



FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the Flitwick Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 17th June 2025 at the Rufus Centre at 7:45pm

Present:

Cllr J Roberts (Chairman)
Cllr C Thompson
Cllr D Toinko
Cllr T Harald
Cllr L Bandy
Cllr A Crawford
Cllr H Hodges
Cllr R Wilsmore
Cllr M Platt
Cllr P Earles
Cllr Snape
Cllr Parsons

Also present:

Cllr I Adams – Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Ward Member
Stacie Lockey – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Stephanie Stanley – Deputy Town Clerk & RFO
3 members of the public (1 via virtual access)

5832. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was **resolved** to accept apologies for absence for Cllr Blazeby (holiday), Cllr Patterson (holiday).

Cllrs Parsons and Snape would join the meeting late – both Members were delayed on a train home from work.

5833. 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.

5834. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor thanked the Officers and Members who helped with the Family Fun Day, which was a good day.

The Town Mayor thanked Cllr Platt for chairing the Extraordinary Council Meeting.

The Town Mayor had attended the Interactive Music Park Opening at Hinksley Road and the Family Fun Day since the last meeting.

The Deputy Town Mayor had attended CBC's Development Management Committee (DMC) meeting and spoke against the Steppingley Field development. He also attended the Pride Picnic.

5835. Leader Update

The item was postponed until Cllr Snape arrived at the meeting.

5836. REPORTS FROM WARD MEMBERS

Cllr Adams congratulated Cllr Platt for opening the public session of the DMC meeting, where CBC objected to the planning application for Steppingley Road field. Although he was pleased with the outcome, Cllr Adams reported that it was likely that the applicant would appeal the decision. Flitwick residents were happy with the decision, and Cllr Adams thanked the Town Council for their involvement in the process.

Questions

Cllr Wilsmore commented that he had not received a copy of the report and asked for an update on the other information included.

Cllr Adams advised that the report included information about the consultation on Home-to-School transport being free for the nearest school. This would have a significant impact on the area, and Ward Members were concerned that CBC was not discussing this closely enough with the local schools. Flitwick schools would mainly increase their number of pupils, but moves would only happen when transitioning to the next school (e.g., Lower to Middle School) or if people were new to the area.

Cllr Wilsmore had been speaking to the Business Manager at Woodlands Academy, who had been concerned about the additional five coaches that would be dropping off pupils if the plans went ahead, since using the car park was not an option. Cllr Adams explained that for school trips, the coaches reversed in, but he anticipated the need for some capital spend if this happened, as options would need to be investigated for getting buses onto the site. It was for these reasons that Cllr Adams wanted CBC to engage more with the schools.

Cllr Adams referred to the safe walking routes for pupils who lived within 3 miles of the schools, and it was unknown if transport would be provided. Cllr Adams stated that there were many aspects of the proposal that needed clarity.

The Inspiring Music Programme was continuing at Redborne.

Cllr Thompson asked for an update on the land next to the Senior Living Village. Cllr Adams reported that CBC were still agreeing the Head of Terms, but there was no further update. In terms of the Senior Living Development, CBC anticipated that this would be completed in October 2025; however, Cllr Adams had heard some doubt that it might overrun further.

Cllr Toinko had been unable to find the report within the supporting papers and commented that there was no mention of it in the email circulated that morning. He appreciated that Cllr Adams was the only Ward Member who attended the Council meetings, but asked if an email could be sent stating that there was a late paper. Cllr Adams had sent the report late the previous day and said he would attempt to send it earlier in the future.

Cllr Adams left the meeting at 19:58.

5837. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

A resident attending commented that she was pleased that CBC had rejected the Steppingley Road Field planning application. She asked if there was anything that residents could do concerning the appeal process and commented that the number of objections must show the strength of feeling.

A resident referred to the Home-to-School consultation and commented that she had spoken to a mother of a child who attended a local school that day, and they had explained that the school was at capacity. Cllr Wilsmore advised that the schools were not at capacity.

A resident asked for an update on the progress at 3 Station Road. The Chairman advised that the Council were hoping to make an announcement shortly regarding the tenant of the retail unit and that the restaurant tenancy process was moving forward.

A resident commented that the Senior Living Development was overdue, and she inquired whether the taxpayer was covering the fees incurred. The Chairman commented that CBC was paying penalty clauses for overrunning, but he did not know the details; however, Cllr Adams might be able to provide more information.

The Chairman thanked the residents for attending.

5838. INVITED SPEAKER

No items.

5839. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

No items.

5840. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. For Members to approve the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held, on **Tuesday 20th May 2025**, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre.

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 20th May 2025 at the Rufus Centre as a true record.

- b. For Members to approve the minutes of the Extraordinary Town Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 10th June 2025**, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre.

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes of the Extraordinary Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 10th June 2025 at the Rufus Centre as a true record.

- c. For Members to receive and consider the resolutions and recommendations of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting, held on **Tuesday 19th May 2025**, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre.

The resolutions and recommendations of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Tuesday 19th May 2025 were noted.

5841. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 20th May 2025 & Tuesday 10th June 2025**.

No items.

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

5842. OUTSIDE BODIES

No items.

5843. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Year End Accounts 2024-25

i) To note the unaudited Financial Statement 2024-25

Cllr Hodges referred to the £19,000 VAT refund and asked why the Council had received this. The RFO commented that her immediate reaction was that this was a reclaim of VAT following increased capital expenditure in the final quarter of the financial year relating to the 3 Station Road refurbishment. She agreed to double-check and report back to Cllr Hodges.

Members noted the Financial Statement for 2024-25.

ii) To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2024-25

It was **resolved** to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2024-25.

iii) To approve the Annual Return 2024-25

It was **resolved** to approve the Annual Return 2024-25.

iv) To consider the Final Interim Internal Audit Report for 2024-25

It was **resolved** to accept the Final Interim Internal Audit Report for 2024-25.

The Chairman thanked the RFO and her team for their work on the accounts.

b. Appointment of Internal Auditor

The RFO explained that it was a statutory requirement for the Council to appoint an internal audit for the ensuing financial year.

It was **resolved** to appoint Auditing Solutions Ltd. for the financial year 2025-26.

c. Earmarked Reserve (EMR) 331 - Virement

Members were asked to consider a virement of £57,050 from EMR 331 – Steppingley Rd Legal Fees – to a new EMR to assist with funding the installation of new boilers for the Rufus Centre.

Cllr Toinko asked for the cost of the new boilers. The Town Clerk explained that the initial quotes were between £90,000 and £100,000, and that Officers were due to start the tender process.

Cllr Earles asked about the current condition of the boilers. Members were informed that one boiler had been condemned, leaving two functioning, but Officers were keen to have three upgraded in readiness for the winter.

It was **resolved** to approve a virement of £57,050 from EMR 331 – Steppingley Rd Legal Fees – to a new EMR to support the funding of the new boilers for the Rufus Centre.

Action: RFO

d. Policies

(i) Information & Data Protection

Cllr Thompson asked about the review date being February 2025. The Town Clerk explained that the policy had been considered in February; however, the decision was delayed.

It was **resolved** to adopt the circulated Information & Data Protection Policy.

(ii) Digital & ICT Policy

Cllr Earles sought clarification on what the policy was about. The Town Clerk advised that the policy encompassed various matters, including the use of the internet, social media, and CCTV. Cllr Harald advised that the policy covered general ICT usage and provided information on how people working for, or elected members of, the Council should conduct themselves.

It was **resolved** to adopt the circulated Digital & ICT Policy.

(iii) Key Holder Policy

Members were informed that this was a new policy being proposed to support the operations of the Community Fridge. The Town Clerk would have the authority, if this policy were to be adopted, to assign keyholders for the Rufus Centre without requiring a Council decision, which had previously delayed the process for making Cllr Crawford a keyholder.

Cllr Harald asked if the policy included details on the procedure should keyholders lose keys. The Town Clerk responded that this information was not included.

It was **resolved** to adopt the circulated Key Holder Policy.

e. Scouts Planning

Cllr Thompson enquired about the biodiversity net gain element and sought clarification that the Scouts were requesting permission from the Council to cultivate a portion of Station Road land outside their perimeter, enabling the group to fulfil this part of the planning obligations.

Cllr Snape and Cllr Parsons entered the meeting at 20:23.

Cllr Toinko pointed out that it would be challenging for the Scouts to meet the biodiversity requirements on a site where the future building occupied the entire area. Cllr Toinko stated that it was inappropriate for the Scouts' request to be done via an informal arrangement, as this would leave the Council with a significant liability, given the requirement for the area to remain adequate for 30 years. He added that this would require licensing and registration, and it would also result in the loss of public amenity land. Cllr Toinko pointed out that biodiversity was not within the Town Council's remit.

Cllr Toinko referred to the issue at the Steppingley Road allotments site and commented that some trees might need to be relocated to the Station Road site. Cllr Wilsmore commented that this was unfortunate timing as the Council had planted some trees on

Station Road in March. Cllr Wilsmore added that he did not feel that this was a loss of parkland.

Cllr Toinko disagreed with the proposal, as he believed it was illegal and opposed providing an agreement on the basis that the developer, i.e., the Scouts, would fulfil their planning conditions.

Cllr Parsons asked how much land the Scouts were asking to use for this purpose. Cllr Toinko responded that it appeared to be the same size as the current site. Cllr Toinko felt that the benefits were with the developer rather than the Council.

Cllr Wilsmore asked if the Council were to proceed, would this mean that the Council would be unable to do anything else with this section of land? Cllr Toinko stated that the area would need to be registered and licensed for a period of 30 years.

Cllr Hodges commented that he understood the Scouts relied positively on volunteers, but he raised concerns about insurance and the use of machinery on Council-owned land. Cllr Wilsmore believed that the Scouts were trying to be helpful by stating that the group would maintain this section of land, rather than the Officers.

Cllr Platt advised that Station Road amenity land, which was now open space, was former allotment land and felt that in the future, the Council may need to reallocate allotments there.

The Town Clerk clarified the space that the Scouts were looking to maintain. Members were unclear about the exact area that the Scouts were offering to maintain, and it was agreed that the Town Clerk would ask the group to provide more precise details on the area size, the liability being asked for from the Council (referring to the 30 year commitment discussed) before the Members decided. Cllr Wilsmore wanted the Scouts to know that Members did not want to jeopardise their project from proceeding. It was agreed to bring this item to the next meeting.

Action: Town Clerk

Cllr Thompson commented that this type of arrangement would usually be completed via a contract and therefore the Council needs to know the liability. She raised the point that the Scouts might not realise the commitment that the group was asking for.

f. Warrenfield Room Conversion to Office Space

The Chairman presented two options.

Cllr Parsons asked what the additional rent would be to justify the extra cost of the kitchenette element. The Town Clerk agreed to get this information.

Action: Town Clerk

Cllr Hodges asked if there was empty office space currently, and he was advised that the Rufus Centre had full tenancy at present.

Cllr Snape questioned if the room needed to be refurbished, bearing in mind that the meeting rooms were of a higher standard than the offices that were yet to be refurbished. Cllr Snape appreciated that the Warrenfield Room did not have a suspended ceiling. The Town Clerk commented that the most significant cost was the reinstatement of the required doors, and the proposal was to bring the space in line with the other refurbished offices. She added that if the room were to become a tenant office space, it would need to be accessible 24 hours a day, in line with the other rooms.

Cllr Thompson commented on the previous meeting's discussion about the Council being cautious with capital spend, highlighting that this would potentially cost £12,000. The Town Clerk advised that there was £7,000 in an EMR to use.

Cllr Snape asked if the Templefield Room would be more appropriate and commented that it seemed a substantial sum of money to reinstate the required doors. The Town Clerk agreed to ask the Business & Facilities Manager (BFM) about another appropriate space. Cllr Snape commented that the BIDB had decided to progress with this idea, but there was no BIDB meeting scheduled soon enough to move forward with it. He suggested delegating the responsibility to progress this matter to the Town Clerk.

It was **resolved** to delegate the decision to the Town Clerk regarding the progression of converting the Warrenfield Room into office space.

Action: Town Clerk

5844. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Finance Reports

- i) Balance Sheet – noted.
- ii) Projects Fund – noted.

5845. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

A resident asked what section of land the Scouts discussion was about. The Chairman explained that the group wanted an additional piece of land adjacent to their current site at Station Road.

Residents left the meeting at 20:39.

5846. EXEMPT ITEMS

The following resolution will be **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

a. Confidential Report

The confidential report from the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 20th May at the Rufus Centre was noted.

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolve** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

Meeting closed at 20:43.

Signed (Chairman)