss of availability of personal data.

#### Breach Detection Measures

The Council has implemented a range of measures to assist it in detecting a personal data breach and will continue to review and refine these.

The Council will ask its IT Support company to make sure all computers and phones are up-to-date, make sure our router is an up-to-date quality model, and the firewall and anti-virus software on each computer is current.

The Council will make regular and documented inspections of physical security of premises, rooms and cabinets and ensure documents with confidential or personal information are not left about.

The Council will require our website host to document what they are doing to detect data breaches (typically hacks) and how they report them to you. The Town Clerk is responsible for this.

Staff are encouraged to regularly check for errors which may result in a data breach and report them to the Town Clerk or DPCO.

The Council will regularly check security monitoring systems should flag up personal data breaches.

Staff will be trained to look for to look for:

- Unusual behaviour from anyone using a system
- Unauthorised insiders trying to access servers and files.
- Anomalies in outbound network traffic.
- Traffic sent to or from unknown locations.
- Excessive consumption.
- Changes in configuration.
- Hidden files.
- Unexpected changes.

#### Investigation in to suspected breach

In the event that we become aware of a breach, or a potential breach, an investigation will be carried out. All staff are instructed to contact the DPCO immediately a data breach is identified or suspected. This investigation will be carried out by the Data Protection Compliance Officer or other person agreed by the Town Clerk and DPCO, who will make a decision over the severity of risk:

Low Risk: Risk needs to be entered in Breach Register only.

Medium Risk: Breach is required to be notified to the Information Commissioner.

High Risk: Breach will need to be notified to the individual(s) and the ICO

### **Record of Breaches**

The Town Clerk or other nominated officer records all personal data breaches regardless of whether they are notifiable or not as part of its general accountability requirement under GDPR. It records the facts relating to the breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.

### **When a breach will be notified to the Information Commissioner**

In accordance with the GDPR, we will undertake to notify the Information Commissioner of a breach which is likely to pose a risk to people's rights and freedoms. A risk to people's freedoms can include physical, material or non-material damage such as discrimination, identity theft or fraud, financial loss and damage to reputation.

Notification to the Information Commissioner will be done without undue delay and at the latest within 72 hours of discovery. If we are unable to report in full within this timescale, we will make an initial report to the Information Commissioner, and then provide a full report in more than one instalment if so required.

The following information will be provided when a breach is notified:

- i) a description of the nature of the personal data breach including, where possible:
- ii) the categories and approximate number of individuals concerned; and
- iii) the categories and approximate number of personal data records concerned.
- iv) Contact details of the DPCO.
- v) a description of the likely consequences of the personal data breach; and
- vi) a description of the measures taken, or proposed to be taken, to deal with the personal data breach, including, where appropriate, the measures taken to mitigate any possible adverse effects.

### **When a breach will be notified to the individual.**

In accordance with the GDPR, we will undertake to notify the individual whose data is the subject of a breach if there is a high risk to people's rights and freedoms. A high risk may be, for example, where there is an immediate threat of identity theft, or if special categories of data are disclosed online.

This notification will be made without undue delay and maybe dependent on the circumstances, be made before the supervisory authority is notified.

The following information will be provided when a breach is notified to the affected individuals:

- i) a description of the nature of the breach
- ii) the name and contact details of the Data Protection Compliance Officer.
- iii) a description of the likely consequences of the personal data breach, and
- iv) a description of the measures taken, or proposed to be taken, to deal with the personal data breach, including, where appropriate, the measures taken to mitigate any possible adverse effects.

## Appendix 3

### FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL: CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION (CCTV) POLICY & CODE OF PRACTICE

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#### CCTV POLICY

##### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to regulate the management and use of the closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems operated by Flitwick Town Council. The CCTV systems are owned wholly by the Town Council.

Cameras are located at the following locations:

1. The Rufus Centre
2. The Hub
3. Town Centre (Kings Road/Town Square)
4. Skate Park

All cameras at the Rufus Centre and the Hub are monitored from the Town Council Offices which are streamed wirelessly from separate control units held at each secure location. The Town Centre and Skate Park cameras are monitored by Central Bedfordshire Council.

This CCTV scheme and policy is operated within the Information Commissioner's Code of Practice for CCTV 2008 and Surveillance Camera Code of Practice 2013 published by the Home Office.

##### OBJECTIVES OF THE CCTV SCHEME

Along with a range of measures, the CCTV system will be used to:

- monitor and assist visitors to certain Town Council premises
- aid safety and security to all vulnerable members of the community
- reduce the fear of crime
- deter crime and criminality
- aid the detection of crime and the prosecution of offenders
- reduce instances of nuisance and vandalism

##### STATEMENT OF INTENT

- The CCTV Scheme will be registered with the Information Commissioner under the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018 and will seek to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and the Commissioner's Code of Practice, as well as the Surveillance Camera Codes of Practice 2013 & 2019 published by the Home Office.
- Flitwick Town Council will treat as data all CCTV recordings and relevant information.
- Cameras will be used to monitor activities within the Council and its recreation grounds in line with the objectives of the scheme.
- Static cameras are set as to not focus on private homes, gardens and other areas of private property.
- Unless an immediate response to events is required, staff must not direct cameras at an individual, their property or a specific group of individuals, without an authorisation being obtained in writing for directed surveillance to take place, as set out in the Regulation of Investigatory Power Act 2000.

- Materials or knowledge secured as a result of CCTV will not be released to the media, or used for any commercial purpose, or for the purpose of entertainment. Recordings will only be released under the written authority from the Police, or in respect of a subject access request.
- The planning and design have endeavoured to ensure that the scheme will give maximum effectiveness and efficiency. ~~It is not possible, however, to guarantee that the system will cover or detect every single incident taking place in the areas of coverage.~~
- Warning signs, as required by the Code of Practice of the Information Commissioner will be placed at all access routes to areas covered by the Council's CCTV.

#### OPERATION OF THE SYSTEM

- The system will be administered by the Town Clerk and other Council staff, in accordance with the principles and objectives expressed in the code.
- The CCTV system will be in operation 24 hours each day, for every day of the year.
- Systems will be checked on a weekly basis to ensure that the system is operating effectively and in particular that the equipment is properly recording and that cameras are functional. The system will be regularly serviced and maintained. Defects will be reported to the servicing company at the earliest convenient opportunity.

#### CONTROL OF SOFTWARE & ACCESS TO THE SYSTEM

- Access to the CCTV software will be strictly limited to authorised operators with a password.
- Operators must satisfy themselves that all persons viewing CCTV material will have a right to do so.
- The main control facilities will be kept secure.
- Other administrative functions will include controlling and maintaining downloaded digital materials, and maintenance and system access logs.

#### MONITORING PROCEDURES

- Images from these cameras will be shared with Bedfordshire Police. Access to monitors must be restricted to staff where those areas being monitored are not in public view.
- If covert surveillance is planned or has taken place, copies of the Authorisation Forms, including any Review, must be completed and retained.

#### DIGITAL IMAGES: PROCEDURES

- Live and recorded materials may be viewed by authorised operators investigating an incident.
- Recorded material may be downloaded from the system in line with the objectives of the scheme.
- Images (stills and footage) may be viewed by the Police for the detection or investigation of crime.
- A record will be maintained of the release of images to the Police or other authorised applicants. ~~A register will be available for this purpose.~~

- Viewing of images by the Police must be recorded in writing ~~and in the log book~~. Requests by the Police are allowable under section 29 of the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998.
- Should images be required as evidence, a digital copy may be released to the Police.
- The Police may require the Council to retain images for possible use as evidence in the future. Such images will be securely stored until they are needed by the Police.
- Applications received from outside bodies to view or release images will be referred to the Town Clerk. In these circumstances, images will normally be released where satisfactory documentary evidence is produced showing that they are required for legal proceedings, a subject access request, or in response to a Court Order. A fee may be charged appropriate for subject access requests.
- Retention: Images will be retained for only as long as these are required. The system will automatically delete all recordings held on the main control unit after approximately one month.

#### BREACHES OF THE CODE (including breaches of security)

- Any breach of the CCTV Code of Practice will be investigated by the Town Clerk/ DCPO, in order for him/her to take any appropriate disciplinary action.

#### COMPLAINTS

- Any complaints about the CCTV system should be addressed to the Town Clerk.

#### SUBJECT ACCESS AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

- The Data Protection Act (DPA) & GDPR provide Data Subjects with a right to data held about themselves, including those obtained by CCTV
- Requests for Data Subject Access should be made in writing to the Town Clerk
- A request for Subject Access will be charged at £10, which is the maximum allowable under the DPA
- A request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 will be accepted, where such a request is appropriate

### **CCTV Code of Practice**

#### Introduction and Accountability

Flitwick Town Council has a limited closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance system for the purposes of the prevention and detection of crime and the safety and welfare of staff and premises users. The system is owned by Flitwick Town Council and images from the system are strictly controlled and monitored by authorised personnel.

In line with the Home Office 12-point code of conduct the use of the system will:

- always be for the purpose specified which is in pursuit of a legitimate aim and necessary to meet an identified pressing need
- take into account its effect on individuals and their privacy
- have as much transparency as possible, including a published contact point for access to information and complaints
- have clear responsibility and accountability for all surveillance activities including images and information collected, held and used
- have clear rules, policies and procedures in place and these must be communicated to all who need to comply with them

- have no more images and information stored than that which is strictly required
- restrict access to retained images and information with clear rules on who can gain access
- consider any approved operational, technical and competency standards relevant to a system and its purpose and work to meet and maintain those standards
- be subject to appropriate security measures to safeguard against unauthorised access and use
- have effective review and audit mechanisms to ensure legal requirements, policies and standards are complied with.
- be used in the most effective way to support public safety and law enforcement with the aim of processing images and information of evidential value, when used in pursuit of a legitimate aim.
- be accurate and kept up to date when any information is used to support a surveillance camera system which compares against a reference database for matching purposes.

#### Operation

- The Town Clerk is responsible for the operation of the CCTV system and for ensuring compliance with this policy. Operations will be delegated to other members of staff. Any concerns in respect of the system's use or regarding compliance with this policy should be addressed to the Town Clerk.

#### Location

- This code of conduct applies to all CCTV systems operated by the Town Council. Currently CCTV is present at the Millennium Park ~~and the~~ Rufus Centre, Skate Park and the Town Centre (Kings Road/Town Square). It will also encompass all other CCTV images that, in due course, are added to the system, or obtained from CCTV systems operated by which the Town Council have access to.
- The system is operational, and images are capable of being monitored for 24 hours a day throughout the whole year.
- Images captured on camera will be recorded and are held in secure locations. Although every effort has been made in the planning and design of the CCTV system to give it maximum effectiveness, it is not possible to guarantee that the system will detect every incident taking place within the area of coverage.
- For the purposes of the Data Protection Act 2018, the Data Controller is The Flitwick Town Council and the Council is legally responsible for the management and maintenance of the CCTV system. It may however be a Data Processor for images obtained from other images.
- No unauthorised access to the system is allowed at any time. Normal access is strictly limited to authorised staff only. Bedfordshire Police may in future monitor cameras under a separate Memorandum of Understanding.
- In an emergency and where it is not reasonably practicable to secure prior authorisation, access may be granted to persons with a legitimate reason to access the CCTV system.
- Before granting access to the CCTV system, controllers must satisfy themselves of the identity of any visitor and ensure that the visitor has the appropriate authorisation. All visitors will be required to complete and sign the visitors' log, which shall include their name, department or the organisation they represent, the person who granted authorisation for their visit (if applicable) and the start and finish times of their access to the CCTV system.
- It is recognised that the images obtained comprise personal data and are subject to the law on Data Protection. All copies will be handled in accordance with the procedures

- Recorded images will only be reviewed with the authority of the Town Clerk. Copies of digital images will only be made for the purposes of crime detection, evidence in relation to matters affecting safety, evidence for prosecutions, or where otherwise required by law.
- All staff involved in the operation of the CCTV system will, by training and access to this Policy, be made aware of the sensitivity of handling CCTV images and recordings.
- The Town Clerk will ensure that all staff are fully briefed and trained in respect of all functions; operational and administrative, arising within the CCTV control operation. Training in the requirements of the Data Protection Act and this policy will also be provided.

#### Recordings

- The system is supported by digital recording facilities which will function throughout operations in real time. As the images are recorded digitally, the process of identifying retrieval dates and times will be computerised. Images will be cleared automatically after a set time.
- Unless required for evidential purposes or for the investigation of crime, recorded images will be retained for no longer than 30 days from the date of recording. However, the Town Council recognises that, in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, no images should be retained for longer than is necessary. Accordingly, some recorded images may be erased after a shorter period, for example where it can be determined more quickly that there has been no incident giving rise to the need to retain the recorded images. Digital images will be automatically erased after a set period, which will be no longer than 30 days.
- In the event of the digitally recorded image being required for evidence or the investigation of crime it will be retained for a period of time until it is no longer required for evidential purposes or any investigation into a crime has been completed.

#### Digital Recording and Access Procedures

- All disks containing images to remain the property of the Town Council.
- Requests by persons for viewing or copying of disks or obtaining digital recordings will be usually be made by prior authority of the Police.
- Requests from the Police will arise in a number of ways, including:
  - requests for a review of recordings in order to trace incidents that have been reported
  - immediate action relating to live incidents, e.g. immediate pursuit
  - for major incidents that occur when images may have been recorded continuously
  - individual Police Officers seeking to review recorded images
- It is important that access to, and disclosure of, the images recorded by CCTV is restricted and carefully controlled, not only to ensure that the rights of individuals are preserved but also to ensure that the chain of evidence remains intact, should the images be required for evidential purposes. Users of CCTV will also have to ensure that the reasons for which they may disclose copies of the images are compatible with the reasons or purposes for which they originally obtained those images. These aspects of the policy reflect Data Protection Principles of the Data Protection Act 2018.
- All requests for access or disclosure will be recorded. The Town Clerk will make decisions on access to recorded images by persons other than Police Officers. Requests by the Police for access to images will not normally be denied and can be made without the above authority, provided they are accompanied by a written request signed by a Police Officer who must indicate that the images are required for the purposes of a specific crime enquiry.
- If access or disclosure is denied, the reasons will be documented.
- If access to or disclosure of the images is allowed, then the following will be documented:
  - the date and time at which access was allowed or the date on which disclosure was made
  - the reason for allowing access or disclosure
  - the extent of the information to which access was allowed or which was disclosed

#### Photographs and hard copy prints



- Photographs and hard copy prints taken from digital images are subject to the same controls and principles of Data Protection as other data collected. They will be treated in the same way as digital images.
- At the end of their useful life all computer disks, still photographs and hard copy prints will be disposed of as confidential waste.
- This code of practice will be reviewed regularly to assess its implementation and effectiveness and it will be promoted and implemented throughout the Council.

## Appendix 4

### FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL: SUBJECT ACCESS POLICY

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#### Introduction

This policy was adopted by the Town Council in order to comply with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. Data subjects have the right to access personal data held on them by the Council. Details are set out in the Privacy Notice on the Council's website.

This policy is in place to ensure that internal procedures on handling of Subject Access Requests (SARs) are accurate and complied with and includes:

- Responsibilities (who, what)
- Timing
- Changes to data
- Handling requests for rectification, erasure or restriction of processing.

The Council will ensure that personal data is easily accessible at all times in order to ensure a timely response to SARs and that personal data on specific data subjects can be easily filtered. The Council has implemented standards on responding to SARs.

#### Upon receipt of a SAR

- The data subject will be informed who at the Council to contact, the Town Clerk.
- The identity of the data subject will be verified and if needed, any further evidence on the identity of the data subject may be requested.
- The access request will be verified, to ensure it is sufficiently substantiated and it is clear to the data controller what personal data is requested. If necessary, additional information will be requested.
- Requests will be verified as to them being unfounded or excessive (in particular because of their repetitive character); if so, the Council may refuse to act on the request or charge a reasonable fee.
- Receipt of the SAR will be promptly acknowledged, and the data subject will be informed of any costs involved in the processing of the SAR.
- Whether the Council processes the data requested will be verified. If the Council does not process any data, the data subject will be informed accordingly. At all times the internal SAR policy will be followed, and progress may be monitored.
- Data will not be changed as a result of the SAR. Routine changes as part of the processing activities concerned may be permitted.
- The data requested will be verified to establish if it involves data on other data subjects. This data will be filtered before the requested data is supplied to the data subject; if data cannot be filtered, other data subjects will be contacted to give consent to the supply of their data as part of the SAR.

#### Responding to a SAR

The Council will respond to a SAR within one month after receipt of the request:

- If more time is needed to respond to complex requests, an extension of another two months is permissible, and this will be communicated to the data subject in a timely manner within the first month;
- If the council cannot provide the information requested, it will inform the data subject on this decision without delay and at the latest within one month of receipt of the request.
- If a SAR is submitted in electronic form, any personal data will be preferably provided by electronic means as well.
- If data on the data subject is processed, the Council will ensure as a minimum the following information in the SAR response:
  - the purposes of the processing;
  - the categories of personal data concerned;

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- | ➤ the recipients or categories of recipients to whom personal data has been or will be disclosed, in particular in third countries or international organisations, including any appropriate safeguards for transfer of data, such as Binding Corporate Rules or EU model clauses
- | ➤ where possible, the envisaged period for which personal data will be stored, or, if not possible, the criteria used to determine that period;
- | ➤ the existence of the right to request rectification or erasure of personal data or restriction of processing of personal data concerning the data subject or to object to such processing;
- | ➤ the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioners Office ("ICO");
- If the data has not been collected from the data subject: the source of such data;
- The existence of any automated decision-making, including profiling and any meaningful information about the logic involved, as well as the significance and the envisaged consequences of such processing for the data subject.
- Provide a copy of the personal data undergoing processing.



## FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

### DIGITAL & ICT POLICY

#### **Contents**

1. Introduction
2. General Operation
3. Compliance with Legislation
4. Security
5. Virus Controls
6. Use of Computer Equipment
7. Misuse
8. Internet
9. Use of Email
10. Social Media
11. Health and Safety
12. Protocol for the use of Flitwick Town Councils Website
13. Web Links Policy
14. Sharing Technology

Appendix 1: Removable Media Policy

Appendix 2: Internet Acceptable Usage Policy

Appendix 3: IT Access Policy

Appendix 4: Digital & Social Media Policy

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## **1. Introduction**

This document defines the Council's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Policy. Digital and ICT is a key enabler for the Council, both in its ongoing day to day business processes and in supporting strategic change, particularly in the drive to 'digitise' services.

The Policy is intended to support and enable the Council's Corporate Strategy. It has 3 broad aims:

1. Customer agenda - To enable customers to access the Council's services on-line, and have their requirements fulfilled, where practical, through digital solutions.
2. Business agenda - To enable the Council to make effective use and obtain the maximum benefit from the use of ICT.
3. Technical agenda - To provide a robust, reliable, effective and resilient infrastructure for the efficient delivery of ICT; this has to be allied with new business processes designed from a digital mind-set, and with the customer in mind.

Flitwick Town Council will then, make the most of technology to ensure its services are as efficient, economic and accessible as possible, particularly where the cost of change is outweighed by the benefits. This policy compliments our Information and Data Protection Policy and Social Media Policy which can also be found in our Constitution.

This Policy is directly supplemented by four appendices which give more detail in related areas:

- Appendix 1: Removeable Media Policy.
- Appendix 2: Internet Acceptable Usage Policy.
- Appendix 3: IT Access Policy.
- Appendix 4: [Digital & Social Media Policy](#).

The Council uses its computer, software packages and the internet (including emails and social media), to further the efficiency of its business and to provide the best service possible to its customers, partners and the public. Any disruption to the use of these facilities will be detrimental to the Authority and may result in actual financial loss. This Policy sets out how the Council intends to regulate the use of these facilities.

The Council has a duty laid down in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations, to ensure the proper security and privacy of its computer systems and data. All users have, to varying degrees, some responsibility for protecting these assets and complying with this policy (See also the Council's Information and Data Protection Policy).

For the purposes of this document the following definitions apply:

"Computer" (or "computer system") means any device for automatic storing and processing of data and includes mainframe computer, minicomputer, microcomputer, personal computer(whether hand-held laptop, portable, tablet, standalone, network or attached to a mainframe computer), workstation, word processing system, desk top publishing system, office automation system, messaging system or any other similar device;

"Computer data" means any information stored and processed by computer and includes programs, text, geographic, pictures, video and sound.

## **2. General Operation**

- All hardware, software, data and associated documentation produced in connection with the work of the Council, are the legal property of the Council.

- The Council will maintain external support contracts for the hardware, major items of software and provision of internet facilities as necessary.
- The Council will not knowingly breach copyright of another person.
- ~~The Council will include an assessment of risks from its use of IT in its Business Risk Assessment.~~
- The Council will routinely back up its essential data off site.
- The Council will make a detailed inventory of its ICT equipment on its Asset Register and also maintain a section on digital assets.
- The Council will consider the location of equipment and provide documentation to ensure optimum physical security.
- The Council will maintain a record of relevant training for each individual user.
- The disposal of any ICT equipment, software, waste or data must be authorised, undertaken safely and securely and be properly documented.
- The Council will standardise where possible on Microsoft standard software.
- The Council will maintain a Recovery Plan in case of loss, corruption or damage to ICT equipment, software or data.

### **3. Compliance with Legislation**

The Council's policy in respect of the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 is set out in its Information and Data Protection Policy.

Under the Computer Misuse Act 1990 (as amended by Part 5 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and Part 2 of the Serious Crime Act 2015), the following are criminal offences, if undertaken intentionally:

- unauthorised access to a computer system or data;
- unauthorised access preparatory to another criminal action;
- unauthorised modification of a computer system or data;
- making, supplying or obtaining any articles for use in a malicious act using a computer;
- unauthorised acts causing serious damage,

All users should be made aware that deliberate unauthorised use, alteration, or interference with a computer system or its software or data, whether proprietary or written "in-house", will be regarded as a breach of the Council policy and may be treated as gross misconduct. In some circumstances such a breach may also be a criminal offence.

It is an offence under the Copyright, Design and Patent Act 1988 to copy licensed software without the consent of the copyright owner. All copying is forbidden by the Act, unless it is in accordance with the terms and conditions of the respective licence or contract.

### **4. Security**

IT security is the protection of information systems from theft, damage interference or unauthorised use of the hardware, the software, and to the information on them, as well as from disruption or misdirection of the services that they provide. It is the process of preventing and detecting unauthorised use of the computer system.

The Council will ensure that controls are put in place to provide confidentiality, integrity, and availability for all components of computer systems. These will include:

- Ensuring the secure location of equipment and documentation to help safeguard the Council's ICT assets. ~~Portable equipment must be locked away when not in use and must not be removed from the premises without permission.~~
- Only persons authorised by the Town Clerk may use Council computer systems. The authority given to use a system will be sufficient but not excessive and users will be notified that the authority given to them must not be exceeded. Secure areas will be password protected.

- Developing operating procedures to control use of ICT equipment. Access to the Computers is subject to passwords. Levels of encryption will be maintained according to risk.
- Installing and keeping updated, reliable and reputable anti-virus software. (see below)
- Maintaining activated firewalls to act security guards between the internet and the computer network.
- Staying up to date with the latest software.
- Ensuring staff avoid clicking on email attachments unless they know the source.
- Changing passwords regularly, using a unique combination of numbers, letters and case types.
- Ensuring staff use the internet with caution and ignore pop-ups, drive-by downloads while surfing.
- Taking the time to research the basic aspects of computer security and educate ourselves on evolving cyber-threats.
- Performing daily full system scans and creating a periodic system backup schedule to ensure data is retrievable should something happen to a computer.
- Being satisfied that partner organisations or contractors who use their own systems have adequate security arrangements in place.

Further development of appropriate secure data storage, off site back up of data, and recovery plans will be a priority for review.

#### **5. Virus Controls**

Viruses are undesirable pieces of computer code that can corrupt systems, equipment and data. They are a serious, increasing threat to the computer systems of the Council. All computers and servers will have loaded and operate the Council's standard virus detection software for scanning discs, memory sticks and fixed drives. Discs and memory sticks of unknown origin should not be used in the Council's computers.

No software should be loaded onto the Council's equipment without the permission of the Town Clerk.

If a virus is suspected, the equipment should be switched off and isolated until the virus can be eliminated.

#### **6. Use of Computer Equipment**

1. Only authorised persons have use of computer equipment.
2. The use of new software must first be authorised by the Town Clerk or other nominated person before general use is permitted.
3. Only software authorised for business applications may be used.
4. Unauthorised copying or removal of computer equipment/software is not allowed.

#### **7. Misuse**

This Policy applies to the activities which constitute unacceptable use of the network operated by the Council. The policy applies equally to employees, councillors, clients, visitors and others who may be allowed to use the facilities on a permanent or temporary basis. All misuse of the facilities is prohibited including specifically but not exclusively the following:

1. The creation or transmission of any offensive, obscene or indecent images, data or other material or any data capable of being resolved into obscene or indecent images or material.
2. The creation of material which is designed or likely to cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety.
3. The creation or transmission of defamatory material.
4. The transmission of material in any way that infringes the copyright of another person.

5. The transmission of unsolicited commercial advertising material to networks belonging to other organisations.
6. Deliberate actions or activities with any of the following characteristics:
  - Wasting staff effort or networked resources
  - Corrupting or destroying another user's data
  - Violating the privacy of other users
  - Disrupting the work of other users
  - Other misuse of networked resources by the deliberate introduction of viruses
  - Playing games during working hours
  - Private use of the facilities without specific consent
  - Altering the set up or operating parameters of any computer equipment without authority

### **8. Internet**

The internet is established as an important communications and information facility. At the Council these facilities are provided for use of staff and occasionally councillors to achieve Council objectives. Authorised persons are encouraged to make use of the Internet as part of their official and professional activities. Any use for unauthorised purposes outside of those permitted in this policy will be regarded as gross misconduct. If you are unsure whether use would be authorised, you must seek advice from the Town Clerk in advance. Visitors such as volunteers or contractors working with the Council may also be specifically authorised to use the Council's access to the internet, for the work they are doing for the Council.

You should not download files, including application and games that are not connected with your work for Flitwick Town Council. Any sites which require registration or payment for services must not be accessed without due authority. [*See Digital & Social Media Policy below*]

### **9. Use of Email**

The use of email is encouraged as its appropriate use facilitates efficiency. The email system is available for communication directly concerned with the legitimate business of the Council. An exchange of email correspondence requires the same professional standards as other forms of communication. You should not send or forward mail, which is defamatory or offensive for whatever reason, or is known to be factually incorrect or misleading.

In order to protect the Council from viruses, email attachments which might contain macros (word processor and spreadsheet files) or applications, should not be opened if they are from a sender whom you do not recognise, - simply delete.

Email addresses should be treated as confidential and care taken that private email addresses are not wrongly circulated. Email to multiple addresses outside of Councillors and the Clerk should be sent as blind copy, (bcc). [*See Social Media Policy*]

### **10. Social Media**

Social media is the term for online tools, websites and interactive media that enable users to interact with each other by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. The term "social media" covers sites and applications including but not restricted to Facebook, ~~Twitter~~, ~~Instagram~~, ~~eFlickr~~, LinkedIn, blogs, and any similar sites which develop after the creation of this policy. It also includes comments on online newspaper articles.

Social media can be a positive media, but it can lead to high emotions and online arguments. The additional risks to personal safety will be considered in safety risk assessments. (*see Health and Safety below*).

The Council has adopted a Social Media Policy which is included in this document as Appendix 4. For both councillors and officers it is to be considered in conjunction with their respective codes of conduct and associated protocols. It relates to all use of social media, whether inside or outside of official capacities. [*See Social Media*]

### **11. Health and Safety**



Computers are now a part of everyday life. If they are not used correctly, they can present hazards. Computers may be called Display Screen Equipment (DSE), Visual Display Units (VDU's) and the immediate environment where they are used i.e. desk/chair etc. is referred to as a workstation.

The Display Screen Equipment Regulations, 1992 regulate the use of computers at work and refer to the persons affected as "users". "Users" are persons who "habitually use VDU's as a significant part of their normal work and regularly work on display screens for two/three hours each day or continuously for more than one-hour spells". The Regulations also apply to employees working at home.

The Council will ensure that a correct assessment of all workstations is undertaken to highlight any problems. In addition, there are risks which arise from possible arguments and harassment arising through social media.

## **12. Protocol for the use of Flitwick Town Council's Website.**

### **Background**

The Town Council operates two linked websites, the main Council [website www.flitwick.gov.uk](http://www.flitwick.gov.uk) ~~one~~ and The Rufus Centre [www.therufuscentre.co.uk](http://www.therufuscentre.co.uk). Both websites ~~were developed and~~ are hosted by an external provider. ~~They will be further developed and made more interactive and have recognisable design links with a range of partner organisations.~~

Our website is [one of](#) the main [platforms media](#) ~~for the purpose of~~ communicating information about the Town Council. The website ~~and indeed email communications media~~ may be used to:

- Post [agendas, supporting papers](#), minutes and dates of meetings
- Advertise events and activities
- Publicise good news stories ~~including linked website or~~ press [release](#) page
- Vacancies
- Post and communicate information from partners i.e. Police, Library and Health etc.
- ~~Announce~~ing new information.
- Promulgate information required under the Transparency Code
- Give information on the Council, [Members](#), its policies and governance
- Post and communicate information from other Town related community groups, clubs, associations and bodies.
- [Promote Flitwick businesses through the Business Directory](#)
- Refer resident queries to the Town Clerk, other staff or councillors.

The Rufus Centre Website is intended to:

- Promote the conference, celebration and meeting facilities.
- Advertise regular and one- off events [including third party events held at The Rufus Centre](#)
- [Provide booking link to Ticketsolve booking platform for FTC and Rufus events.](#)
- Promote the [Rendezvous Café](#).
- Give information about community groups operating at the centre
- Advertise availability ~~of~~in rentable office space.
- [Provide links to tenants based at centre.](#)

### **Future Additions**

The Council will regularly review the contents of [both its](#) websites to ensure that it continuously improves the range and quality of current and historical data available.

### **Editorial Control**

~~The Town Clerk~~Officers ~~have~~s been given editing rights for the Town Council site ~~and The Town Clerk~~ can add, delete and amend specified areas of information on the Town Council site. Quality is important to the image of the Council. ~~Remember: anything that we publish on the web, we should be happy to see published in a local newspaper!~~

### **Editorial Content**

Information needs to be accurate and in accordance with Town Council Policy.

The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity 2015 must be taken into account when matters of publicity are concerned. Basically, we are allowed to publicise the contact details of individual councillors, positions they hold and can publicise individual proposals, decisions and recommendations but must keep information objective and not use Council funds to mount campaigns intended to persuade members of the public to hold a particular view on a question of policy or party politics. The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 require public sector websites to meet accessibility standards. They also apply to downloadable documents, mobile apps, intranets and extranets. The Council will publish an accessibility statement on its website and the Town Clerk will ensure compliance.

#### Updating the Site

The site will be updated regularly. It is important that the site remains fresh, relevant and current.

#### Web Links

We will place important links on our website to make it as easy as possible for visitors to find out information about the Town and its organisations. We will also approach other bodies for them to have links to our site- see Web links policy below.

### **13. Web Links Policy**

The website may include links to various outside bodies, including:

- Links to the websites of business who sponsor any Council event or facility,
- Links to external organisations providing a public service – e.g. Central Bedfordshire Council,
- Links to community partners

#### Criteria for outside link to Flitwick Town Council

From the adoption of this Policy, the following criteria will be used to decide what websites may be linked to the Flitwick Town Council website:

1. Other Council websites such as Central Bedfordshire Council, or other local councils in the greater Flitwick area.
2. Public service websites that provide information to the public, such as Police, Fire & Rescue Service, Safer Community Partnerships.
3. Tourism websites that provide information to people wishing to visit the local area
4. Specific business websites providing public information, at the discretion of the Council.
5. Contact for local churches
6. Links to websites of businesses who sponsor Council events or facilities.
7. Local History and Museum websites.

~~8. No individual businesses to be linked to the website, unless they are sponsors (as above).~~

~~9-8.~~ Links to websites of community groups or clubs which serve the Town.

~~10-9.~~ The Council to have the final decision as to whether a website meets the criteria set out in this Policy document.

~~11-10.~~ The following Disclaimer to be used:

“Our website contains links to these other sites to provide information and for the convenience of the public. Flitwick Town Council does not control these sites and so cannot guarantee that the information is up to date or correct. Flitwick Town Council does not endorse any of the content of any businesses linked to the website nor any advertising linked to these websites”.

### **14. Sharing Technology**

We will work and share technology with the principal council and other local bodies where appropriate, providing it takes forward the objectives of this policy.

#### Sharing information with and between Councillors

As much information as possible will be provided electronically to councillors. The Local Government (Electronic Communications) England Order 2015 has amended the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12 to allow the distribution of summonses, agendas and minutes by electronic means providing each councillor agrees.

Councillors historically print as necessary themselves, however it is at times necessary for councillors to print large documents and this facility is offered. Council specific email addresses and advice on the

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security of confidential information will be made available to councillors. The Council will in the future need to review these arrangements, along with the possibility of more useable technology provision.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL: REMOVEABLE MEDIA POLICY**

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#### **1. Policy Statement**

Flitwick Town Council will ensure the controlled use of removable media devices to store and transfer information by all users who have access to information, information systems and IT equipment for the purposes of conducting official Council business.

#### **2. Purpose**

This document states the Removable Media policy for Flitwick Town Council. The policy establishes the principles and working practices that are to be adopted by all users in order for data to be safely stored and transferred on removable media.

This policy aims to ensure that the use of removable media devices is controlled in order to:

- Enable the correct data to be made available where it is required.
- Maintain the integrity of the data.
- Prevent unintended or deliberate consequences to the stability of Flitwick Town Councils Council's computer network.
- Avoid contravention of any legislation, policies or good practice requirements.
- Build confidence and trust in the data that is being shared between systems.
- Maintain high standards of care in ensuring the security of Protected and Restricted information.
- Prohibit the disclosure of information as may be necessary by law.

#### **3. Scope**

This policy applies to all Members, Committees, Services, Partners, Employees of the Council, contractual third parties and agents of the Council who have access to Flitwick Town Council information, information systems or IT equipment and intends to store any information on removable media devices.

#### **4. Definition**

This policy should be adhered to at all times, but specifically whenever any user intends to store any information used by the Council to conduct official business on removable media devices.

Removable media devices include, but are not restricted to the following:

- External Hard Drives.
- USB Memory Sticks (also known as pen drives or flash drives).
- Media Card Readers.
- Embedded Microchips (including Smart Cards and Mobile Phone SIM Cards).
- MP3 Players.
- Digital Cameras.
- Audio Tapes (including Dictaphones and Answering Machines).

#### **5. Risks**

Flitwick Town Council recognises that there are risks associated with users accessing and handling information in order to conduct official Council business. Information is used throughout the Council and sometimes shared with external organisations and applicants.

Securing **PROTECTED** or **RESTRICTED** data is of paramount importance – particularly in relation to the Council's need to protect data in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 & 2018. Any loss of the ability to access information or interference with its integrity could have a significant effect on the efficient operation of the Council. It is therefore essential for the continued operation of the Council that the confidentiality, integrity and availability of all information recording systems are maintained at a level, which is appropriate to the Council's needs.

This policy aims to mitigate the following risks:

- Disclosure of **PROTECTED** and **RESTRICTED** information as a consequence of loss, theft or careless use of removable media devices.
- Contamination of Council networks or equipment through the introduction of viruses through the transfer of data from one form of IT equipment to another.
- Potential sanctions against the Council or individuals imposed by the Information Commissioner's Office as a result of information loss or misuse.
- Potential legal action against the Council or individuals as a result of information loss or misuse.
- Council reputational damage as a result of information loss or misuse.

**Non-compliance** with this policy could have a significant effect on the efficient operation of the Council and may result in financial loss and an inability to provide necessary services to our customers.

## **6. Applying the Policy**

### **6.1. Restricted Access to Removable Media**

It is Flitwick Town Council policy to prohibit the use of all removable media devices. The use of removable media devices will only be approved if a valid business case for its use is developed. There are large risks associated with the use of removable media, and therefore clear business benefits that outweigh the risks must be demonstrated before approval is given.

Requests for access to, and use of, removable media devices must be made to the Town Clerk for **Approval**.

Should access to, and use of, removable media devices be approved the following sections apply and must be adhered to at all times.

### **6.2. Procurement of Removable Media**

All removable media devices and any associated equipment and software must only be purchased and installed by the Council's outsourced IT provider. Non-council owned removable media devices must not be used to store any information used to conduct official Council business and must not be used with any Council owned or leased IT equipment.

The only equipment and media that should be used to connect to Council equipment or the Council network is equipment and media that has been purchased by the Council and approved or has been sanctioned for use by the Council.

### **6.3. Security of Data**

Data that is only held in one place and in one format is at much higher risk of being unavailable or corrupted through loss, destruction or malfunction of equipment than data which is frequently backed up. Therefore, removable media should not be the only place where data obtained for a council purpose is held.

Copies of any data stored on removable media must also remain on the source system or networked computer until the data is successfully transferred to another networked computer or system.

In order to minimise physical risk, loss, theft or electrical corruption, all storage media must be stored in an appropriately secure and safe environment.

Each user is responsible for the appropriate use and security of data and for not allowing removable media devices, and the information stored on these devices, to be compromised in any way whilst in their care or under their control.

All data stored on removable media devices must, where possible, be encrypted. If this is not possible, then all **PROTECTED or RESTRICTED** data held must be encrypted.

Users should be aware that the Council will audit / log the transfer of data files to and from all removable media devices and Council-owned IT equipment.

#### **6.4. Incident Management**

It is the duty of all users to immediately report any actual or suspected breaches in information security to the Town Clerk.

It is the duty of all Members to report any actual or suspected breaches in information security to the Chairman of the Council.

Any misuse or irresponsible actions that affect business data, or any loss of data, should be reported as a security incident.

#### **6.5. Third Party Access to Council Information**

No third party (external contractors, partners, agents, the public or non-employee parties) may receive data or extract information from the Council's network, information stores or IT equipment without explicit agreement from the Council's outsourced IT provider acting on behalf of Flitwick Town Council.

Should third parties be allowed access to Council information then all the considerations of this policy apply to their storing and transferring of the data.

#### **6.6. Preventing Information Security Incidents**

Damaged or faulty removable media devices must not be used. It is the duty of all users to contact the Council's outsourced IT provider should removable media be damaged.

Virus and malware checking software approved by the Council's outsourced IT provider must be operational on both the machine from which the data is taken and the machine on to which the data is to be loaded. The data must be scanned by two functionally different virus checking software products, before the media is loaded on to the receiving machine.

Whilst in transit or storage the data held on any removable media devices must be given appropriate security according to the type of data and its sensitivity. Encryption or password control must be applied to the data files unless there is no risk to the Council, other organisations or individuals from the data being lost whilst in transit or storage.

#### **6.7. Disposing of Removable Media Devices**

Removable media devices that are no longer required, or have become damaged, must be disposed of securely to avoid data leakage. Any previous contents of any reusable media that are to be reused, either within the Council or for personal use, must be erased. This must be a thorough removal of all data from the media to avoid potential data leakage using specialist software and tools. All

removable media devices that are no longer required, or have become damaged, must be returned to the Council's outsourced IT provider for secure disposal.

For advice or assistance on how to thoroughly remove all data, including deleted files, from removable media contact the Council's outsourced IT provider.

#### **6.8. User Responsibility**

All considerations of this policy must be adhered to at all times when using all types of removable media devices. However, special attention must be paid to the following when using USB memory sticks (also known as pen drives or flash drives).

- Any removable media device used in connection with Council equipment or the network or to hold information used to conduct official Council business must only be purchased and installed by the Council's outsourced IT provider. Any removable media device that has not been supplied by IT must not be used.
- All data stored on removable media devices must be encrypted where possible.
- Virus and malware checking software must be used when the removable media device is connected to a machine.
- Only data that is authorised and necessary to be transferred should be saved on to the removable media device. Data that has been deleted can still be retrieved.
- Removable media devices must not be used for archiving or storing records as an alternative to other storage equipment.
- Special care must be taken to physically protect the removable media device and stored data from loss, theft or damage. Anyone using removable media devices to transfer data must consider the most appropriate way to transport the device and be able to demonstrate that they took reasonable care to avoid damage or loss.

For advice or assistance on how to securely use removable media devices, please contact the Council's outsourced IT provider.

#### **7. Policy Compliance**

If any user is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to Flitwick Town Council's disciplinary procedure.

If a criminal offence is considered to have been committed further action may be taken to assist in the prosecution of the offender(s).

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL: INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USAGE POLICY**

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#### **1. Policy Statement**

Flitwick Town Council will ensure all users of Council provided internet facilities are aware of the acceptable use of such facilities.

#### **2. Purpose**

This policy document tells you how you should use your Council Internet facility. It outlines your personal responsibilities and informs what you must and must not do.

The Internet facility is made available for the business purposes of the Council. A certain amount of personal use is permitted in accordance with the statements contained within this Policy.

It is recognised that it is impossible to define precise rules covering all Internet activities available and adherence should be undertaken within the spirit of the policy to ensure productive use of the facility is made.

#### **3. Scope**

This Internet Acceptable Usage Policy applies to, but is not limited to, all Flitwick Town Council Members, Committees, Services, Partners, Employees of the Council, contractual third parties and agents of the Council who access the Council's Internet service and IT equipment.

#### **4. Definition**

This Internet Acceptable Usage Policy should be applied at all times whenever using the Council provided Internet facility. This includes access via any access device including a desktop computer, council laptop, or a smartphone device.

#### **5. Risks**

Flitwick Town Council recognises that there are risks associated with users accessing and handling information in order to conduct official Council business.

This policy aims to mitigate the following risks:

- Viruses, malware etc.
- Increased risk of data loss and corresponding fines
- Inappropriate access to and unacceptable use of the Council's network, software, facilities And documents.
- Inadequate destruction of data
- The non-reporting of information security incidents
- Inconsistency in how users deal with 'secure' documents
- The impact of insufficient training for users
- The sharing of passwords
- Incorrect or inappropriate classification of documents
- Risk of reputation damage and further loss in public confidence

- Operational difficulties providing services
- Inappropriate sharing of personal data in breach of the Data Protection Act 1998 & 2018.

Non-compliance with this policy could have a significant effect on the efficient operation of the Council and may result in financial loss and an inability to provide necessary services to our customers.

## **6. Applying the Policy**

### **6.1. What is the purpose of providing the Internet service?**

The Internet service is primarily provided to give Council employees and Members:

- Access to information that is pertinent to fulfilling the Council's business obligations.
- The capability to post updates to Council owned and/or maintained web sites
- An electronic commerce facility.
- An ability to engage online with our customers.

### **6.2. What you should use your Council Internet account for**

Your Council Internet account should be used in accordance with this policy to access anything in pursuance of your work including:

- Access to and/or provision of information.
- Research.
- Accessing browser-based IT applications.

### **6.3. Personal use of the Council's Internet service**

At the discretion of your line manager, and provided it does not interfere with your work, the Council permits the use of the Internet facilities for non-business research or browsing during unpaid mealtimes or unpaid before/after flexitime/normal working hours.

Personal use of the Internet is subject to management discretion and the following conditions:

- To investigate or detect the unauthorised use of the systems, e.g. that the policy is being observed, that no discriminatory or offensive content appears in emails, etc.
- That personal use does not impinge on the member of staff's work or that of other staff;
- That personal use takes place outside of normal working hours and that the time is not included in the calculation of daily hours; and
- That personal use is not connected to any business or profit-making venture.

In addition to these general restrictions noted above, the Council specifically excludes the following uses of the Internet:

- To view content of an obscene or discriminatory nature, or content that is in violation of UK legislation.
- To download unofficial software for use on Council equipment.
- To reveal confidential information.
- To spread or publish any political, with the exception of recognised Trade Union Activity, or threatening views or content that could cause unrest. To search for personal information using the business email address.

### **6.4. Use of Social media**

- You must not access social networking sites for personal use during working hours. Access to the Web using the Councils IT systems is restricted to lunch breaks and before and after the working day, unless specific permission is granted by your manager.



- You may not use Facebook page for personal blogs unless the use is in line with the Town Councils Social Media Policy.
- Employees must not give information on a social networking site which is confidential to the Council, its suppliers or customers.
- Employees must refrain from making reference on social networking sites to the Council, its employees, its customers and its suppliers.
- Employees must not post entries on Facebook or a social networking site which are derogatory, defamatory, discriminatory or offensive in any way, or which could bring the Council into disrepute.
- Employees should be aware that blogs may create documents which the courts can order to be disclosed for use in litigation. Consequently, employees will be assumed to have written any contentious items unless they can prove definitively that they have not done so.
- The Council will monitor its IT systems as is deemed necessary in order to prevent inappropriate usage Monitoring use of social media during work time.
- The Council reserves the right to monitor employees Internet usage, the Council considers that valid reasons for checking and employees Internet usage include suspicions that the employee has been spending an excessive amount of time using social media websites for non-work-related activity; or acted in a way that is in breach of the rules set out in this policy
- The Council reserves the right to retain information that it has gathered on employees use of the Internet for a period of one year.
- Access to particular social media sites may be withdrawn in any case of misuse.

Note:

Access to on-line games and the use of social chat rooms or forums will be reviewed and may be blocked for business reasons e.g. streaming media, impact on services, or due to content being downloaded.

Please refer to the Town Council Social Media Policy.

Staff purchase personal items at their own risk. The Council is not responsible for any personal transactions you enter into. You must accept responsibility for, and keep the Council protected against, any claims, damages, losses or the like which might arise from your transaction – for example in relation to payment for the items or any personal injury or damage to property they might cause.

If you are in any doubt about how you may make personal use of the Council's Internet service, you are advised to discuss this with your Manager.

All personal usage must be in accordance with this policy. Your computer and any data held on it are the property of Flitwick Town Council and may be accessed at any time by the Council to ensure compliance with all its statutory, regulatory and internal policy requirements.

#### **6.5. Internet account management, security and monitoring**

The Council will provide a secure logon-id and password facility for the network which will include access to the internet. The Council's outsourced IT provider is responsible for the technical management of this account.

The provision of Internet access is owned by the Council and all access is recorded, logged and interrogated for the purposes of:

- Monitoring total usage to ensure business use is not impacted by lack of capacity.
- The filtering system monitors and records all access for reports that are produced for line managers and auditors.

## **6.6. Things you must not do**

Access to the following categories of websites is currently blocked using the Websense URL filtering system.

Please note that this is not exhaustive and will be updated as appropriate:

- Illegal.
- Pornographic.
- Violence.
- Hate and discrimination.
- Offensive.
- Weapons.
- Hacking.
- Gambling.
- Dating.
- Radio stations.
- Games.

Except where it is strictly and necessarily required for your work, for example IT audit activity or other investigation, you must not use your Internet account to:

Create, download, upload, display or access knowingly, sites that contain pornography or other "unsuitable" material that might be deemed illegal, obscene or offensive.

Subscribe to, enter or use peer-to-peer networks or install software that allows sharing of music, video or image files.

Subscribe to, enter or utilise real time chat facilities such as chat rooms.

Subscribe to, enter or use online gaming or betting sites.

Subscribe to or enter "money making" sites or enter or use "money making" programs.

Run a private business.

Download any software that does not comply with the Council's Software Policy. The above list gives examples of "unsuitable" usage but is neither exclusive nor exhaustive. "Unsuitable" material would include data, images, audio files or video files the transmission of which is illegal under British law, and material that is against the rules, essence and spirit of this and other Council policies.

## **6.7. Your responsibilities**

It is your responsibility to:

Familiarise yourself with the detail, essence and spirit of this policy before using the Internet facility provided for your work.

Assess any risks associated with Internet usage and ensure that the Internet is the most appropriate mechanism to use.

Know that you may only use the Council's Internet facility within the terms described herein.

Read and abide by the following related policies: Email Acceptable Use Policy. Software Policy.IT Access Policy. Removable Media Policy.

#### **6.8. Line Manager's responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of Line Managers to ensure that the use of the Internet facility:

Within an employee work time is relevant to and appropriate to the Council's business and within the context of the user's responsibilities.

Within an employee's own time is subject to the rules contained within this document.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL: IT ACCESS POLICY**

#### **1. Policy Statement**

Flitwick Town Council will establish specific requirements for protecting information and information systems against unauthorised access.

Flitwick Town Council will effectively communicate the need for information and information system access control.

#### **2. Purpose**

Information security is the protection of information against accidental or malicious disclosure, modification or destruction. Information is an important, asset of Flitwick Town Council which must be managed with care. All information has a value to the Council. However, not all of this information has an equal value or requires the same level of protection.

Access controls are put in place to protect information by controlling who has the rights to use different information resources and by guarding against unauthorised use.

Formal procedures must control how access to information is granted and how such access is changed.

This policy also mandates a standard for the creation of strong passwords, their protection and frequency of change.

#### **3. Scope**

This policy applies to all Flitwick Town Council Members, Committees, Services, Partners, Employees of the Council (including system support staff with access to privileged administrative passwords), contractual third parties and agents of the Council with any form of access to Flitwick Town Council's information and information systems.

#### **4. Definition**

Access control rules and procedures are required to regulate who can access Flitwick Town Council information resources or systems and the associated access privileges. This policy applies at all times and should be adhered to whenever accessing Flitwick Town Council information in any format, and on any device.

#### **5. Risks**

On occasion business information may be disclosed or accessed prematurely, accidentally or unlawfully. Individuals or companies, without the correct authorisation and clearance may intentionally or accidentally gain unauthorised access to business information which may adversely affect day to day business. This policy is intended to mitigate that risk.

Non-compliance with this policy could have a significant effect on the efficient operation of the Council and may result in financial loss and an inability to provide necessary services to our customers.

## **6. Applying the Policy - Passwords**

### **6.1. Choosing Passwords**

Passwords are the first line of defence for our ICT system and together with the user ID help to establish that people are who they claim to be.

A poorly chosen or misused password is a security risk and may impact upon the confidentiality, integrity or availability of our computers and systems.

The Council will enforce Multi Factor Authentication, (MFA) when accessing FTC accounts.

#### **6.1.1. Weak and strong passwords**

A weak password is one which is easily discovered, or detected, by people who are not supposed to know it. Examples of weak passwords include words picked out of a dictionary, names of children and pets, car registration numbers and simple patterns of letters from a computer keyboard.

A strong password is a password that is designed in such a way that it is unlikely to be detected by people who are not supposed to know it, and difficult to work out even with the help of a computer.

Everyone must use strong passwords with a minimum standard of:

- At least seven characters.
- Contain a mix of alpha and numeric, with at least one digit
- Cannot have two consecutive characters which are the same
- More complex than a single word (such passwords are easier for hackers to crack).

The Government advises using Environ passwords with the following format: consonant, vowel, consonant, consonant, vowel, consonant, number, number. An example for illustration purposes is provided below:

- pinray45

### **6.2. Protecting Passwords**

It is of utmost importance that the password remains protected. The following guidelines must always be adhered to:

- Never reveal your passwords to anyone.
- Never use the 'remember password' function.
- Never write your passwords down or store them where they are open to theft.
- Never store your passwords in a computer system without encryption.
- Do not use any part of your username within the password.
- Do not use the same password to access different Flitwick Town Council systems.
- Do not use the same password for systems inside and outside of work.

### **6.3. Changing Passwords**

All user-level passwords must generally be changed every 60 days, unless there are special cases that justify this being different, or whenever a system prompts you to change it. Default passwords must also be changed immediately. If you become aware, or suspect,

that your password has become known to someone else, you must change it immediately and report your concern. Users must not reuse the same password within 20 password changes.

### **6.4. System Administration Standards**

The password administration process for individual Flitwick Town Council systems is well-

documented and available to designated individuals.

All Flitwick Town Council IT systems use 'Active Directory' and will be configured to enforce the following:

- Authentication of individual users, not groups of users - i.e. no generic accounts. Multi Factor Authentication, (MFA) will be used when accessing FTC accounts.
- Protection with regards to the retrieval of passwords and security details.
- System access monitoring and logging - at a user level.
- Role management so that functions can be performed without sharing passwords.
- Password admin processes must be properly controlled, secure and auditable.

## **7. Applying the Policy – Employee Access**

### **7.1. User Access Management**

Formal user access control procedures must be documented, implemented and kept up to date for each application and information system to ensure authorised user access and to prevent unauthorised access. They must cover all stages of the lifecycle of user access, from the initial registration of new users to the final de-registration of users who no longer require access. These must be agreed by Flitwick Town Council. Each user must be allocated access rights and permissions to computer systems and data that:

- Are commensurate with the tasks they are expected to perform.
- Have a unique login that is not shared with or disclosed to any other user.
- Have an associated unique password that is requested at each new login.

User access rights must be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that the appropriate rights are still allocated. System administration accounts must only be provided to users that are required to perform system administration tasks.

### **7.2. User Registration**

A request for access to the Council's computer systems must first be submitted to the Town Clerk / Deputy Town Clerk, access must only be gained if approval has been given.

When an employee leaves the Council, their access to computer systems and data must be suspended at the close of business on the employee's last working day. It is the responsibility of their Town Clerk / Deputy Town Clerk to request the suspension of the access rights via the Council's outsourced IT provider.

### **7.3. User Responsibilities**

It is a user's responsibility to prevent their user ID and password being used to gain unauthorised access to Council systems by:

- Following the Password Policy Statements outlined above in Section 6.
- Ensuring that any PC they are using that is left unattended is locked or logged out.
- Leaving nothing on display that may contain access information such as login names and passwords.

### **7.4. Network Access Control**

Only Council owned - equipment connected to wired network connections and the Corporate Wi-Fi SSID. All personal devices should be connected to the guest Wi-Fi network. The normal operation of the network must not be interfered with, approval must be obtained before connecting any equipment to the Council's network.

### **7.5. User Authentication for External Connections**

Where remote access to the Flitwick Town Council network is required, an application must be made via the Town Clerk and the Council's outsourced IT provider.

### **7.6. Supplier's Remote Access to the Council Network**

Partner agencies or 3rd party suppliers must not be given details of how to access the Council's network without permission.

Partners or 3rd party suppliers must contact the Town Clerk and the outsourced IT provider before connecting to the Flitwick Town Council network and a log of activity must be maintained. Third party access will be supervised.

Remote access software must be disabled when not in use.

### **7.7. Operating System Access Control**

Access to operating systems is controlled by a secure login process.

The login procedure must also be protected by:

- Not displaying any previous login information e.g. username.
- Limiting the number of unsuccessful attempts and locking the account if exceeded.
- The password characters being hidden by symbols.
- Displaying a general warning notice that only authorised users are allowed.

All access to operating systems is via a unique login id that will be audited and can be traced back to each individual user. The login id must not give any indication of the level of access that it provides to the system (e.g. administration rights).

System administrators must have individual administrator accounts that will be logged and audited. The administrator account must not be used by individuals for normal day to day activities.

### **7.8. Application and Information Access**

Access within software applications must be restricted using the security features built into the individual product. The owner' of the software application is responsible for granting access to the information within the system.

- Be compliant with the Password section (section 6) above.
- Be separated into clearly defined roles.
- Give the appropriate level of access required for the role of the user.
- Be unable to be overridden (with the admin settings removed or hidden from the user).
- Be free from alteration by rights inherited from the operating system that could allow unauthorised higher levels of access.
- Be logged and auditable.

## **8. Policy Compliance**

If any user is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to Flitwick Town Council's disciplinary procedure. If a criminal offence is considered to have been committed further action may be taken to assist in the prosecution of the offender(s).

## Appendix 44.

### FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL: DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

#### Introduction

The aim of this Policy is to set out a policy and code of practice to provide guidance to staff and town councillors in the use of online communications, collectively referred to as digital and social media. It is intended to supplement the main Digital and ICT Policy.

Digital and social media is a collective term used to describe methods of publishing on the internet. The policy covers all forms of digital media and social networking sites which include (but are not limited to):

#### Digital Media

- Town Council emails
- Town Council website

#### Social Media

Social Media applications include, but are not limited to:

- Social networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn
- Microblogging applications, for example Twitter
- Image and video sharing sites, such as YouTube, [Tik Tok](#), [Pinterest](#) and [Flickr](#)
- Blogs, for example Blogger
- Video streaming services, such as Twitch
- Discussion forums, such as Reddit
- Instant Messaging services, such as Messenger, WhatsApp and Skype
- Reference sources such as Wikipedia

#### Who does it apply to?

The principles of the Policy apply to Town Councillors, all Council Staff and any volunteers or contractors working with the Council. It is also intended for guidance for others communicating with the Town Council.

#### The scope of the policy

- All employees and elected members are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the Council.
- Breach of this policy by employees may be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.
- Breach of this policy by elected members may be a breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct.

#### Responsibility for implementation of the policy

- The Council has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.
- The Town Clerk is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for changes to minimise risks to our work.
- All employees and elected members should ensure that they take the time to read and understand this policy. Any breach of this policy should be reported to the Town Clerk or [HR Committee](#), [Chairman of Audit Sub-Committee](#).
- ~~➤ The Corporate Services Committee may include the monitoring of the application of this policy in their audit programme.~~



### **Email and Telephones**

This part of the policy sets out the restrictive use of the Town Council's electronic equipment, namely, computers and telephones.

Emails will be used to distribute information of council business.

Communications via email internet usage undertaken in the name of the Council or on Council systems carry inherent risks such as:

- Potential defamation
- Spreading of viruses, including Trojans which can steal data
- Breach of confidentiality
- Accepting files from sources in online chat rooms which could bypass firewalls or email filters
- Breach of contract
- Breach of copyright
- Breach of data protection legislation
- Breach of privacy and unlawful discrimination

The Council provides telephones, email and internet access solely for the purposes required for the performance and fulfilment of job responsibilities. Occasional and reasonable personal use of the Council's telephone, internet and email service is permitted, provided that it does not interfere with work performance or security.

### **Monitoring and Privacy Issues**

The Town Council reserves the right to monitor telephone, email and internet usage in accordance with the law, in particular the latest Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulations and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Internet and email usage may be monitored from time to time in order to identify potential breaches of this Policy. This may lead to formal disciplinary action. Employees should note that serious breaches may result in dismissal for gross misconduct. However, the Town Council is subject to Article 8 of the Human Rights Act, and this means that the Council will respect employees' private and family life.

### **Email etiquette**

All employees must follow the procedure outlined below when sending and receiving emails on behalf of the Town Council:

- Only agreed email signatures may be used
- All messages must use appropriate business language
- A waiver clause will be included at the end of each email message
- The circulating of offensive, indecent or obscene material or anything which breaches the Equal Opportunities Policy is strictly prohibited.
- Confidential material should not be disclosed unless it needs to be forwarded to a particular person and is authorised.
- Only attachments from a trusted source may be downloaded
- Ensure that the address of the recipient is correct before sending emails
- Ensure that a 'reply to all' is appropriate
- Ensure that essential files are saved before deleting the message in which they were received.

Individual Town councillors must use their town council email address for their role as a councillor and not their private email. Councillors are personally responsible for any online activity conducted via their council e-mail address. They must adhere to the Members' Code of Conduct, and any related protocols.

### **Telephone etiquette**

All employees must follow the procedure outlined below when using the Council's telephone:

- Answer all calls by stating the name of the Town Council and their own name
- Be polite at all times
- Do not be rude or abrupt to callers, even if they are.
- Do not use offensive language
- Do not swear
- Check the telephone frequently for messages from callers and respond in a timely manner

Employees may make and receive personal calls as long as they are brief and infrequent. This applies to calls on the Council's land line or employees' personal mobile phones.

#### **Unacceptable behaviour on the internet**

Below are examples of what the Town Council deems to be unacceptable use or behaviour by employees:

- Allowing non-authorised users to access the internet using employees log in or while logged on.
- Visiting internet sites that contain obscene, hateful, pornographic or other illegal or unsavoury material.
- Passing on such material to colleagues or external people.
- Using the computer to perpetrate any form of fraud or software, film or music piracy.
- Using the internet to send offensive or harassing material to other users.
- Downloading commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties, unless this download is covered or permitted under a commercial agreement or other such licence.
- Hacking into unauthorised areas.
- Publishing defamatory and/or knowingly false material about the Council, its employees, members, colleagues and/or customers on social networking sites, 'blogs' (online journals), 'wikis' and any online publishing format.
- Undertaking deliberate activities that waste staff effort or networked resources.
- Introducing any form of malicious software into the corporate network.
- Gambling on-line.
- Disclosure of any confidential corporate information without express consent.
- Any other area that the Council reasonably believes may cause problems.
- Publishing personal opinion which is contrary to Council policy, or which is about matters which would not be considered part of the employee's remit.

#### **Website**

The use of digital and social media does not replace existing forms of communication. The main media for the purpose of communicating information about the Town Council is our website [and Facebook pages](#). The website and other forms of social media will be used to enhance communication. ~~Therefore, existing means of communication should continue with social media being an additional option, but one of growing importance.~~

#### **Social Media**

This section of the policy is intended to help employees and elected members make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as social networking websites, forums, message boards, blogs or comments on web-articles, such as ~~Twitter~~, Facebook, [Instagram](#) and LinkedIn. -(see main policy above)

It outlines the standards the Council requires employees and elected members to observe when using social media, the circumstances in which your use of social media will be monitored and the action that will be taken in respect of breaches of this policy.

#### **Use of Digital and Social Media channels owned by Flitwick Town Council**

The Council have appointed ~~the Senior Management Team (SMT)~~[SMAT](#) as moderator for Council-owned digital and social channels. [SMAT](#) will be responsible for overseeing and monitoring of the content, ensuring it complies with the Digital and Social Media Policy. The Town Clerk will have authority to remove any posts made by third parties from our social media pages which are deemed to be of a defamatory, offensive or libellous in nature. Such posts will also be reported to the Hosts (i.e. Facebook).

~~The Corporate Services Committee will, as part of their audit programme, also monitor digital and social media channels.~~

Social media channels, such as Facebook [and Instagram](#), will be used to share [news and information referring to the FTC or The Rufus Centre](#) ~~the website information above~~ with links [where applicable](#). ~~referring to the Flitwick Town Council website.~~

All social media sites in use should be checked and updated on a regular basis and ensure that the security settings are in place.

Councillors may discuss items which they believe should be included on the Council's social media channels with SMAT. They will have no direct responsibility for such postings.

Not all communication requires a response. There will not be immediate responses to communications that may be discussed by the Council or a committee. Communications should be acknowledged.

- The Town Clerk and/or Communications & Marketing Manager will be responsible for all final published responses.
- If a matter needs further consideration it may be raised at either the open forum or as a full agenda item for consideration by a quorum of Councillors. Again, the poster shall be informed via the page or direct message that this is the case.

#### **Basics on communicating with residents, colleagues and officers**

- Confidential information should generally not be disclosed
- Bear in mind obligations under data protections rules
- Consider carefully forwarding or sharing third party communication, in case it could be affected by copyright rules, could be considered defamatory material or may be inaccurate.

#### **Personal Guidance for Councillors using Digital channels and Social Media**

The Council's social media channels do not currently have pages for individual councillors and therefore councillors generally post through their own social media accounts. Councillors may respond to a post on the Council's social media channels but are perhaps better to allow officers to respond to third party postings.

Social media can be very useful in getting feedback on proposals and communicating information about Councillors' activities.

Social important media is always on, so consider setting personal limits and establishing your own routine.

Councillors' are subject to the council's code of conduct when using social media

Some Councillors' choose to have separate social media profiles for personal and council use. It is important to keep in mind, however, that even the strictest privacy settings are no guarantee for posts or actions to remain private. As a rule of thumb, never post anything online you would not be comfortable saying or sharing in a public meeting.

It is that Councillors' set out clearly in their communications whether it is sent in their Councillor role or in a private capacity.

Councillors' are personally responsible for the content they publish on any form of social media. Publishing or allowing to be published (in the form of a comment) an untrue statement about a person which is damaging to their reputation may incur a defamation action for which you will be personally liable. The same applies if you pass on any similar untrue statements you receive.

Social media sites are in the public domain and it is important to ensure you are confident of the nature of the information you publish. Once published, content is almost impossible to control and may be manipulated without your consent, used in different contexts, or further distributed.

Consider your personal safety and security and incorporate it into planning any public duties or interaction, in association with the Town Clerk. Much personal safety is common sense, but it is useful to remind yourself of the advice.

When participating in any online communication;

- Be responsible and respectful; be direct, informative, brief and transparent.
- Always disclose your identity and affiliation to the Town Council. Never make false or misleading statements.

- Be mindful of the information you post and do not present yourself in a way that might cause embarrassment.
- Personal opinions must not be published as being representative of the Council, bring the Council into disrepute or act contrary to the Council's Code of Conduct, associated protocols or any other Policies. Where Councillors identify themselves as such on social media channels, it is recommended that, in the personal biography information on Twitter and similar channels, Councillors state "Opinions I express here are my personal views and not those of Flitwick Town Council"
- Keep the tone of your comments factual and informative, never condescending or "loud." Use sentence case format, not capital letters, or write in red to emphasis points.
- Refrain from posting controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks. Language that may be deemed as offensive relating in particular to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age or religion or belief should not be published on any social media site.
- Keep arguments offline.
- Don't write in haste. Avoid writing when you are angry, upset, or tired.
- Avoid personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications.
- Never use an individual's name unless you have written permission to do so.
- Permission to publish photographs or videos on social media sites should be sought from the persons or organisations in the video or photograph before being uploaded. It is advised that if you wish to distribute an image or video from an external source, that this is done by sharing or linking to the external source's original post, image or video.
- Respect the privacy of other councillors and residents.
- Do not post any information or conduct any online activity that may violate laws or regulations.
- Be careful. Some people say things via social media that they probably would not say in person, and they can post false information, insults or messages that you would not want to be associated with you. These can multiply and be shared quite rapidly. Councillors' ~~and in particular female Councillors~~ are unfortunately increasingly the subject of online abuse, bullying and harassment on social media.
- Sometimes, it is better to try to switch ongoing dialogue to another media such as email.
- If you feel unable to answer a post for example of a contentious nature this shall be referred to the SMAT. The poster will be informed by way of response to this fact and also be invited to correspond with the Town Clerk directly.
- Some communication from residents and other third parties may be required to be discussed at a Town Council meeting. When this is necessary the item will be placed on the next available agenda. Any response will then be included in the minutes of the meeting.

The Council will support Councillors' in their use of social media. If you need advice or if things go wrong, please contact the Town Clerk.

#### **Guidance to members of staff**

Whilst an officer's postings on the Council's social media sites will be controlled, they are expected to take account of the views of the public, respond to requests for a service and deal with complaints in the normal manner.

Staff may also have personal social media accounts, the contents of which are their own affair. They are however, expected not to comment on the business of the Council or on matters in the Town which the Council are involved in, or respond to third party posts on such matters. Any member of staff making detrimental comments about Flitwick Town Council or its Councillors, will immediately be subject too disciplinary action.

The guidance given to ~~C~~eouncillors, largely applies to employees.



## **FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Key Holder Policy**

#### **1. Purpose**

Flitwick Town Council has created this key holder policy to maintain the security of the Council premises, contents, and grounds. It is also intended to help protect staff members and users of all Council buildings.

#### **2. Policy**

Flitwick Town Council will only issue keys for Council premises to staff members and councillors on a 'required for role' basis. This ensures the minimum number of persons have the means to access Council premises at any time of the day and night, ensuring that security levels remain rigorous, minimising the risk of unauthorised access.

The Town Clerk will identify staff members and Councillors as eligible permanent key holders. Each identified person must complete a permanent key holder agreement form (see page 2), which registers them as key holders and highlights their responsibilities within this function.

The Town Clerk is responsible for keeping a permanent key holder register (page 3) of all keys held and by whom.

#### **3. Responsibility**

The Town Clerk will be responsible for ensuring this policy is followed.

#### **4. Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years.



## FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

### Permanent Key Holder Agreement Form

This record certifies that I.....have been nominated by the Council to be a permanent key holder.

The types and number of keys held by me are listed on the Key Holder Register, which is kept by the Town Clerk for the Town Council.

I understand the responsibilities of my role as a permanent key holder and hereby agree to the following statements:

- Keys that have been issued to me will be kept in my possession at all times and not shared with any other staff members at the Council or Councillors.
- I will restrict the use of the building to the areas that have been made available to me.
- I will ensure that when I take keys away from the premises that they are kept safe and that no other person (e.g. family member, friend, acquaintance) has access to them.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to inform the Town Clerk immediately should any theft, loss, damage or misuse occur with regard to the keys.
- I will not transfer keys to any member of staff.
- I understand that I must return ALL keys in my possession immediately at the request of the Town Clerk.

Signed:.....

Date:.....



## FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

### Permanent Key Holder Register

Name	Keys Held	Reason	Signed Agreement? (Y/N)	Date Keys Issued	Time	Date Keys Returned	Time

# **Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment for Flitwick Scout Hall, Flitwick, Central Bedfordshire**

**Carried out on behalf of  
Flitwick Scouts**

**June 2025**

**Philip Irving**



## **Flitwick Scout Hall, Flitwick Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment**

**Author:** Philip Irving MCIEEM has worked for over twenty years as a Senior Ecologist for The Greensand Trust, providing ecological advice on the management of Trust sites and writing management plans etc.

He also undertakes consultancy work including surveys for bats, great crested newts and other protected species, and holds a Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 (licence registration no: 2015-12411-CLS-CLS), and a great crested newt class licence CL08 (licence registration no: 2015-17174-CLS-CLS).

### **Introduction**

Flitwick Scout Hall located on the south side of Station Road in the centre of Flitwick at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference TL035347, with the existing building located at the west end of the application site.

This Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been carried out as part of a planning application for construction of a new scout building adjacent to the existing scout hall.

### **Methodology**

A visit to the application site was made on the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025 to assess the existing habitats, and also included carrying out a preliminary roost assessment of a tree on the northern roadside boundary for its potential to support roosting bats.

The Defra Small Sites Metric was used to calculate the level of biodiversity loss or gain resulting from the development.

### **Site Description**

The application site consists mostly of regularly mown and species-poor modified grassland containing frequent patches of bare ground, and dominated by perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*) and fescue sp. (*Festuca* sp.) with other grasses including meadow grass sp. (*Poa* sp.), cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*). The few common and widespread herbs present include locally abundant white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) with frequent daisy (*Bellis perennis*) and occasional dandelion (*Taraxacum officinalis*), greater plantain (*Plantago major*), lesser trefoil (*Trifolium dubium*), spotted medick (*Medicago arabica*), broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), common and sticky mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum* and *C. glomeratum*), catsear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), dovesfoot cranesbill (*Geranium molle*) and common ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*). An area of unmown grassland in the southwest corner of the site next to the scout hall contains occasional black knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) and ox-eye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*).

The margins of the grassland contain common ruderal and weed vegetation including nettle (*Urtica dioica*), prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), common mallow (*Malva sylvestris*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), barren brome (*Bromus sterilis*), mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), common groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) and white and red dead nettle (*Lamium album* and *L. purpureum*).

On the west edge of the site adjacent to the wall of the scout hall is a large hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) surrounded by nettle, cleavers and cow parsley. On the east side of the scout hall is a concrete storage compound bordered by a steel security fence.

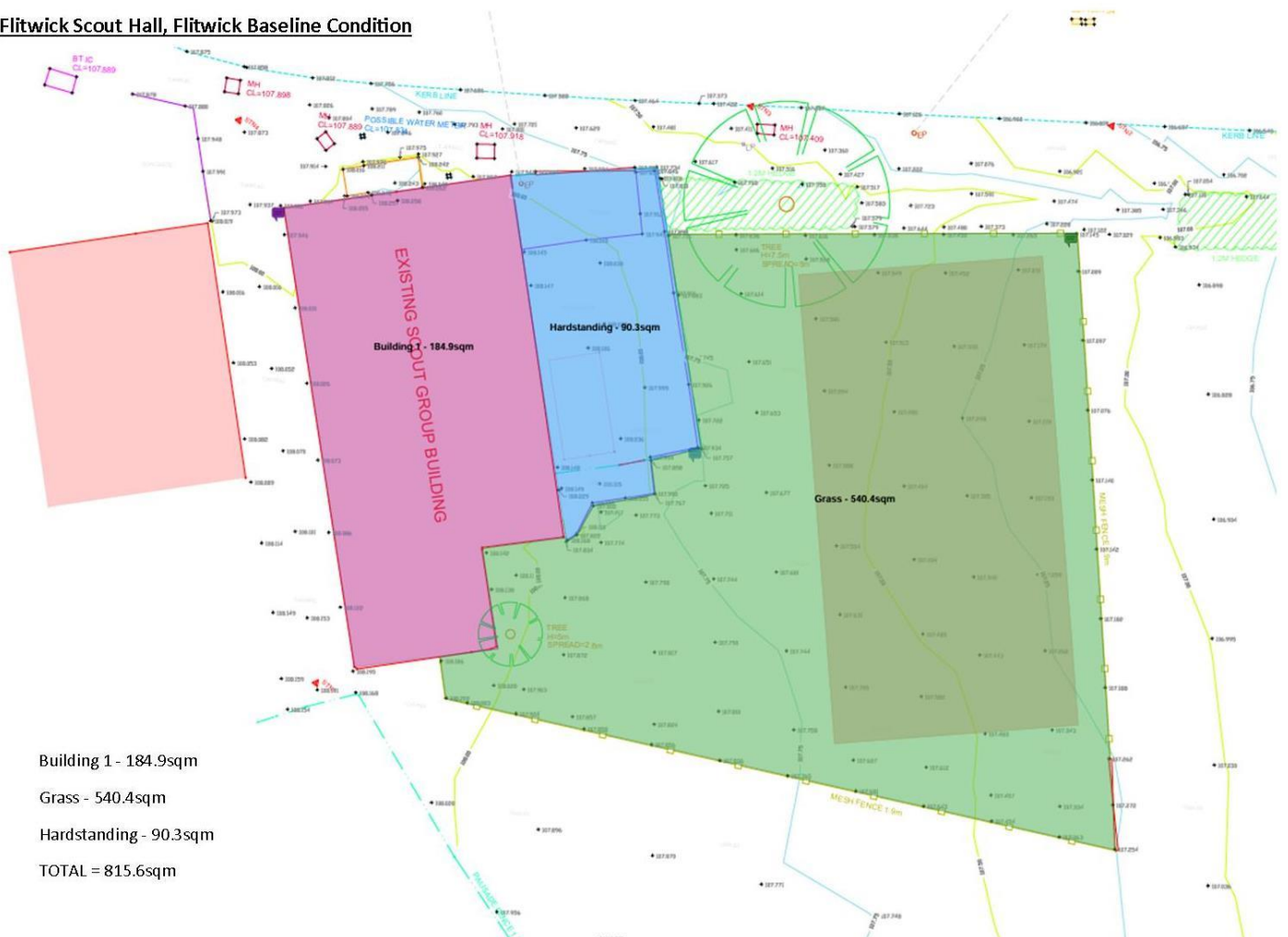
Most of the site is bordered by a wire fence, and outside of the fence on the northern roadside boundary is a short section of c. 2m high hawthorn hedge containing a semi-mature ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) standard with dead ivy (*Hedera helix*) on the trunk. The tree is not mature enough to contain deadwood features such as holes and loose bark that would have potential to support roosting bats.

The land to the south and east of the site also consists of regularly mown amenity grassland containing abundant ribwort plantain and daisy, and occasional dandelion, with the grassland to the south partly planted with young trees and shrubs including silver birch (*Betula pendula*), field maple (*Acer campestre*), beech and hawthorn.

## Baseline Condition

Grassland	Modified grassland	540.4sqm (195.7 sqm retained)
Urban	Developed land/ sealed surface	275.2sqm (all retained)
Individual tree	Small urban tree	1 no (retained)

### Flitwick Scout Hall, Flitwick Baseline Condition

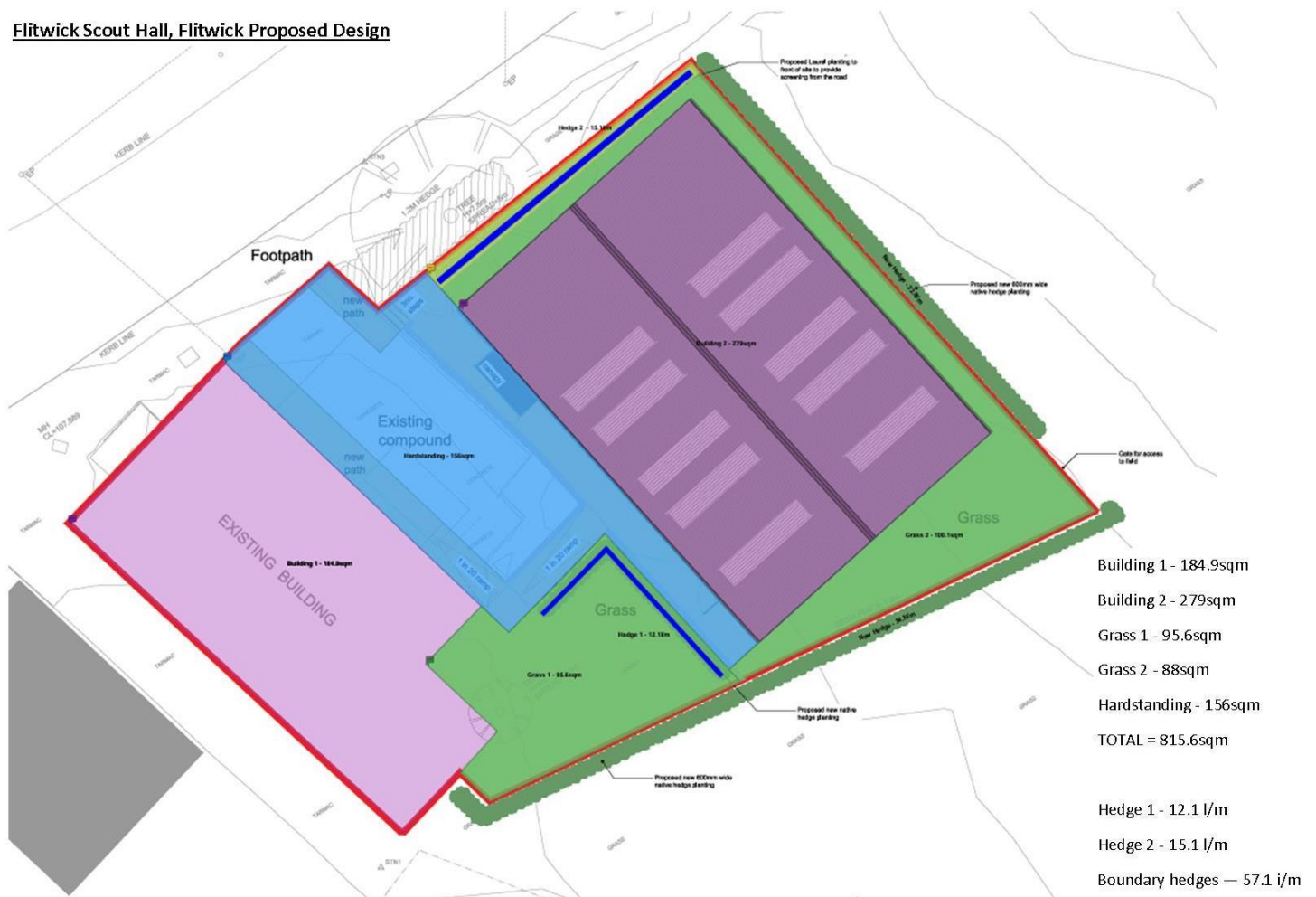


## Proposed Design

In spite of the loss of part of much of the existing modified grassland, the planting of fourteen native trees and new sections of native and ornamental hedges will result in the development meeting the BNG Targets and Trading Rules as confirmed by the results of a Small Sites Metric.

Urban	Developed land; sealed surfaces	619.9sqm
Grassland	Modified grassland	195.7sqm
Individual trees	Small trees	14 no.
Hedgerow	Native hedgerow	69.2m
Hedgerow	Ornamental hedgerow	15.1m

### Flitwick Scout Hall, Flitwick Proposed Design



## Headline Results table of Metric

Site Name	Flitwick Scout Hall, Flitwick	
Sheet Name	Headline Results	
Headline Results		
Headline	BNG Targets Met ✓	
Trading Rules	Trading Rules Satisfied ✓	
Next steps	Check for input errors/rule breaks present in the metric ⚠	
Baseline Units	Habitat units	0.2536
	Hedgerow units	Zero Units Baseline
	Watercourse units	Zero Units Baseline
Post-development Units	Habitat units	0.2899
	Hedgerow units	0.2853
	Watercourse units	0.0000
Total net unit change	Habitat units	0.0363
	Hedgerow units	0.2853
	Watercourse units	0.0000
Total net % change	Habitat units	14.31% #NAME?
	Hedgerow units	% target not appropriate
	Watercourse units	% target not appropriate
Habitats units required to meet target		0.0000
Hedgerow units required to meet target		0.0000
Watercourse units required to meet target		0.0000

## Habitat Maintenance and Monitoring Plan (HMMP)

The tree planting will consist of native species, including fruit and berry bearing species such as hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), wild cherry. (*Prunus* sp.) and rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*).

The ornamental hedge planting will consist of laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) while the native hedgerow planting will include species such as hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), buckthorn (*Rhamnus catharticus*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*), crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguineum*), wayfaring tree and guelder rose (*Viburnum lantana* and *V. opulus*).

In the first few years the planted trees and shrubs will be maintained by regular clearance of long vegetation around them during the summer by strimming, or by applying mulch to their base to suppress the growth of vegetation. The planting will be monitored annually in the first three years, and every three years thereafter for a period of 30 years and any dead trees and shrubs shall be replaced as necessary during that time.

The ongoing management of the tree and hedgerow planting will be carried out by the Flitwick Scouts.

Hi Andy,

Here is the input from the Greensand Trust ecologist.

Speak soon and thanks for your help.

Regards

Jonathan Smith

Hi all,

Following a discussion with Jonathan this morning, I have attached a BNG assessment report and small sites metric. Jonathan said that meadow management of any of the grassland wasn't an option so instead of that, the planting of 14 trees would be sufficient to meet the targets. For now I have assumed these would be within the current application site but it seems likely that they would need to be on the land to the south on which there has already been some tree planting. I would suggest that 500sqm of that land would be sufficient to plant the trees on, and potentially less but I haven't shown it on the plans or the metric as there seems to be uncertainty as to whether the red-line boundary can be moved to include it, and also it requires agreement from Flitwick TC to allow it, so its a bit of a chicken and egg situation.

The other option is to not include the area of tree planting within the application site, in which case it would be classed as off-site, which as I said previously cannot be accommodated on the Small Sites metric. I have therefore also attached a draft main metric that includes off-site tabs of 500sqm (0.05ha) of the amenity grassland to the south on which 10 trees have been planted (for some reason not as many trees were required with the main metric to meet the BNG targets). However, as I also said previously, off-site mitigation also often requires a section 106 agreement and the land may need to be registered with the council as a BNG donor site, so it can get complicated if its not within the application site.

If you did want to use the main metric, whether the tree planting is in or out of the application site, I would need to amend the report.

There is also the other option of payment for off-site units that I mentioned previously.

Let me know how you want to proceed.

Regards

Phil Irving

Philip Irving

Senior Ecologist

The Greensand Trust

**Registered Charity: 1077055**

Company limited by guarantee. Registered in England: 370241

Hi,

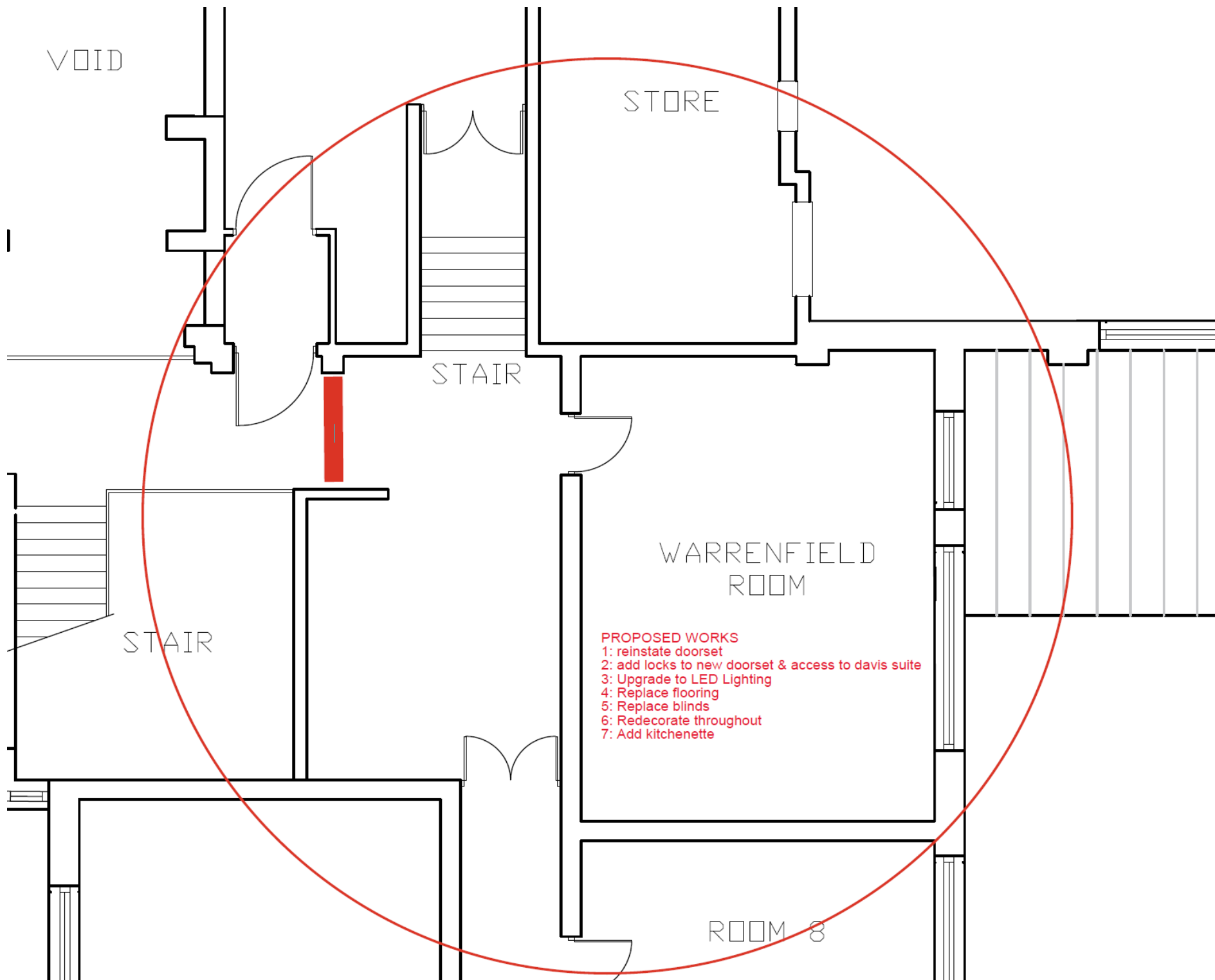
A decision here is most likely going to be driven by cost. If moving the red planning line will require us to resubmit the planning application re-incurring the planning fees then the option of buying the habitat units is likely to be more cost effective. However this will depend if other additional costs appear due to having to use the main metric.

We are in early talks with the Town Council regarding moving the red line but they may require a written agreement to us that we not only plant but also maintain the planted area for the remainder of our lease period (23 years ish).

Can we get closer to understanding the costs and perhaps the timeline of the two approaches please, particularly the point of whether we will incur the planning fees again if we redefine the red line.

Thanks

Jonathan



## Balance Sheet as at 31st May 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	102,840		
5,599	Burial Grounds & Cemetries	2,229		
19,462	VAT Control Account	47,625		
28,835	PREPAYMENTS	0		
8,166	Mthly Business Prepays	48,479		
53,989	PrePayment for Land Sale	61,267		
0	Staff Loan	1,000		
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	4,600		
42,231	Barclays Business Reserve 106	121,482		
1,000	PDQ Account	7,467		
46,550	Tenants Deposits Account	52,415		
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	1,165,595		
1,450,647			1,623,937	

1,450,647 Total Assets

1,623,937

## Current Liabilities

15,997	DEBTORS Control: Functions	31,125		
0	Barclaycard	2,953		
3,441	CREDITORS	85,630		
7,943	ACCRUAL - Loan Interest (YE)	0		
12,119	ACCRUALS (YE)	0		



## Balance Sheet as at 31st May 2025

## 31st March 2025

## 31st March 2026

17,763	PAYE/NIC Due	18,646
10,568	LGPS Pension Control	9,794
3,128	NEST Pension Control	3,455
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	1,100
1,079	Barclaycard Year End balance	0

138,217

204,891

**1,312,429 Total Assets Less Current Liabilities****1,419,046****Long Term Liabilities**

0

0

**1,312,429 Total Assets Less Long Term Liabilities****1,419,046****Represented By**

397,766	GENERAL RESERVE	659,723
100	EMR Proud AF Picnic	100
14,000	EMR Compensation Field 2025	7,175
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	17,370
10,505	EMR Hinksley Music Park 24/25	511
18,187	EMR Allotments	17,672
1,048	EMR Summer Programme	1,048
397	EMR Youth Activities	397
0	EMR Fixed Wire Testing (5yrs)	850
13,351	EMR Cost of Living	10,499
57,050	EMR Steppingley Rd Legal Fees	57,050
133,566	EMR 3 Station Road Development	(17,481)
722	PROJ - Flitwick Town Sq Defib	722
3,800	PROJ - Heritage Website	2,220
2,000	PROJ - Rural Match Fund Bench	2,000
1,814	PROJ - Nature Park Planning	164
36,100	PROJ - Skate Park Extension	9,600

Balance Sheet as at 31st May 2025

31st March 2025

1,312,429

31st March 2026

1,419,046

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the authority as at 31st May 2025 and reflects its Income and Expenditure during the year.

Signed :  
Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Signed :  
Responsible  
Financial \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

(315)	Central Project Fund	Opening Balance	£	92,164	
315	PLUS 2025/26: Agreed CPF Precept Funding		£	89,747	(1st instal E44,874 rec'd April & 2nd instal E44,873 received Sep)
800s	LESS: 25/26 Projects Opening Balance		£	181,912	
	LESS Projects Overspend		£	-	
	PLUS Projects Underspend		£	-	
(315)	Central Project Fund	YTD Funds Available	-£	0	(Working balance (315) less 2nd precept instal (Oct)= -£44,873)

Last Updated: 31 May 2025

As at April 25, the Central Project Fund is committed spend to 3 Station Road project.

All identified capital projects to be considered on a case-by-case basis and funded through the Operations Reserves (EMR 319).

[illegible]