



FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Flitwick Town Council meeting held on
Tuesday 18th November 2025 at the Rufus Centre at 7:45pm

Present:

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

Also present:

Stacie Lockey – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Stephanie Stanley – Deputy Town Clerk & RFO
2 members of the public

5908. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

5909. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

- (a) Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – no items.
(b) Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – no items.

5910. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor had attended the following civic engagements:

- Remembrance Events – Airmen's Memorial, Sunday Service and on 11th November. Officers, particularly the Community Services Officer, were praised for their efforts in coordinating the Remembrance Sunday event.
- Mid Beds Carers Association Annual General Meeting.
- The official opening of The Cottage Bakery in Flitwick.
- Half Term events – football session and pumpkin carving.

The Town Mayor welcomed back Cllr Thompson after her sabbatical leave.

5911. Leader Update

The Leader gave the following update:

- Steppingley Road Planning Application (land adjacent to the allotments)
This application was live, and the consultee responses were coming in. The application had been called in for the Development Management Committee (DMC) by Cllr Adams. This might be withdrawn later, depending on the outcome of the consultation period. Members were informed that if the DMC considered the application, it could result in a 4-6-month delay in the project's programme.
- Relationship with Central Beds Council (CBC)
The Leader had met with all Ward Members, and he was keen to try to reboot the Joint Committee, especially for the Section 106 benefits it would bring. A meeting date was yet to be confirmed.

The Leader had met with Cllr Goodchild, a Deputy Portfolio Holder at CBC, who had been tasked with building relationships with Town & Parish Councils. CBC had more to do to understand what each town and parish was doing.

One topic discussed related to the Fair Funding Review, and it was hoped that by the end of November/beginning of December, the formula would be known from the Central Government. The worst-case scenario would be £24m in cuts over 3 years, and in the background, CBC was discussing what could be cut. The Leader was explicitly asked whether the Town Council would be interested in running a library, and he said it was highly unlikely. Libraries were not an easy undertaking, and this was not in the remit of a Town or Parish Council. CBC were in talks with FTC Officers about managing the planting area around the transport interchange and being paid to do this.

- Flitwick Community Fridge
Funding had been secured (£30k) from the Household Support Fund. £9k was to be spent on food vouchers before and after Christmas to assist 149 households in the supported tier. The remaining funds would be used to purchase additional food items.

The membership scheme was generating interesting data, enabling insight into who needs the most support.

Cllr Blazeby referred to the email survey sent by CBC on community-led housing and commented that the situation seemed to be getting out of hand. He asked whether the Council were being asked to provide feedback as a Council body, or whether the Planning Improvement Working Group would look at this initially. The Town Clerk commented that she had not received any communication about this, and Cllr Blazeby agreed to forward the email to her.

Action: Cllr Blazeby

Cllr Earles asked why Cllr Adams had called the Steppingley Road plans to DMC. Cllr Snape stated that he knew why this had been done; however, he did not wish to discuss it in the public section of the meeting. Cllr Snape reiterated that Cllr Adams wanted to ensure residents had an opportunity to provide feedback on all developments in the ward. Cllr Snape commented that the application was compliant with national and local planning policies and that the consultation responses to date were mostly positive. Cllr Snape confirmed that lobbying had been done in the background.

Cllr Toinko asked whether there would be a cash flow problem if the planning application went to the DMC. Cllr Parsons, Chairman of the Finance & GP Committee, commented that the Council had sufficient reserves should the project be delayed. Cllr Snape advised on the local government capital controls. Cllr Parsons explained that it would be helpful if the capital receipt came in the same financial year as the spend at Station Road and the

expenditure for the replacement of the Rufus Centre boilers. He added that replenishing the reserves after March 2026 would take longer and would be more difficult, as the capital receipt could be spent only on capital expenditure.

5912. REPORTS FROM WARD MEMBERS

There was no report.

5913. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No items.

5914. INVITED SPEAKER

No invited speaker.

5915. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

No items.

5916. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. For Members to approve the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held, on **Tuesday 21st October 2025**, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre.

Cllr Thompson checked what was required with her apologies for sabbatical leave. The Deputy Town Clerk explained that the resolution for the leave continued after the first meeting and this was not subsequently included in other minutes until Cllr Thompson's return.

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 21st October 2025 at the Rufus Centre as a true record.

- b. For Members to receive and consider the resolutions and recommendations of the Community Services Committee meeting, held on **Tuesday 4th November 2025**, this meeting was held at The Rufus Centre.

Members noted that the Committee had asked Officers to investigate further about the station interchange planting before committing to undertake this work.

The resolutions from the Community Services Committee meeting held on Tuesday 4th November at the Rufus Centre were noted.

5917. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 21st October 2025**.

No items.

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

5918. OUTSIDE BODIES

No items.

5919. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Central Bedfordshire Council - Designating Local Green Spaces

Members noted that the deadline was on 28th November 2025.

Cllr Thompson asked about other areas in FTC's ownership that were not included in the list. Members were informed that some areas were covered under legislation and were protected from development in other ways.

Cllr Snape commented that the Nature Park application was in the planning process, so this would rezone the space.

Members discussed that Hinksley Road Playing Field was designated as a green space. Cllr Snape was keen to exclude it from the submission in case there was a future opportunity for the Council to participate in a regeneration project (in terms of a land swap).

Cllr Thompson asked whether including the field at Station Road would prevent the Council from changing it to allotment space should the Council choose to, or need to, in the future. Cllr Hart explained that the designation as a local green space would add a layer of protection for the area from building development.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Hart for her work on this.

Cllr Snape commented that the Council needed to evidence usage or amenity value as part of the submission and asked whether Officers were required to build on what was included to date. Cllr Hart was seeking feedback on this matter and would ask the question at a meeting the following day.

It was **resolved** to accept the areas circulated and forward them to CBC for processing.

Action: Town Clerk

b. Calendar of Meetings 2026

It was **resolved** to approve the circulated calendar of meetings for 2026.

c. Local Organisation Leases – Sea Cadets

Cllr Snape was in favour of approving the longer lease term but thought Officers should ask the organisation to either sign the document or stop requesting changes, as this had taken too long to secure the new lease.

The Town Clerk commented that the situation was nearly complete and that the organisation had experienced some internal issues, which had led to seeming indecision regarding the occupation of the Changing Rooms. The problem had also been prolonged due to the Officers liaising with the Council's former solicitors. The Town Clerk predicted that the lease would be signed within the next month.

Members wanted a deadline imposed by the end of the financial year for completion. Cllr Toinko commented that each lease for the local organisations needed to be considered separately and that it was irrelevant to compare lease terms for the groups. Cllr Snape commented that organisations that provided a plan for the building were given longer leases than those that did not.

Cllr Wilsmore asked why the Council would extend the lease term. The Chairman advised that this related to the groups' ability to access more grant funding. Cllr Wilsmore asked if this led to any negative impact for the Council and Cllr Blazeby advised that the maintenance aspect of the lease covered FTC for these situations.

It was **resolved** to accept the request to extend the Sea Cadets' lease term to 25 years.

Action: Town Clerk

d. **Central Bedfordshire Council – Community Governance Review Consultation Second Stage**

Members discussed the review and the following points were made:

- There was a general over-reliance on co-option
- Members and residents ratios per ward
- CBC wanted to ensure parish elections wherever possible
- It was not good to have councillor vacancies
- Councils needed to ensure there were enough Members to run their activities
- The significance of having a certain number of Members for the General Power of Competence at the first meeting of the new Council term
- FTC had requested membership of 15 and CBC's counter-proposal was for it to reduce to 13
- Members were concerned that if the membership reduced to 13, then the Council would struggle to fill the Committees etc.
- There was the potential of adapting the Council's structure (e.g. merging the Finance & Business Committees) and making relevant changes to the Scheme of Delegations should numbers reduce to 13
- There was the potential that new Members would come through at the election time

It was **resolved** not to respond to CBC's counterproposal regarding the Governance Review.

Cllr Thompson suggested that Members could respond individually.

e. **Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)**

Members discussed the item and made the following comments:

- Cllr Hart had attended the meeting at CBC about this and explained that the Officer responsible for this would work with the CERT group to offer guidance
- Various tiers of plans would be acceptable
- CBC planned to use the Leisure Centre in an emergency
- There was a budget of £3k per community for purchasing equipment, and this was for items such as pumps, sandbags and aqua bags
- There was space at the Tractor Store for storing items
- There was a potential to have financial support from CBC if FTC offered to store some of the CBC resources for neighbouring towns, as well as Flitwick
- The existing CERT WhatsApp group had been helpful when there was flooding previously, and it provided access to CBC Officers
- There was an agreement among Members that when the previous floods happened, other areas were prioritised when Flitwick needed more support
- All Members agreed that Flitwick needed a plan and Cllr Thompson commented that people needed to be aware of safeguarding with the WhatsApp group

It was **resolved** to set up a CERT Working Group.

It was **resolved** to elect the following Members to the CERT Working Group: Cllrs Hart, Bandy, Earles, Snape, Roberts, Toinko and Crawford.

5920. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Finance Reports

Members noted the Balance Sheet and Projects Fund Summary.

b. Delegated Authority Decision

Members noted the decision made under Delegated Authority to appoint Princebuild Ltd. as the chosen contractor for the replacement heating system at the Rufus Centre, for £117,181.25 + VAT. This would be funded via the Earmarked Reserve for the boilers (£57,000) and the Central Projects Fund (£60,181.25).

5921. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

A resident commented that the CERT group was a good idea, as they had needed to provide shelter for someone for 6 weeks during the floods in Flitwick before. She added that it would benefit residents to know what support is available and that most towns should have a plan.

A resident asked for an update on the Steppingley Road field planning application. The Chairman advised that there was no update yet.

The residents left the meeting at 20:48.

5922. 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.

15a. Confidential Report

Members noted the Confidential Report from 21st October 2025.

15b. Station Road Update

Officers received an update from Officers.

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

The meeting closed at 20:51.

Signed..... (Chairman)

