



FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Community Services Committee meeting
held on Tuesday 5th August 2025 at the Rufus Centre

Present:

Cllr C Thompson (Chairman)
Cllr M Platt
Cllr L Bandy
Cllr A Snape
Cllr R Wilsmore
Cllr T Harald
Cllr A Crawford

Also present:

Stacie Lockey - Town Clerk & Chief Executive (TC)
Grace Bunyan - Administration Officer
Aaron Pepper - Public Realm Supervisor (PRS)
Sarah Burgess – Amenities Officer (AO)

1293. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies for Cllr Earles (holiday) and Cllr Toinko (holiday).

1294. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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

1295. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman informed members that the newly appointed Community Engagement Manager was due to start on Monday 11th August which the team were looking forward to. Members were reminded that the Town Mayor's Charity Coffee Morning was taking place on Friday (8th August) and welcomed them to come along. The Chairman advised Members that the Summer Programme for 2025 was underway and had been going well. The Chairman gave special thanks to the Flitwick Town Council Officers in regards to the programme, especially with the current staff shortages.

1296. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No members of the public attended the meeting.

1297. INVITED SPEAKER

No speaker was invited to the meeting.

1298. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Members raised no questions at this time.

1299. MINUTES

- a. For Members to receive and adopt the minutes of the Community Services meeting held on **Tuesday 1st July 2025**.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes from the Community Services meeting held on **Tuesday 1st July 2025** with no amendments.

1300. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting on **Tuesday 1st July 2025**.

No Committee members raised any questions in relation to the Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting on **Tuesday 1st July 2025**.

1301. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- a. **Village Hall Car Park**

The Chairman reiterated the request made at the Community Services Committee meeting on 1st July by the Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC) to reinstate barriers between the Village Hall and Hub car park. The Chairman also clarified that the Council had taken legal advice, and reminded Members that the Council were within their rights to leave the single white line as adequate delineation. The Chairman explained the alternative option to install temporary barriers between the car parks on a Friday and advised Members that the barriers could potentially be stored at The Village Hall but would belong to Flitwick Town Council, meaning the Council could also use these for other occasions. The Chairman also told Members that the Council had informed the VHMC that they would look into the alternative barrier options.

Cllr Wilsmore queried whether the Council had confirmed with the VHMC whether they were able to store the barriers at the Village Hall and whether they would allow the Council permission to put these up between the car parks on a Friday. The Chairman advised that they did not believe the Council had confirmed this information with the VHMC yet and that they would need to clarify this before purchasing any of the barrier options.

Cllr Wilsmore told Members that he believed the Traffic Chapter 8 Barriers were too heavy and difficult to maneuver, so were unlikely to be a suitable option. He also asked for clarification as to whether it was essential that the Crowd Control Barriers were red, as he had found alternative options online which were built to the same standard and from the same materials as the barriers included in the Amenities Officer's report, however the barriers he had seen were cheaper (approximately £16 each).

Cllr Harald queried whether the Council would have much use of the barriers aside from the use to separate the two car parks on a Friday. The AO suggested that the barriers could also possibly be used for events such as Family Fun Day.

Cllr Snape requested clarification as to whether the Village Hall had an up-to-date risk assessment for the car park and also queried how the Council proposed to pay for the barriers. The TC advised Members that they would need to review the Community revenue budget.

Cllr Snape explained to Members that he appreciated that he was not present at the July Community Services Committee meeting, however he believed that it seemed as though the responsibility for the issue was being put solely on the Council when it should be a joint responsibility between the Council and the Village Hall.

Cllr Wilsmore suggested that the Village Hall could potentially trial a different layout of their stalls at the market on a Friday in order to create a temporary barrier between the car parks, however the Chairman explained that there was no guarantee as to which stall holders would be present at the Friday market, so this may not always be possible.

Cllr Harald did not believe that the Council should purchase temporary barriers as he believed what they had already done was adequate. Cllr Bandy argued that the Village Hall currently had lower funds as they were completing projects such as roof so believed the Council should take some responsibility while thinking of the safety of the public. Cllr Wilsmore agreed with Cllr Harald and believed that it was not entirely the Council's responsibility to install barriers, but he also agreed with Cllr Bandy.

Cllr Snape informed Members that historically, access for The Hub car park had been an issue and there were letters dating back into the 1980's regarding issues in relation to the car park.

Cllr Snape objected to the idea that this was solely the Council's issue and believed as it was a joint issue, the costs to purchase barriers should be split between the Council and the Village Hall.

Members questioned that although the VHMC had stated that the single white line currently separating the car parks was a problem, there was no actual proof of this in terms of specific individual incidents that have occurred.

The Chairman told Members that there seemed to be three options in which Members could choose to progress with: purchase temporary barriers, do nothing, or contact the VHMC to propose splitting the costs of the barriers.

It was **RESOLVED** to contact the VHMC to check their capacity, confirm whether they had a risk assessment in place, and propose splitting the cost of purchasing temporary barriers.

b. Christmas Lights Display

The Chairman explained to Members that the Council's contract with Lamps & Tubes Illuminations Ltd was coming to an end and, given the current resources of the Community Services team, they were proposing that the Council extend the contract. The Chairman also highlighted to Members that Officers were happy with the service received from the company thus far.

Cllr Wilsmore explained that he believed Christmas Lights were for the purpose of attracting Christmas trade, and due to the location of the lights, did not believe they would be of benefit to anyone. He suggested that the Christmas Lights display should be reduced to just cover Station Square.

Cllr Snape thought that it made sense to extend the current contract, even though he would love to see a different display. The Chairman agreed with Cllr Snape.

It was **RESOLVED** to extend the current Christmas Lights Display contract for a further two years to 2027 (inclusive).

c. Event Booking Protocol Policy Review

Cllr Snape requested clarification as to who was responsible for making the decision as to whether something went to the Safety Advisory Group or not. The TC explained that this was currently a 'grey area' and that she would support Officers to make a judgement at the time depending on the type of event. Members felt this needed to be reflected in the document.

There was some discussion on where partial fees or no fees were applied and whether this needed to be more specific, but the committee agreed the current wording on officer discretion was adequate, as any large-scale or contentious requests would come to committee anyway

Members discussed the fees and recalled a discussion on these at the last meeting. The AO advised that a report would be coming to the next meeting to discuss fees for various upcoming events.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the reviewed Event Booking Protocol with one amendment regarding SAG approval.

d. Allotment Facilities

The Chairman advised Members that the Council had previously looked into providing a compostable toilet facility; however, this option was expensive, so the Council would need to look at getting a grant to fund this.

The TC advised Members that whichever decision was made during this meeting would be the decision going forward and that this agenda item would not come up again next year, as it was believed to be difficult to continue to communicate different decisions to plot holders each year.

The Chairman recommended that, once Members had decided whether or not to install toilet facilities at the allotment sites, plot holders, including the reps, would need to be informed as soon as possible, before their plots were due for renewal for next year.

Members questioned whether the toilet facilities currently on site were used much. The Chairman advised that there were a number of plot holders who really appreciated the facilities; however, overall, they were not used to a great extent. Cllr Wilshire argued that the costs were an extensive amount of money to spend on facilities which only a small number of people use.

Cllr Snape felt that it was not appropriate to use the Allotment EMR to supply portaloos.

The Chairman requested that the allotment representatives be informed of the decision made regarding toilet facilities at the allotment sites as soon as possible.

It was **RESOLVED** to not reinstate toilet facilities in the future at Station Road and Steppingley Road allotment sites.

e. Burial Ground & Allotment Fees

The Chairman reminded Members that, during July's meeting, Members had decided to introduce a fee for the transfer of exclusive rights.

Allotments

The Chairman highlighted to Members that they had just made the decision not to reinstate toilet facilities at the allotment sites and that building works would be starting next to one of the sites, so suggested these factors be taken into consideration when reviewing the allotment fees.

Cllr Harald believed that the proposed 5% fee increase was marginal and considered it fair, given the recent lack of fee increases.

The Chairman requested Officers' thoughts and recommendations in terms of deposit amounts for the end of tenancy. The AO explained that other Councils' fees ranged from £30/40 - £100, so advised a median of these would be a sensible figure. The AO advised Members that the deposits would only be introduced to new tenants and would not apply to existing plot holders.

It was **RESOLVED** to increase the Allotment fees for 2027/28 by 5% (£28.56) and to introduce a £50 deposit for end of tenancy.

Burial Ground

Members did not believe it made sense to change the burial ground fees, considering there were currently no available burial plots.

It was **RESOLVED** for Burial Fees for 2026/2027 to remain the same.

f. Nature Park Management Plan

Members thought that the management plan was well-written and comprehensive.

The AO informed members that the grazier at Manor Park was extremely interested in also grazing at The Nature Park. The AO highlighted that the management plan included grazing within the plan, so the AO was looking to proceed with the proposition quite quickly.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the draft Nature Park Management Plan 2025-2030.

g. Hinksley Road Music Park

Cllr Harald queried whether the Council had received any additional complaints in relation to Hinksley Music Park. The TC clarified that the Council had not received any further complaints which she was aware of. Cllr Wilsmore suggested that the lack of complaints does not confirm that the Music Park had not been causing upset to other residents.

The Chairman proposed that the Council look into purchasing signage to display at the Music Park to indicate that the park be used during appropriate hours to avoid disruption. Members agreed with the proposal as they believed their options were limited, as the park had already been installed, so it could not be moved.

Action: AO

Cllr Snape raised concerns regarding the disruption caused by the Music Park during the early hours of Sunday mornings while the Hinksley Park Run takes place. Cllr Snape asked whether Officers had spoken to the organisers of the Park Run to ask whether there were marshals on site to stop this from happening.

Action: AO

It was **RESOLVED** for the Town Clerk to respond to the complainant with actions the Council would be taking to minimise disruption.

1302. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Community Financial Report

Members noted the report from the Senior Finance Officer.

b. Officer Update

- i) The Chairman reminded Members that they had requested a list of sites owned and managed by Flitwick Town Council at the July Community Services meeting and informed Members that the AO had now provided them with this. The Chairman thanked the AO for providing the list and asked if it was possible to produce a map that highlighted the sites, as they thought this would be useful.

The PRS informed M that the Public Realm Team was up to date with maintenance within the town and emphasised that the team had been working extremely hard. The PRS also thanked Members for passing on positive comments regarding their work, stating that it goes a long way and was greatly appreciated.

Cllr Wilsmore proposed the possibility of installing a pedestrian gate at Millennium Park in addition to replacing the gates on Temple Way, as there was currently no pedestrian access on that side of the park. The AO agreed to look into this.

Members queried whether the reason for littering at Millennium Park was due to the bins being full or whether people just chose not to use them. The PRS advised that, the majority of the time, the bins were not full so there was no reason as to why people would not be able to use the bins to appropriately dispose of waste. Cllr Wilsmore suggested there was little point in installing more bins as it seems this would not help to alleviate the littering issue.

The PRS mentioned that, occasionally, large pizza boxes blocked the bins, causing the bins to appear full. Cllr Wilsmore suggested the Council could look into installing larger bins or differently designed bins in order to make them easier to access.

Cllr Snape agreed that providing more bins was unlikely to prevent littering, however, he believed that the litter around the skate park was not as bad as it was made out to be on social media, and that this was more reflective of a singular incident.

The Chairman requested clarification as to whether the water bottle dispenser at Milenium Park was broken, to which the PRS confirmed that it was. The Chairman queried whether this was still under warranty, however the TC confirmed that it was not.

- ii) Cllr Wilsmore queried what we were going to do regarding the removal of the beaters from Hinksley Music Park. The Clerk advised that they were uncertain of what the solution would be as of yet. Members requested clarification as to whether the beaters were attached to the park. The PRS confirmed that the beaters were attached and that tools would have been required to remove these. Members questioned whether there was a way that the Council could make these more difficult to remove to prevent this issue from re-occurring.

Cllr Snape drew Members attention to the 'Fridge Update' and highlighted the snapshot of the dashboard report. He informed Members that there were now up to 250 active membership accounts and that this number was still growing. Cllr Snape told Members that the third supported tier session for those with low income/in need of additional support was due to take place tomorrow (3rd August). He advised Members that there was a vast number of sign-ups for the supported tier, however, not all of these had brought in their evidence of need to enable their account to be activated. Cllr Snape reported that they had received positive comments regarding the membership scheme so far and told Members that he believed the scheme was going well in terms of supporting Members of the community and reducing food waste. Cllr Snape highlighted the recent challenges the Community Fridge had incurred in relation to the new 'suggested donations'. He advised that, on average, there were around 60-90 people visiting the fridge each day and leaving with high-quality food; however, a handful of these people were against making the suggested donation.

Cllr Harald questioned why 52% of the accounts were currently inactive. Cllr Snape informed Members that the figures had changed since the report had been written and that there were now more active accounts. He explained that visitors were required to provide proof of address and proof of need (if applicable) to activate the account.

1303. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No members of the public attended the meeting.

1304. 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** – members noted the Confidential Report

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 ended at 20:43

Signed(Chairman)