



## FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

**DRAFT Minutes of the Flitwick Town Council meeting held on  
Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2025 at the Rufus Centre at 7:45pm**

Present:

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

Also present:

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

### **5923. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was **resolved** to accept apologies for absence from Cllr Parsons (personal commitment).

### **5924. 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 – Cllr Hodges declared an interest in agenda item 12a – planning application CB/25/03264/OUT.

### **5925. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Mayor thanked everyone who attended the Town Mayor's Charity Quiz Night, which raised over £2,000 for his charities. Special thanks were given to Cllr Thompson for her efforts as Quiz Master and to Cllr Bandy for her help with the raffle donations. The Town Mayor also thanked the Community Services Team for organising the event and his wife, Liz, for helping.

The Christmas Lights Switch On event was a great success, with a large turnout from residents. The Town Mayor thanked the Members who had assisted and extended a special thank you to the Community Services Officer who had organised the event for the first time.

The Town Mayor had attended the Houghton Regis Town Mayor's Coffee Morning.

The Deputy Town Mayor, Cllr Platt, had attended the Beds Fire & Police Service Christingle Service.

## **5926. Leader Update**

### Community Fridge

The Leader noted that it was important for the Council to reflect on the work done for the Community Fridge. It had been a phenomenal year for the service that continued to go from strength to strength. A great community of people ran it, and many Members were actively involved in its delivery.

The service currently assists 170 supported households and reaches people mainly through word of mouth. The Community Services Team and volunteers were preparing 162 Christmas hampers for the families in need, complete with gifts and fresh food. This had been made possible by collaborations with local partners.

The data obtained from the CRM system used to administer the service showed that, since the system was implemented, over 50 tonnes of food had been supplied to local people, with a waste rate of 2.9%. The service has supported over 10,000 visits and reduced CO2 emissions.

The service had delivered a significant impact, and the Leader wanted to thank Members for their support.

### Burial Space

There had been a positive Chairman's Meeting earlier in the day with Reverend Harald of St Peter & St Paul's Church to discuss burial space in Flitwick, since there was no more space in the current burial ground. Rev Harald had been keen to sit with Members to explain the impact on individuals, and she asked to work together to look for solutions. Rev Harald proposed creating a Garden of Remembrance in the unused space of the old burial ground. The TC would work with Rev Harald to progress with this solution.

Historically, the Council had considered additional burial space, and at the time, decisions on this were left open to further investigation.

### Anti-social Behaviour & Noise

The Leader had been contacted by residents from the bottom end of Station Road near the Crown Public House (PH) with complaints about anti-social behaviour and noise. The Crown had implemented a prolific programme of events. The Leader thanked Cllr Adams for contacting relevant CBC Officers about this issue.

### Draft Budget 2026-27

The Leader thanked the DTC and her team for their efforts in preparing the comprehensive draft budget for 2026-27. He added that the budget was due to be discussed at this meeting and highlighted that the Council was in a good financial position.

### Star Council Awards

The Leader wished to congratulate the TC for being shortlisted as a finalist for the National Association of Local Councils Clerk of the Year award. He added that the TC had made a considerable impact since taking on the TC role and that it was important to show how much Members valued the work that she did.

## 5927. REPORTS FROM WARD MEMBERS

Cllr Adams provided the following update:

- Steppingley Road Field Planning Application – written confirmation had been received stating that the enquiry was going ahead on 22<sup>nd</sup> January. The first four days would be public, and the second four days would be private. The enquiry would take place at the Priory House Council Chamber.
- Planning Application for land near Trafalgar Drive – Cllrs Adams and Townsend were opposing this development due to the access problems. There was little change from the previously submitted application; however, it used less greenbelt land and had slightly fewer dwellings. This application had been called in to the Development Management Committee. Members were reminded that this was the third time that an application had been submitted for this area of land.
- The Crown PH – The issues explained previously by the Leader had been an ongoing problem, and something needed to be done to stop the disturbance. There was also an increased number of cars being parked in the nearby streets. The owners needed to manage their licence responsibly and Cllr Adams would continue to push for this matter to be sorted out.
- The Avenue Parking – people were continuing to park on the frontage of the Vape Shop and the Pearl of Bengal Restaurant at the top of the Avenue. Cllr Adams had received a surprising response to his complaint about this because the area where cars were parking was not considered a public highway. The double yellow lines had made very little difference. Cllr Adams had suggested installing bollards and would update Members in due course. Emails about this had been shared with the Chairman.
- CBC Budget 2026-27 – the Government's Fair Funding formula was not currently looking very positive, with a likely loss of £21-23m in year one and £34m in year two. The settlement was due tomorrow, but there could be a delay until 18<sup>th</sup> December. The decision to combine grants with business rates did not look favourable for CBC, but accurate information would be available once the settlement was announced. This made the 2026-27 budget process very challenging, especially since CBC had little remaining reserves. Cllr Adams had attended a few meetings about the budget and had heard first-hand the pain around the table about potentially excluding provisions that would be unpalatable.

### Questions/Comments

Cllr Earles thanked Cllr Adams for his assistance with sorting the footpath issue beside Woodland Middle School which had been dealt with within days of his involvement. Cllr Adams stated that it was CBC Officers who had progressed this and were able to get the contractors on site.

Cllr Hodges referred to the parking issues in the Avenue and questioned if it was an offence to drive across the public footpath to get to the shops' frontage area. Cllr Wilsmore stated that it was not an offence.

Cllr Thompson asked for an update on the retirement village development. Cllr Adams did not have an update on this but he would find out the information and pass this onto Members.

Cllr Adams left the meeting at 20:03.

**5928. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No items.

**5929. INVITED SPEAKER**

No invited speaker.

**5930. MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

No items.

**5931. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

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

Cllr Thompson referred to minute number 5919a – CBC Consultation on Designating Green Spaces – and asked for an amendment to the wording relating to Station Road field to incorporate a clarifying statement about if the Council chose to, or needed to, use the field for allotments in the future. Cllr Thompson thought the current wording implied that this was already happening.

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at the Rufus Centre as a true record with one amendment as stated above relating to Station Road field.

- b. The resolutions of the Finance & GP Committee meeting held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at the Rufus Centre were noted.
- c. The resolutions of the Community Services Committee meeting held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2025 at the Rufus Centre were noted.
- d. The resolutions of the Business Improvement & Development Board meeting held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025 at the Rufus Centre were noted.

**5932. MATTERS ARISING**

- a. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2025**.

No items.

- b. Members to receive any updates from Officers.

No items.

**5933. OUTSIDE BODIES**

No items.

**5934. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**a. CB/25/03264/OUT – Land Off Trafalgar Drive And Salisbury Road, Trafalgar Drive, Flitwick**

A report prepared by Cllr Hodges, Chairman of the Planning Improvement Working Group (PIWG), had been previously circulated.

Cllr Hodges thanked former Cllr Gleave for his first objection and commented that there had been little change since the 2023 application. Cllr Hodges confirmed the following details:

- There was a slight reduction in the number of properties
- Drainage remained a big concern, in particular, the two new attenuation ponds being close to the properties
- Residents had raised concerns about the volume of traffic that this development would bring
- Four members of the PIWG had been on site with a former Planning Officer, who had commented that the ponds were approximately 40 years old
- The Wildlife Trust were supporting the view of CBC's Wildlife Officer

The Chairman commented that Cllr Hodges' report was very informative.

It was **resolved** to object to the planning application CB/25/03264/OUT for the reasons set out in the report circulated.

*Action: Amenities Officer*

**b. Draft Budget 2026-27**

The DTC provided an overview of the draft budget, associated precept demonstrations and discussions held at the Finance & GP Committee meeting the previous day, including:

- The Finance & GP Committee's suggestion to reduce income budgets for Rufus Centre Room Bookings and Rendezvous Catering (total £50,000)
- The Finance & GP Committee's suggestion to increase the expenditure under the General Purposes cost centre to include provision for maintenance programmes (£30,000)
- Explanations about how the above changes affected the draft revenue budget position, the central projects fund allocation and the precept demonstrations
- Should the Council approve a precept rise of 3% in January, the impact this would have on residents' council tax for a Band D property
- The Council were in a strong financial position
- Members were reminded that the proposed budget for 2026-27 would be considered at the January Council meeting
- All Members would be sent the revised draft budget for 2026-27 complete with changes suggested by the Finance & GP Committee the following day

*Action: DTC*

Cllr Snape pointed out that the DTC had mentioned a potential 3% rise, as this was likely to be the Finance & GP Committee's recommendation in January. He referred to the Band D illustration for council tax and commented that this was the housing band that most councils nationally presented when explaining the impact to their residents. Cllr Snape advised that in Flitwick, there were more Band C properties, and the precept demonstrations may switch to this for the January paperwork.

Cllr Blazeby highlighted that the council tax impact would not match exactly when the letters are sent to residents because CBC did not have the up-to-date figures for the number of properties. Members noted this and expected to see a slight variance.

Cllr Hart asked for an explanation of why the IT Support budget was being reduced for next year. The DTC explained that the Council had entered a new contract and parts of the previous service had been removed because these were surplus to requirements.

Cllr Hodges asked if there was any indication of what CBC's rise would be. Cllr Snape stated it would be a maximum of 5%

Cllr Toinko commented on the reduced funding for the Family Fun Day and asked where the proposal for the Festival of Lights originated. He believed the budget for the Family Fun Day should be increased to provide the fair rides free of charge, as this was the Council's flagship event.

Cllr Thompson commented that the Festival of Lights proposal had been discussed at the last Community Services meeting. Increased expenditure had been budgeted for under the community events general code, with the intention of the Officers providing a report summarising options for how this money should be spent at the February meeting. The TC explained that one option would be to cover the cost of the fair at the Fun Day.

Cllr Wilsmore referred to the Festival of Lights event proposal and mentioned the seventh planning condition for the Manor Park. The TC commented that Officers were liaising with the planning team to see if anything could be done to facilitate the event. Cllr Thompson added that the event could happen at an alternative Town Council site.

**c. Community Fridge Door Replacement**

Cllr Snape explained about the ongoing issues with the door to the Community Fridge room. Cllr Blazeby commented that this was a security matter and it needed to be replaced.

It was **resolved** to approve expenditure up to £5,000 from the Ops Reserves to replace the door to the Community Fridge.

**d. Customer Care Policy**

Cllr Thompson commented that the suggested changes weakened the policy because specific details about timings had been removed and replaced with more vague terminology. The TC responded that the original policy included unrealistic targets, e.g., answering the reception phone within 20 seconds, which could not be promised.

Cllr Blazeby questioned whether the specific timings could be measured. The TC stated that there was no way of measuring these targets.

It was **resolved** to approve the circulated Customer Care Policy.

**e. Annual Meeting 2026**

It was **resolved** to hold the Annual Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

**f. Annual Residents Survey**

Cllr Blazeby provided an introduction on the aims of the Annual Residents Survey, including its comparison with the Local Government Association survey, its promotion, the outputs generated, and how the responses are communicated at the Annual Meeting. Before conducting this survey, the Council had no way to measure how it was doing in residents' eyes. There were usually some topical questions so that the responses could guide the direction of the Council, e.g., regarding the use of the Town Square. Cllr Blazeby commented that it might be helpful for the next survey to include a question about the Council's capital expenditure options.

Cllr Harald asked about the percentage of residents who took part in the survey. Cllr Blazeby advised that the 2025 survey had 425 responses. The DTC explained that the data from past surveys has assisted with previous grant applications.

Cllr Thompson suggested including a 'you said, we did' type piece at the Annual Meeting.

Members agreed that there remained problems with residents not understanding the Town Council's and CBC's remits.

The most common matters residents have previously expressed concern about were parking, speeding, and dogs. Responses showed that residents were more realistic about issues such as crime levels and social disturbances than the LGA's survey average indicated.

Cllr Harald thought the survey was a good exercise because it enabled the Council to obtain essential data and distribute feedback to the relevant organisations responsible. He added that it was done at minimal cost but did not think residents should be forced to complete the survey, as this could distort the results. The take-up rate might be low; however, this could indicate residents are generally content or unbothered by issues in the town.

Members discussed the open-ended questions section. Cllr Hart wondered if there could be a question about funding the Family Fun Day fairground rides or providing the Festival of Lights. Cllr Thompson suggested that specifics should not be included, and for that example, it was likely that both events could be funded.

Cllr Wilsmore questioned why this event was just presented to Members with no discussion. Cllr Thompson advised that the proposal was discussed at the recent Community Services meeting that Cllr Wilsmore had attended and this was the opportunity to ask questions.

**g. Planning Improvement Working Group Vacancy**

Cllr Earles had resigned as a Member of the PIWG.

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Hart to the PIWG.

**h. Manor Park Driveway**

The TC advised that the Officer Recommendation in the report should have stated quote 3. The Amenities Officer who prepared the report had been trying to join the meeting online but was having technical difficulties.

Cllr Harald asked why the submitted quotes varied so widely in cost. The TC advised that the most expensive option included additional topping, timber edging on both sides of the carriageway for the full length, higher overheads as a larger company, and traffic management provision for ten days.

Cllr Snape asked if the recommended quote included traffic management. The TC said it did not include this.

Cllr Thompson supported the Officer's recommendation and commented that the item had come to Full Council as the timings did not work for a Community Services decision. There was no Community Services meeting scheduled for January.

Cllr Hodges asked what was included for £16,250. The TC advised that all companies were provided with the same specification. The recommended quote included shingle and timber edging to the edge of the park, but no traffic management.

Cllr Hart referred to the cheapest quote and commented that there was no mention of using skips or plant equipment, traffic management, etc. The TC informed Members that it was a small company and the job was perhaps too large for them.

Cllr Wilsmore commented that the report did not include any details about what the companies would do. The TC advised that the carriageway would be scraped back. Cllr Wilsmore stated that the existing carriageway did not contain granite chippings.

The TC advised that the company that made the entrance gates had assisted in designing the specification and was experienced in working with owners of heritage parks. Members were informed that something needed to be put on top to preserve the area. Cllr Wilsmore suggested scraping it back and assessing what was underneath before progressing, and commented that he would speak to the Amenities Officer separately.

It was **resolved** to proceed with Option 3, at £16,250 for the Manor Park carriageway works, to be funded from the Ops Reserves.

*Action: Amenities Officer*

**5935. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**a. Finance Reports**

The Balance Sheet and Project Summary were noted.

**5936. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No items.

The residents left the meeting at 20:51.

**5937. 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.

**15b. Outside Bodies Update**

Members received an update on Outside Bodies.

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

The meeting closed at 21:12.

Signed: .....(Chairman)

**Town Council Meeting 20.1.26**  
**Item 12a – Annual Residents Survey**

**Suggested Open-Ended Questions:**

The council are considering refurbishing 'The Hub' (adjacent to Flitwick Library/Millennium Park) to enable increased use by the wider community. What uses or services do you think would benefit from operating out of the building in the Town Centre?

Since 2020, the council has put on a 'family fun day' in June. Initially, the fairground attractions were provided free to all. However, in 2025, residents were asked to pay a small contribution towards the cost of using the rides - £1.50 per ride. Do you think we should return to providing these for free in 2026?

The Rufus Centre (including the Rendezvous Cafe) has become an increasingly popular venue for social use, events and the provision of serviced offices and room rentals since 2020. What improvements could the Council make to ensure that the building and location continue to attract new users in the future?

Are there any town-specific environmental or social initiatives (e.g., Flitwick Community Fridge, Share Library of Things, Litter picks) that you think Flitwick Town Council should be looking to trial, lead, or support? If so, what?

There are a number of established events that the Council either runs or supports local organisers to put on each year, e.g., Christmas Lights Switch-on, Family Fun Day, The Vintage Car Show, and Halloween Trail. Are there other event opportunities that you think should be trialled or investigated to become a central community focus? (e.g. Scarecrow Trail, Big Front Garden Sale, Festival of Lights)

# Finance & General Purposes Committee

Flitwick Town Council **DRAFT** Budget 2026/27

Budget Manager: Steph Stanley

GENERAL PURPOSES: 101			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26					NEXT Year: 2026/27		
			Budget	Actual	Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
Income	1003	Photocopying Contribution	150	265	<b>190</b>	280		280	250	<b>200</b>	▲10	▲5%
	1191	Miscellaneous Income	0	38	<b>0</b>	4,666	4,665	1	0	<b>0</b>		
		<b>Total Income</b>	150	303	<b>190</b>	4,946	4,665	<b>281</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>200</b>	▲10	▲5%
Expenditure	4001	Salaries & Wages	231,775	213,185	<b>229,247</b>	137,456		137,456	211,318	<b>225,843</b>	▼3,404	▼1%
	4003	Travel Costs	30	24	<b>30</b>	18		18	28	<b>30</b>		
	4017	FTC Hospitality	750	748	<b>720</b>	531		531	720	<b>720</b>		
	4020	Postage Costs	1,300	1,069	<b>1,300</b>	1,063		1,063	1,300	<b>1,300</b>		
	4021	Stationary	2,500	2,402	<b>2,500</b>	645		645	1,500	<b>1,500</b>	▼1,000	▼40%
	4022	Photocopier Costs	2,600	2,500	<b>2,600</b>	1,478		1,478	2,600	<b>2,600</b>		
	4023	Telephone Costs	8,500	7,287	<b>8,000</b>	4,836		4,836	7,020	<b>7,020</b>	▼980	▼12%
	4025	Office Furniture & Equipment	1,500	795	<b>1,100</b>	978		978	1,100	<b>1,100</b>		
	4034	Salaries Contingency	25,000	26,133	<b>10,000</b>	604		604	10,000	<b>10,000</b>		
	4040	IT Support	25,000	26,133	<b>26,000</b>	16,848		16,848	21,500	<b>18,500</b>	▼7,500	▼29%
	4048	IT Hardware	16	4,541	<b>2,500</b>	85		85	2,500	<b>2,500</b>		
	4055	Maintenance Programmes								<b>30,000</b>	▲30,000	
	4056	Licenses & Memberships	2,000	2,727	<b>2,800</b>	2,848		2,848	2,900	<b>4,900</b>	▲2,100	▲75%
	4058	Bank Charges	160	222	<b>200</b>	61		61	200	<b>260</b>	▲60	▲30%
	4059	SUNDRIES	300	234	<b>300</b>	158		158	150	<b>150</b>	▼150	▼50%
	4102	FTC Internal Rent	37,590	37,590	<b>37,590</b>	25,060		25,060	37,590	<b>37,590</b>		
4103	FTC Internal Hire	2,000	1,535	<b>1,500</b>	765		765	1,500	<b>2,000</b>	▲500	▲33%	
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	341,021	327,125	<b>326,387</b>	193,434	0	<b>193,434</b>	<b>301,926</b>	<b>346,013</b>	▲19,626	▲6%	

**CIVIC PURPOSES: 102**

			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26				NEXT Year: 2026/27			
			Budget	Actual	Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
Inc.	1143	CURRENT Yr - TM Charity Income	0	2,488	0	2,886		2,886	0	0		
		<b>Total Income</b>	0	2,488	0	2,886	0	2,886	0	0		
Expenditure	4035	Regalia Costs	500	0	500	500		500	500	1,000	▲ 500	▲ 100%
	4036	Civic Service	800	0	800	0		0	800	800		
	4103	FTC Internal Hire	620	664	500	0		0	500	500		
	4143	CURRENT Yr - TM Charity Costs	0	2,488	0	541		541	0	0		
	4149	Leader Expenses	0	200	200	24		24	200	200		
	4210	TM Allowance & Civic Reception	4,000	4,000	4,000	663		663	4,000	4,000		
	4502	Elections / By Elections	0	0	0	0		0	0	6,500	▲ 6,500	▲ 100%
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	5,920	7,352	6,000	1,728	0	1,728	6,000	13,000	▲ 7,000	▲ 117%	

**COMMUNICATIONS: 103**

			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26				NEXT Year: 2026/27			
			Budget	Actual	Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
Income	1001	Advertising Income	750	564	1,000	200		200	668	500	▼ 500	▼ 50%
	1177	Grants & Donations Received	0	2,000	0	0		0	0	0		
		<b>Total Income</b>	750	2,564	1,000	200	0	200	668	500	▼ 500	▼ 50%
Expenditure	4024	Marketing Planning Software	250	240	250	0		0	250	250		
	4028	Advertising & Promotions	135	205	250	0		0	250	250		
	4031	Flit Valley Communications								692	▲ 692	▲ 100%
	4038	Living History Website	1,390	47	1,000	0		0	1,000	0	▼ 1,000	▼ 100%
	4042	FTC Branding	3,000	1,200	1,000	1,000		1,000	1,000			
	4045	Flitwick Papers Costs	9,000	8,910	9,500	6,582		6,582	8,776	9,500		
	4046	Website Maintenance	1,500	630	1,100	375		375	1,100	1,200	▲ 100	▲ 9%
	4705	Bad Debt	0	0	0	252		252	252			
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	15,275	11,232	13,100	7,957	0	8,209	12,628	11,892	▼ 1,208	▼ 9%	

3 STATION ROAD: 106

			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26				NEXT Year: 2026/27			
			Budget	Actual	Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
Income	1022	Tenant Rent	0	0	0	0	0	0	909	12,999	▲12,999	▲100%
	1028	Building Dilapidation	0	100,000								
	1177	Grants & Donations Received	0	384,667								
	<b>Total Income</b>		0	484,667	0	0	0	0	909	12,999	▲12,999	▲100%
Expenditure	4013	Utility - Electric	0	1,474	2,000	1,371		1,371	1,400	1,250	▼750	▼38%
	4015	Utility - Water	0	149	200	121		121	121	250	▲50	▲25%
	4016	Business Rates	0	15,169	16,456	9,916		9,916	9,916	8,760	▼7,696	▼47%
	4019	Utility - Gas	0	330	600	299		299	210	600		
	4029	Insurance	0	1,921	2,737	0		0	0			
	4131	Renovation Costs	52,408	392,163	0	523,469	523,385	84	84	0		
	4132	Building Maintenance	0	190	0	498		498	498	400	▲400	▲100%
	4140	Maintenance Contracts	0	0	0	1,344		1,344	1,344	0		
	4506	Legal & Professional	0	122,412	0	22,532	22,532	0	0	0		
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		52,408	533,808	21,993	559,550	545,917	13,633	13,573	11,260	▼10,733	▼49%	

**FINANCE & HR: 422**

			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26				NEXT Year: 2026/27			
			Budget	Actual	Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
Inc.	1002	Insurance Claims	0	39,242								
		<b>Total Income</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>39,242</b>				<b>0</b>				
Expenditure	4004	Insurance Claims	0	39,742								
	4009	Health & Safety	4,000	3,508	<b>4,000</b>	2,163		2,163	3,500	<b>3,500</b>	▼ 500	▼ 13%
	4010	Simply Health Scheme	6,000	5,651	<b>6,700</b>	2,943		2,943	6,700	<b>6,750</b>	▲ 50	▲ 1%
	4027	Audit Fees - External	2,300	2,700	<b>2,700</b>	0		0	2,700	<b>3,000</b>	▲ 300	▲ 11%
	4029	Insurance	28,350	34,673	<b>38,852</b>	38,709		38,709	38,736	<b>45,000</b>	▲ 6,148	▲ 16%
	4039	HR Support	6,000	7,135	<b>6,500</b>	6,314		6,314	7,000	<b>8,000</b>	▲ 1,500	▲ 23%
	4041	PDQ Systems: 420/422: 50/50	3,000	4,252	<b>5,000</b>	3,168		3,168	4,500	<b>5,000</b>		
	4047	Staff Training	3,000	2,630	<b>3,500</b>	2,632		2,632	3,500	<b>3,000</b>	▼ 500	▼ 14%
	4053	Payroll Systems	2,000	1,903	<b>1,500</b>	614		614	1,500	<b>1,700</b>	▲ 200	▲ 13%
	4054	Spot Bonus Awards	160	160	<b>300</b>	160		160	300	<b>600</b>	▲ 300	▲ 100%
	4057	Accounts IT Software	2,500	2,380	<b>3,500</b>	3,150		3,150	3,150	<b>3,312</b>	▼ 188	▼ 5%
	4061	Loan CAPITAL Paid	45,000	37,422	<b>37,982</b>	31,982		31,982	37,982	<b>38,555</b>	▲ 573	▲ 2%
	4062	Loan INTEREST Paid	20,000	18,489	<b>17,904</b>	8,953		8,953	17,904	<b>16,756</b>	▼ 1,148	▼ 6%
	4103	FTC Internal Hire	1,400	1,716	<b>3,000</b>	607		607	3,000	<b>2,000</b>	▼ 1,000	▼ 33%
	4156	Audit Fees - Internal	2,200	1,620	<b>2,300</b>	235		235	1,500	<b>1,600</b>	▼ 700	▼ 30%
	4160	Accountancy Consultancy	4,700	2,902	<b>4,000</b>	1,835		1,835	2,600	<b>2,600</b>	▼ 1,400	▼ 35%
4506	Legal & Professional Fees	10,000	19,765	<b>12,000</b>	9,003		9,003	12,000	<b>14,000</b>	▲ 2,000	▲ 17%	
		<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>140,610</b>	<b>186,648</b>	<b>149,738</b>	112,468	0	<b>112,468</b>	<b>146,572</b>	<b>155,373</b>	▲ 5,635	▲ 4%

**PLANNING: 601**

			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26				NEXT Year: 2026/27			
			Budget	Actual	Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
Inc.	1191	Misc. Income	0	1,386								
		<b>Total Income</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,386</b>	<b>0</b>		0	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		
Exp.	4103	FTC Internal Hire	350	354	<b>350</b>	115		115	350	<b>350</b>		
		<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>350</b>	115	0	<b>115</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>350</b>		

# Business Improvement & Development Board

Flitwick Town Council **DRAFT** Budget 2026/27

Budget Manager: Mat Earles

RENDEZVOUS: 420

			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26				NEXT Year: 2026/27			
			Budget	Actual	Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
Income	1024	Room Bookings	1,000	2,669	2,500	1,995		1,995	2,500	2,500		
	1026	Bar Income - Rendezvous	40,000	41,005	50,000	31,877		31,877	52,500	57,000	▲7,000	▲14%
	1027	Catering Income - Rendezvous	212,100	237,685	247,500	172,496		172,496	247,500	235,000	▼12,500	▼5%
	1038	External Catering Income			0	408		408	408	42,000	▲42,000	▲100%
	1067	RENDEZVOUS Event Income	3,000	2,408	5,000	100		100	1,000	2,500	▼2,500	▼50%
	1155	Catering Income - Corporate	106,050	78,580	77,770	39,947	-6	39,941	62,500	65,000	▼12,770	▼16%
	1156	Catering Income - Functions	35,350	10,236	28,230	26,028		26,028	33,750	14,000	▼14,230	▼50%
		<b>Total Income</b>	<b>397,500</b>	<b>372,583</b>	<b>411,000</b>	<b>272,851</b>	<b>-6</b>	<b>272,845</b>	<b>400,158</b>	<b>418,000</b>	<b>▲7,000</b>	<b>▲2%</b>
Expenditure	4001	Salaries & Wages	222,072	200,963	230,353	143,162		143,162	219,314	234,812	▲4,459	▲2%
	4002	Uniform	800	263	500	349		349	500	500		
	4011	Agency Staff	0	8,255		709			1,600	0		
	4014	CASUAL STAFF Wages	8,400	12,888								
	4018	Agency Referral	0	2,800								
	4041	PDQ SYSTEMS: 420/422: 50/50	3,000	4,703	5,000	3,168		3,168	4,500	5,000		
	4056	LICENCES / MEMBERSHIPS	200	0								
	4066	Casual Staff - Rendezvous CAFE	0	0	15,000	4,749		4,749	6,500	5,000	▼10,000	▼67%
	4067	Casual Staff - Rendezvous BAR	0	0	4,000	3,160		3,160	4,000	4,500	▲500	▲13%
	4102	FTC Internal Rent	11,500	11,500	11,500	7,667		7,667	11,500	11,500		
	4138	Equipment Purchase	5,000	4,615	4,000	5,370		5,370	5,614	5,000	▲1,000	▲25%
	4140	Maintenance Contracts	6,200	4,123	5,000	1,544		1,544	5,000	5,115	▲115	▲2%
	4141	Catering Costs - Corporate	33,000	34,978	24,200	17,272		17,272	24,200	22,000	▼2,200	▼9%
	4144	Catering Costs - Functions	11,000	11,685	8,800	6,216		6,216	8,800	8,000	▼800	▼9%
	4145	External Catering			0	11,838		11,838	12,880	30,000	▲30,000	▲100%
	4147	Catering Costs - Rendezvous	66,000	72,932	77,000	50,368		50,368	77,000	77,800	▲800	▲1%
	4148	Bar Costs - Rendezvous	16,500	19,877	20,000	9,903		9,903	15,000	20,000		
	4150	Promotions & Advertising	1,630	100	1,250	96		96	1,250	1,250		
	4154	Rendezvous Event Expense	1,500	2,172	3,600	0		0	500	500	▼3,100	▼86%
	4155	Stock Check Costs	840	907	900	680		680	908	908	▲08	▲1%
4157	Wastage: Rendezvous	0	422	1,200	1,118		1,118	2,000	1,500	▲300	▲25%	
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>387,642</b>	<b>393,183</b>	<b>412,303</b>	<b>267,369</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>266,660</b>	<b>401,066</b>	<b>433,385</b>	<b>▲21,082</b>	<b>▲5%</b>	

RUFUS CENTRE: 421

			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26				NEXT Year: 2026/27			
			Budget	Actual	Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
Income	1010	Pitch/Field Hire	2,500	6,633	5,000	7,204		7,204	5,500	7,000	▲2,000	▲40%
	1018	Alarm Activation Reimbursement			0	245		245	245	250	▲250	
	1019	Hire of Equipment	5,500	5,290	7,000	3,030		3,030	3,000	5,000	▼2,000	▼29%
	1020	Functions Income - Rufus Centre	12,000	18,694	15,000	20,595		20,595	18,000	20,000	▲5,000	▲33%
	1021	Ticketsolve Booking Fees	0	2,118	5,000	1,230		1,230	2,500	3,500	▼1,500	▼30%
	1022	Tenant Rent	260,000	275,609	295,000	201,928		201,928	295,000	299,300	▲4,300	▲1%
	1023	Rufus Events Income	15,000	25,789	20,000	14,008		14,008	18,000	20,000		
	1024	Room Bookings	160,000	155,176	170,000	81,043		81,043	120,000	120,000	▼50,000	▼29%
	1025	Private Residential Flat	7,800	8,398	9,122	5,981		5,981	9,122	9,770	▲648	▲7%
	1030	Rufus Events - NT Live			0	1,407		1,407	3,500	5,000	▲5,000	▲100%
		<b>Total Income</b>	<b>462,800</b>	<b>497,707</b>	<b>526,122</b>	<b>336,671</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>336,671</b>	<b>474,867</b>	<b>489,820</b>	<b>▼36,302</b>	<b>▼7%</b>
Expenditure	4001	Salaries & Wages	231,528	227,824	252,347	153,070		153,070	229,861	237,016	▼15,331	▼6%
	4002	Uniform	36	236	300	430		430	430	300		
	4013	Utility - Electric	19,334	27,738	17,191	11,489		11,489	26,076	26,000	▲8,809	▲51%
	4014	Casual Staff Wages	3,600	6,089	1,000	857		857	1,000	1,000		
	4015	Utility - Water	6,218	6,510	6,218	5,926		5,926	7,700	8,100	▲1,882	▲30%
	4016	Business Rates	38,500	41,223	44,054	27,436		27,436	41,072	49,341	▲5,287	▲12%
	4019	Utility - Gas	10,448	15,538	13,567	4,425		4,425	13,567	15,141	▲1,574	▲12%
	4026	Equipment Maintenance	0	0	1,000	0		0				
	4030	Ticketsolve Costs	0	5,029	5,000	3,333		3,333	5,000	5,000		
	4040	IT Support	6,065	2,614	3,500	2,107		2,107	3,160	3,000	▼500	▼14%
	4046	Website Maintenance	1,000	290	1,000	170		170	1,000	1,000		
	4056	Licenses & Memberships	3,000	2,016	3,200	1,218		1,218	3,200	3,200		
	4078	Planting/Weeding	500	361								
	4102	FTC Internal Rent	-49,090	-49,090	-50,386	-33,591		-33,591	-50,386	-50,386		
	4103	FTC Internal Hire	-18,720	-13,563	-19,700	-3,638		-3,638	-19,700	-12,450	▲7,250	▼37%
	4128	Waste Disposal	6,500	8,084	6,500	4,739		4,739	7,000	7,000	▲500	▲8%
	4130	Rufus Capital Works	0	39,948								
	4132	Building Maintenance	23,000	22,857	20,000	17,851		17,851	20,000	20,000		
	4134	Cleaning Costs	33,100	34,787	33,100	23,945		23,945	33,100	33,100		
	4136	Rufus Field/Pitch Maint	1,000	1,000	1,000	7,106	6,825	281	981	700	▼300	▼30%
4138	Equipment Purchase	7,000	6,761	6,000	3,032		3,032	6,000	6,000			
4140	Maintenance Contracts	18,000	16,045	22,500	10,829		10,829	22,500	18,754	▼3,746	▼17%	
4142	Rufus Events Expense	12,500	21,278	15,000	9,305		9,305	15,000	15,000			
4150	Promotions & Advertising	8,000	5,150	6,000	1,955		1,955	6,000	6,000			
4158	Room Bookings Commission Charges	1,500	1,905	500	307		307	500	500			

4159	Functions Expense - Rufus Centre	10,000	6,115	<b>12,000</b>	11,240		11,240	13,200	<b>13,200</b>	▲1,200	▲10%
4705	Bad Debt	0	143								
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	373,019	436,888	<b>400,891</b>	263,541	6,825	<b>256,716</b>	<b>386,261</b>	<b>406,516</b>	▲5,625	▲1%

# Community Services Committee: Amenities & Public Realm

Flitwick Town Council **DRAFT** Budget 2026/27

Budget Manager: Stacie Lockey

			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26				NEXT Year: 2026/27			
			Budget	Actual	Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
<b>CORE SERVICES: 300</b>												
<b>Expenditure</b>	4001	Salaries & Wages	375,162	383,642	<b>406,942</b>	216,422		216,422	342,045	<b>236,478</b>	▼170,464	▼42%
	4002	Uniform	600	663	<b>600</b>	725		725	600	<b>750</b>	▲150	▲25%
	4005	Vehicle/Trucks Maintenance	600	522	<b>750</b>	678		678	600	<b>750</b>		
	4006	Fuel	3,500	3,521	<b>5,000</b>	2,303		2,303	3,600	<b>4,000</b>	▼1,000	▼20%
	4008	Vehicle/Trucks Insurance	3,000	2,740	<b>3,200</b>	3,221		3,221	3,221	<b>3,361</b>	▲161	▲5%
	4037	PublicR Contractor Costs	0	18	<b>0</b>	3,599		3,599	3,600	<b>17,000</b>	▲17,000	▲100%
	4051	Grants Permitted	5,000	5,000	<b>0</b>	0		0	0	<b>0</b>		
	4063	Vehicle/Trucks Repayments	8,850	8,788	<b>8,900</b>	5,859		5,859	8,844	<b>8,844</b>	▼56	▼1%
	4064	Town Centre CCTV	1,700	1,788	<b>2,800</b>	59		59	2,300	<b>2,800</b>		
	4103	FTC Internal Hire	3,000	1,383	<b>2,500</b>	276		276	2,500	<b>1,000</b>	▼1,500	▼60%
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>		401,412	408,065	<b>430,692</b>	233,142	0	<b>233,142</b>	<b>367,310</b>	<b>274,983</b>	▼155,709	▼36%

			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26				NEXT Year: 2026/27			
			Budget	Actual	Current Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
<b>BURIAL GROUNDS: 301</b>												
<b>Income</b>	1004	Burial Grounds Income	8,000	22,263	<b>5,000</b>	17,205		17,205	25,000	<b>15,000</b>	▲10,000	▲200%
	1013	CBC-Closed Burial Ground	1,000	1,000	<b>1,000</b>	1,000		0	1,000	<b>1,000</b>		
		<b>Total Income</b>	9,000	23,263	<b>6,000</b>		6,000	<b>17,205</b>	<b>26,000</b>	<b>16,000</b>	▲10,000	▲167%
<b>Expend.</b>	4015	Utility - Water	150	106	<b>150</b>	71		71	100	<b>100</b>	▼50	▼33%
	4068	Burial Ground Expenditure	750	862	<b>500</b>	1,005		1,005	3,500	<b>1,500</b>	▲1,000	▲200%
		<b>Total Expenditure</b>	900	968	<b>650</b>	1,076	1,726	<b>1,076</b>	<b>3,600</b>	<b>1,600</b>	▲950	▲146%

**ALLOTMENTS: 302**

			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26				NEXT Year: 2026/27			
			Budget	Actual	Current Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
Inc.	1005	Allotment Rents	4,500	4,738	4,500	710		710	4,500	4,500		
		<b>Total Income</b>	4,500	4,738	4,500	710	0	710	4,500	4,500		
Expenditure	4015	Utility - Water	500	313	500	2,299		2,299	1,820	1,850	▲1,350	▲270%
	4072	Allotments Maintenance	1,500	1,500	1,500	457		457	1,500	1,500		
	4088	Portaloo Hire	0	0	0	1,718	1,718	0	0	0		
	4103	FTC Internal Hire	350	241	350	101		101	350	350		
		<b>Total Expenditure</b>	2,350	2,054	2,350	4,575	1,718	2,857	3,670	3,700	▲1,350	▲57%

**LOCAL AMENITIES/TRACTOR STORE: 303**

			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26				NEXT Year: 2026/27			
			Budget	Actual	Current Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
Income	1014	Phone Mast (Station Road)	1,100	5,500	1,100	5,500		5,500	5,500	1,000	▼100	▼9%
	1070	Manor Park (Rural Paymt Agent)	0	1,851	0	888		888	888	0		
	1177	Grants & Donations Received	0	11,334	0	17,487		17,487	17,487	0		
	1191	MISC INCOME	0	14,215								
		<b>Total Income</b>	1,100	32,900	1,100	23,875	0	23,875	23,875	1,000	▼100	▼9%
Expenditure	4013	Utility - Electric	1,000	1,558	1,000	643		643	1,000	1,200	▲200	▲20%
	4015	Utility - Water	0	0	1,000	0		0	500	1,000		
	4059	Sundries								500	▲500	▲100%
	4078	Planting/Weeding	2,000	1,964	1,500	1,105		1,105	1,500	2,500	▲1,000	▲67%
	4084	Plant/Equip - PURCHASE	2,500	2,384	2,000	7,108	4,650	2,458	2,458	4,000	▲2,000	▲100%
	4085	Plant/Equip - MAINTENANCE	2,300	2,586	2,500	1,295		1,295	4,521	4,500	▲2,000	▲80%
	4110	Tree Maintenance	3,000	10,680	4,000	2,840		2,840	4,000	4,000		
	4118	Bins & Seats	300	0								
	4128	Waste Disposal	7,000	5,880	7,000	4,154		4,154	5,160	6,025	▼975	▼14%
	4132	Building Maintenance	500	482	1,000	1,171		1,171	1,019	1,000		
	4137	Water Dispenser Maintenance	300	0	300	0		0	300			
	4140	Maintenance Contracts	830	813	1,430	870		870	1,430	1,060	▼370	▼26%
	4700	Flitwick Manor Park	7,000	7,087	7,000	5,258		5,258	7,000	9,000	▲2,000	▲29%
	4701	Flit Valley Maintenance	0	0	500	0	0	0	500	500		
4702	Flitwick Nature Park	1,000	1,157	500	2,008	1,686	322	500	500			
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	27,730	34,591	29,730	26,452	6,336	20,116	29,888	35,785	▲6,055	▲20%	

**PLAY AREAS: 305**

			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26					NEXT Year: 2026/27		
			Budget	Actual	Current Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
Income	1010	Pitch / Field Hire			0	87		87	263	903	▲903	▲100%
	1012	Millennium Park Hire	1,500	3,200	1,700	1,190		1,190	1,190	2,510	▲810	▲48%
	<b>Total Income</b>		1,500	3,200	1,700	1,277	0	1,277	1,453	3,413	▲1,713	▲101%
Expenditure	4075	Play Areas Repairs & Maint.	8,000	32,713	8,000	11,952	9,994	1,958	8,000	8,000		
	4098	Skate Park Lighting	500	409	650	218		218	500	500	▼150	▼23%
	4111	Pitch Maintenance - Hinksley Rd								700	▲700	▲100%
	4122	Changing Rooms - Hinksley Rd	0	846	650	680		680	860	900	▲250	▲38%
	4861	Millennium Park Path S106	0	11,305								
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		8,500	45,273	9,300	12,850	9,994	2,856	9,360	10,100	▲800	▲9%	

**STREET LIGHTING: 306**

			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26					NEXT Year: 2026/27		
			Budget	Actual	Current Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
Expend.	4096	Electricity - Street Lights	7,000	7,513	7,609	3,362		3,362	7,609	7,650	▲41	▲1%
	4097	Street Lighting Maintenance	500	113	2,000	0		0	2,000	2,000		
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>		7,500	7,626	9,609	3,362	12,971	3,362	9,609	9,650	▲41	▲0.4%

# Community Services Committee: Community Engagement

Flitwick Town Council **DRAFT** Budget 2026/27

Budget Manager: Lisa Simpson

FOOD HUB: 310

			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26				NEXT Year: 2026/27			
			Budget	Actual	Current Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
Income	1148	Community Fridge Deliveries	0	0	192	180		180	300	240	▲48	▲25%
	1149	Sofea Collections			0	0		0	488	2,340	▲2,340	▲100%
	1177	Grants & Donations Received	0	0	0	44,589	26,583	18,006	18,006	0		
	<b>Total Income</b>		0	0	192	44,769	26,583	18,186	18,794	2,580	▲2,388	▲1244%
	4003	Travel Costs	0	0	1,200	184		184	184			
	4005	Vehicle/Trucks Maintenance	0	0	0	345		345	345	850	▲850	▲100%
	4008	Vehicle/Trucks Insurance	0	0	0	1,463	1,463	0	0	1,610	▲1,610	▲100%
	4012	Vehicle/Trucks PURCHASE	0	0	0	16,945		16,945	16,945			
	4071	FUEL - Community Fridge	0	0	400	0		0	0			
	4047	Training								450	▲450	▲100%
	4102	FTC Internal Rent	0	0	1,296	864		864	1,296	1,296		
	4103	FTC Internal Hire	0	0	0	0		0	0	250	▲250	▲100%
	4128	Waste Disposal	0	0	0	113		113	225	355	▲355	▲100%
	4619	General Community Fridge Costs	0	0	200	3,362	3,162	200	200	2,500	▲2,300	▲1150%
	4620	Sofea Collections			0	0		0	488	2,340	▲2,340	▲100%
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		0	0	3,096	23,276	4,625	18,651	19,683	9,651	▲6,555	▲212%	

THE HUB & YOUTH ACTIVITIES: 311

			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26				NEXT Year: 2026/27			
			Budget	Actual	Current Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
Income	1035	Youth Hub Hire	1,000	1,226	1,000	983		983	650	650	▼350	▼35%
	1041	Youth Activities	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	0	0	15,000		
	1177	Grants & Donations Received	0	1,000	0	0		0	0	0		
	<b>Total Income</b>		16,000	17,226	16,000	15,983	15,000	983	650	15,650	▼350	▼2%
Expenditure	4013	Utility - Electric	1,694	2,061	1,173	884		884	1,173	1,013	▼160	▼14%
	4015	Utility - Water	1,306	1,239	4,500	220		220	1,000	1,000	▼3,500	▼78%
	4016	Business Rates	1,700	1,921	2,113	1,921		1,921	1,921	2,367	▲254	▲12%
	4049	Youth Provision	59,000	58,950	52,250	39,188		39,188	52,250	52,250		
	4082	Youth Hub CCTV	1,000	443	1,000	0		0	500	500	▼500	▼50%
	4128	Waste Disposal	400	326	400	166		166	350	390	▼10	▼3%
	4132	Building Maintenance	2,000	1,588	1,500	863		863	1,500	1,500		
	4134	Cleaning Costs	1,815	2,055	1,850	897		897	1,600	1,600	▼250	▼14%
	4138	Equipment Purchase	1,000	924	500	311		311	500	500		
	4140	Maintenance Contracts	1,600	2,402	2,200	1,592		1,592	1,980	1,980	▼220	▼10%
	4151	Broadband Costs	0	0	550	338		338	548	504	▼46	▼8%
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		71,515	71,909	68,036	46,380	0	46,380	63,322	63,604	▼4,432	▼7%	

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: 312

			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26				NEXT Year: 2026/27			
			Budget	Actual	Current Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
Income	1036	Stitchers Donations	0	66								
	1120	KEEP FIT / Dance Fitness	2,800	3,416	3,200	1,838		1,838	2,775			
	1147	Forget Me Not Group	0	103								
	1177	Grants & Donations Received	0	29,592	0	13,770	13,770	0	0	0		
	1181	Cost of Living Monies Rec'd	0	356								
	1121	Health & Wellbeing						0	0	500	▲ 500	▲ 100%
	1122	Over 60s & Older People						0	0	3,150	▲ 3,150	▲ 100%
	1123	Inclusive & Disability						0	0	240	▲ 240	▲ 100%
	1124	Families & Children						0	0	240	▲ 240	▲ 100%
		<b>Total Income</b>	2,800	33,533	3,200	15,608	13,770	1,838	2,775	4,130	▲ 930	▲ 29%
Expenditure	4001	Salaries & Wages								156,490	▲ 156,490	▲ 100%
	4103	FTC Internal Hire	11,000	7,460	11,500	1,775		1,775	11,500	6,000	▼ 5,500	▼ 48%
	4554	Stitchers	195	258	200	100		100	150			
	4558	Keep Fit / Dance Fitness	2,000	1,525	1,850	875		875	1,850			
	4606	Cost of Living Initiative	4,000	4,165	500	1,262	762	500	500			
	4613	Recycle / Reuse	130	92	130	0		0	0			
	4614	Proud AF Initiative	1,250	527	1,500	30		30	30	1,500		
	4617	Flitwick Living History	500	7,856	0	17,368	17,368	0	0	0		
	4625	Forget Me Not Group	500	149	850	96		96	300			
	4626	Health & Wellbeing						0	0	1,685	▲ 1,685	▲ 100%
	4627	Over 60s & Older People						0	0	2,450	▲ 2,450	▲ 100%
	4628	Inclusive & Disability						0	0	2,710	▲ 2,710	▲ 100%
4629	Families & Children						0	0	200	▲ 200	▲ 100%	
		<b>Total Expenditure</b>	19,575	22,032	16,530	21,506	18,130	3,376	14,330	171,035	▲ 154,505	▲ 935%

COMMUNITY EVENTS: 313

			LAST Year: 2024/25		CURRENT Year: 2025/26					NEXT Year: 2026/27		
			Budget	Actual	Current Budget	YTD Spend Mth 8	Linked EMR	Actual YTD Spend Mth 8	Year End Projection	PROPOSED Budget	£ +/-	% +/-
Income	1127	Flitwick Fun Day	3,000	4,838	4,500	6,855		6,855	6,855	4,500		
	1142	Easter Egg Trail	500	0	0	350		350	350	350	▲350	▲100%
	1165	Christmas Lights EVENT	150	119	285	570		570	600	600	▲315	▲111%
	1169	Summer Programme	0	3,797	0	0		0	0	0		
	<b>Total Income</b>		3,650	8,754	4,785	7,775	0	7,775	7,805	5,450	▲665	▲14%
Expenditure	4043	Remembrance Event	700	609	890	714		714	890	890		
	4200	Christmas Lights Installation	19,475	18,699	20,475	16,525		16,525	20,475	20,475		
	4204	Flitwick TownSq Christmas Tree	1,375	1,350	1,500	1,370		1,370	1,370	1,500		
	4211	Easter Egg Trail	0	0	0	350		350	350	350	▲350	▲100%
	4213	Summer Programme	1,000	2,749	1,400	1,522	118	1,404	1,397	570	▼830	▼59%
	4540	Christmas Lights EVENT	6,250	4,713	5,201	1,294		1,294	5,200	5,200	▼01	▼0%
	4551	Flitwick Fun Day	17,537	17,107	16,000	14,147		14,147	14,147	16,000		
	4618	Community General Costs	2,500	1,055	2,000	202		202	1,500	7,150	▲5,150	▲258%
	4541	Festival of Lights								5,000	▲5,000	▲100%
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		48,837	46,282	47,466	36,124	118	36,006	45,329	57,135	▲9,669	▲20%	



Flitwick Town Council

Report to Town Council on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025

## Use of the Stocksfield Room by Flitwick Community Fridge

### 1. Introduction

Launched in January 2023, Flitwick Community Fridge is a council-supported, community-led project operating from The Rufus Centre. Since moving into a dedicated space in August 2024, the service has continued to grow in scale and complexity, particularly following the introduction of the Supported Tier in August 2025.

The purpose of this paper is to explain why the current accommodation is no longer suitable, to set out the case for using the Stocksfield Room, and to enable Full Council to consider a clear and informed resolution.

### 2. About the project

Flitwick Community Fridge exists to prevent good surplus food from going to waste and to support residents affected by the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. It operates as a membership-based service rather than a traditional food bank and is open to everyone. There are currently 480 active member households, with 185 households registered for enhanced support through the Supported Tier.

In 2025, the service redistributed 78.5 tonnes of food, equivalent to approximately 174,000 meals, and avoided around 53 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e by diverting food from waste. The service recorded at least 16,500 visits in 2025. On a busy day, more than 50 people may pass through the Food Hub.

The service is delivered by a large volunteer workforce. In 2025, volunteers contributed 5,539 hours. The service operates its own electric van, funded by the Flitwick Town Mayor's Charity, and undertakes at least three food collections each day.

The Community Fridge operates with established food safety procedures, safeguarding policies, and governance arrangements, overseen by the Council's Community Services Team. At its current scale, it should be regarded as core local social infrastructure, and our recent win of £30k from the UK Household Support Fund demonstrates this.

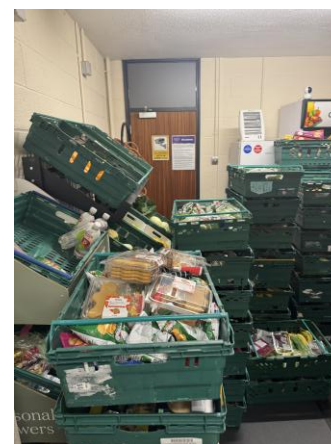
### 3. Problem statement: Lack of operational space

The Community Fridge has outgrown the space it currently occupies. What began as a modest service in the foyer of The Rufus Centre has developed into a high-volume, well-used project responding to real and growing need. The physical space available has not been expanded to meet the level of activity.

The total space currently allocated to the Community Fridge is approximately 22 m<sup>2</sup>, split roughly evenly between a small public-facing area and a stockroom. In practice, this leaves around 11 m<sup>2</sup> of usable public space.

At its current scale, the lack of space creates several persistent problems:

- Insufficient storage capacity for fluctuating volumes of surplus food.
- Inability to accommodate large or unexpected collections, for example, 18 trays of apples weighing around 220 kg, which recently had to be left in the van overnight.
- Unsafe and congested working conditions for volunteers.
- Damage to fridges and freezers due to restricted circulation space.
- Queueing outside during busy sessions undermines dignity and accessibility.
- No level access, with two recorded accidents involving the step and ramp in the past six months.



The service has already operated from the Stocksfield Room on Wednesdays for the weekly dedicated supported tier session and over the Christmas and New Year period. This was transformative, allowing safer working, better flow, improved storage, and a more appropriate experience for service users. A trial use of the Stocksfield Room during January and February is now underway.



*Photos showing the 'top up tables' set out for the supported tier during the current trial use of the Stocksfield Room.*

#### Consequences of not increasing space allocation

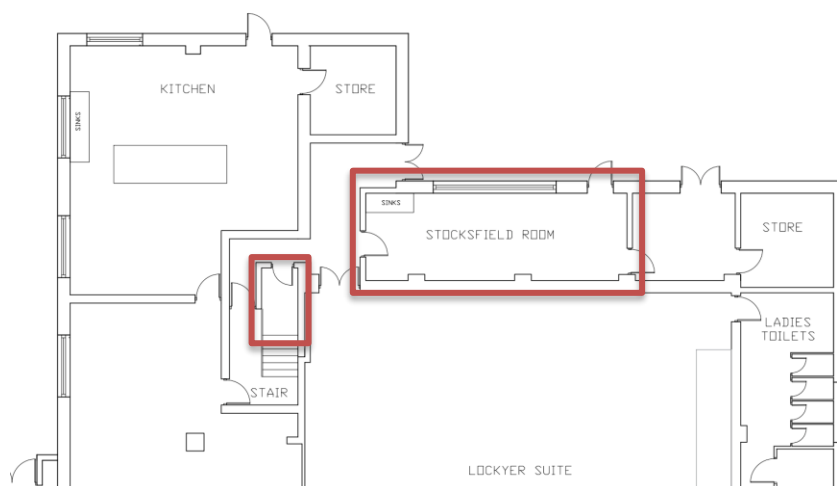
If the space allocation remains unchanged, the Community Fridge will be forced to make changes that materially reduce its effectiveness. In practical terms, this means limiting the volume of food accepted from charity and supermarket partners, seeking alternative storage

elsewhere in the building, which is already constrained and would displace other activity, and reducing fridge or freezer capacity to create minimal additional space.

Doing nothing is not a neutral option. These measures would represent a step backwards for a service that has grown in response to need.

#### 4. Proposal

It is proposed that the Stocksfield Room and under stair cupboard outside the room at The Rufus Centre are permanently allocated to the Flitwick Community Fridge.



This allocation responds directly to the lack of space set out in Section 3 and enables the service to operate safely, accessibly, and with dignity. The change expands the Community Fridge's usable public-facing space by approximately 33 m<sup>2</sup>, bringing the accommodation into line with the scale and maturity of the service.

Community groups previously using the Stocksfield Room have been relocated to The Hub or other rooms within The Rufus Centre, making better use of an under-utilised community building and ensuring no loss of community activity.

A separate report will be brought to Council in February setting out the capital works and funding arrangements required to support this allocation, including a request to the Flitwick Town Mayor's Charity.

#### Access and use of space

During opening hours, service users will access the Stocksfield Room via level routes through the Café or the internal corridor. Outside of opening hours, access for service users will be via the fire door directly into the Stocksfield Room. Volunteer access and food collections will continue via the existing external doors, which are due to be replaced shortly.

- The Stocksfield Room will be used as a multi-purpose Community Fridge space, supporting queuing and waiting, meet-and-greet, food selection, Supported Tier sessions, and partner activity where appropriate.
- The two existing rooms currently used by the Community Fridge will no longer be used for public access. They will instead be retained for storage, food preparation, and deliveries only, reducing congestion and improving safety.

- The store cupboard under the stairs adjacent to the Stocksfield Room will be permanently allocated to the Community Fridge for the storage of ambient food, toiletries, and household items.

### **Alarm system and access**

The Stocksfield Room will be removed from the building alarm system, enabling unrestricted volunteer access in line with the realities of a volunteer-run service with variable delivery and collection times.

### **5. Impact on existing community groups and the traded service**

The permanent allocation of the Stocksfield Room to the Community Fridge has implications for how space is used within The Rufus Centre. These impacts have been considered and actively managed. Based on the usage of Stocksfield in the year 2025 the commercial value of hiring the space was £1,850.

Community groups that previously used the Stocksfield Room have not been discontinued as a result of this change. A number of groups have already been temporarily relocated to The Hub, making better use of an underutilised community building, or accommodated in alternative rooms within The Rufus Centre. This has allowed community activity to continue without loss of provision while we have tested out the use of the space.

Attempts were made to share use of the Stocksfield Room between the Community Fridge and other groups. In practice, this proved unworkable due to the scale, frequency, and operational requirements of the service. Shared use created friction, increased set-up and clear-down time, and generated additional workload for officers and volunteers. A dedicated allocation has therefore provided greater clarity and stability for all users of the building.

The Stocksfield Room is primarily designated for community use. While it has occasionally been used by the traded service as part of Lockyer Suite bookings or during periods of full occupancy, removing it from traded availability does carry an opportunity cost.

Meeting room occupancy at The Rufus Centre has been declining over the past year due to wider economic conditions. There is currently spare capacity within the building, meaning that most bookings can be accommodated elsewhere without material impact on the traded service.

Fundamentally, the Council recognises the overall value of the Community Fridge to the community, both in terms of supporting residents through the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and reducing environmental impact. Any opportunity cost associated with this decision must therefore be considered in the context of the wider social and environmental benefit delivered by the service.

Overall, while the change reduces flexibility in one part of the estate, it enables more effective use of other council assets and supports the continued delivery of a high-impact community service.

### **6. Benefits**

The proposed allocation of the Stocksfield Room delivers a number of clear and proportionate benefits, both in addressing the immediate space constraints and in supporting the longer-term sustainability of the Community Fridge service.

### **Safer and more compliant operation**

Expanding the Community Fridge's usable public-facing space by approximately 33 m<sup>2</sup> significantly reduces congestion and improves circulation. This directly addresses health and safety risks associated with manual handling, unsafe storage, restricted movement, and damage to refrigeration equipment caused by operating in an overly constrained space.

### **Improved accessibility and dignity for service users**

The proposed arrangements provide fully compliant level access and enable indoor queuing and waiting. This removes the need for service users to wait outside in adverse weather and materially improves accessibility and dignity, particularly for people with mobility issues, health conditions, or caring responsibilities during busy Supported Tier sessions.

### **More sustainable service delivery**

The additional space allows the Community Fridge to operate in line with its current scale and complexity, accommodating fluctuating food volumes and supported interactions without reliance on unsafe or temporary workarounds. Separating public-facing activity from storage, preparation, and logistics creates a more resilient and sustainable operating model.

### **Better support for volunteers and partners**

Improved layout and working conditions reduce risk for volunteers and support retention within a volunteer-run service. The additional space also makes it possible to continue and develop on-site collaboration with partners such as Citizens Advice and Bedford Credit Union, enabling residents to access advice, debt support, and financial inclusion services alongside food support.

### **Supporting the Council's cost-of-living priorities**

The Council has made a clear and ongoing commitment to supporting residents through the cost-of-living crisis. Enabling the Community Fridge to operate safely, accessibly, and at scale directly supports this commitment by providing practical, dignified assistance to residents while also reducing food waste and strengthening local resilience.

## **7. Financial implications**

This paper does not seek approval for capital expenditure.

A separate report will be brought to Council in February, setting out the capital works required to fit out the Stocksfield Room, including works necessary to support safe operation and removal of the room from the building alarm system. In parallel, a funding request will be made to the Flitwick Town Mayor's Charity to support elements of the capital works. All capital costs and funding sources will be presented transparently for decision at that time.

Removing the Stocksfield Room from traded availability does carry an opportunity cost. The room is, however, primarily designated for community use, and meeting room occupancy at The Rufus Centre has been declining over the past year due to wider economic conditions. There is currently spare capacity elsewhere in the building, allowing most bookings to be accommodated without a material impact on traded income.

Fundamentally, the Council recognises the overall value of the Community Fridge to the community, both in terms of supporting residents through the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and reducing environmental impact. Any opportunity cost associated with this decision must

therefore be considered in the context of the wider social, environmental, and community benefits delivered by the service.

The proposal also mitigates ongoing and escalating financial risk associated with the current accommodation, including potential liability arising from health and safety incidents, damage to refrigeration equipment caused by insufficient circulation space, food safety risks linked to inadequate storage capacity, and the risk of service disruption if the current space becomes untenable.

Addressing these issues now reduces the likelihood of higher costs, unplanned intervention, or service failure in the future.

## **8. Recommendation**

That Full Council:

1. Approves the permanent allocation of the Stocksfield Room at The Rufus Centre to the Flitwick Community Fridge service as its sole public-facing operational space.
2. Approves the permanent allocation of the under-stairs storage cupboard adjacent to the Stocksfield Room to the Flitwick Community Fridge service for the storage of ambient food, toiletries, and household essentials.
3. Notes that a separate report will be brought to Council in February, setting out the capital works and funding arrangements required to support further service development and effective use of the space.

## Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2025

31st March 2025

31st March 2026

Net Value	Fixed Assets	Cost of Asset	Depreciation	Net Value
<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	<b>Long Term Assets</b>			
<u>0</u>			<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	<b>Current Assets</b>			
92,680	DEBTORS	18,256		
0	SUNDRY DEBTORS	805		
5,599	Burial Grounds & Cemeteries	0		
19,462	VAT Control Account	7,340		
28,835	PREPAYMENTS	16,948		
8,166	Mthly Business Prepays	18,645		
53,989	PrePayment for Land Sale	68,932		
4,532	Accrued Income	0		
3,298	Stock Held - Bar	3,569		
4,346	Stock Held - Food	4,506		
5,569	Current Bank Ac Barclays 009	5,000		
42,231	Barclays Business Reserve 106	225,390		
0	Prepayment Cards: Equals	1,311		
1,000	PDQ Account	956		
46,550	Tenants Deposits Account	61,241		
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	957,595		
<u>1,450,647</u>			<u>1,391,791</u>	
	<b>1,450,647 Total Assets</b>			<b>1,391,791</b>
	<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
15,997	DEBTORS Control: Functions	8,618		
0	Barclaycard	1,365		
3,441	CREDITORS	70,240		
7,943	ACCRUAL - Loan Interest (YE)	0		

## Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2025

31st March 2025

31st March 2026

12,119	ACCRUALS (YE)	0
17,763	PAYE/NIC Due	17,088
10,568	LGPS Pension Control	9,148
3,128	NEST Pension Control	3,475
6,400	Income in Advance (YE)	0
0	Ticket Sales Return Due (NT)	1,701
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	60,744
500	Refundable Deposits: Functions	450
1,079	Barclaycard Year End balance	0
<u>138,217</u>		<u>172,829</u>
<b>1,312,429</b>	<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>	<b>1,218,961</b>
	<b>Long Term Liabilities</b>	
<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>
<b>1,312,429</b>	<b>Total Assets Less Long Term Liabilities</b>	<b>1,218,961</b>
	<b>Represented By</b>	
397,766	GENERAL RESERVE	386,352
914,664	Earmarked Reserves	832,609
<u>1,312,429</u>		<u>1,218,961</u>

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

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

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

**FTC Projects Review 2025-26**

(315)	Central Project Fund	Opening Balance	£	<b>92,164</b>	
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		£	186,576	25/26 temporary balance of EMR 315
	LESS Projects Overspend from CPF		£	-	
	PLUS Projects Underspend		£	4,665	
(315)	Central Project Fund YTD Funds Available		£	<b>0</b>	Working balance (315) less 2nd precept instal (Oct)= Complete

Accepted Project budget variance at 5%.

Last Updated: **31 December 2025**

**2025-26 Capital Projects Funding**

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).

	PROJECT Details					Project Details								24/25 FUNDING Details				Comments		
	Project Code	N/C	Project Description	Committee	Minute Ref	Project Start Date	Whole Project Funds Committed	Previous Year's Project Spend	25/26 Opening Project Balance	GRANT Received	25/26 Project Spend to Date	Overspend Funded by CPF/Ops Reserve	Underspend Returned to CPF	Project Commitment Remaining YTD		TOTAL Approved Grants/ Funding	Prev Yrs Funds Received		25/26 Funds Received	Grants/ Funding Budget Remaining
Ongoing Projects	800	4212 110	Proj - Nature Park	Community	Del. Auth	Apr-21	£ 3,000	£ 13,490	£ -	£ -	£ -			£ -	0%	£ 283,385	£ 10,490	£ -	£ 272,895	S106 remaining: Phase 1 E7,106,89, Phase 2 E274,728 & Plans E1,550 (CBC to be invoiced for S106 once works completed). SL 7/9/22. Planning Consultant RCF approved July 23. Jan 25 : CPF Fund & 24/25 Grant Instal complete. Outstanding approved grant fund (E272,895) not yet claimed. No further CPF spend committed. E10,490 received on ETCR584 June 2024.
	801	4819 110	Proj - Flitwick Town Sq Defib	Community	5213d	Feb-22	£ 1,770	£ 1,048	£ 722	£ -	£ 292			£ 430	24%					Defib Purchased and installed March 2024. Further costs anticipated due to possible relocation fees.
	802	4823 110	Proj - Heritage Website	Corporate	753a 5252a	Jun-23	£ 3,800	£ -	£ 3,800	£ -	£ 1,580			£ 2,220	58%					
	803	4837 110	Proj - Rural Match Fund Benches	Community	5226e	Mar-22	£ 2,000	£ -	£ 2,000	£ -	£ -			£ 2,000	100%					Resolution made at Council March 2022 confirmed March 2023 to be match funded by CBC - amount TBC
	808	4853 110	Proj - Nature Park Planning	Community	5622c	Apr-24	£ 23,673	£ 21,859	£ 1,814	£ -	£ 1,814			£ -	0%					PROJECT COMPLETED & CLOSED - Oct 25
	814	4859 110	Proj - Skate Park Extension	Community	5681gii	Jul-24	£ 9,600	£ 9,600	£ 36,100	£ -	£ 36,100			£ -	0%	£ 64,900	£ 64,900	£ -	£ -	E38,400 match funding from CBC UKSPF Community Grant E26,500 from CBC S106 Funding PROJECT COMPLETED & CLOSED - June 25
NEW Projects: 2025/26	106		3 Station Road Project	FTC			£ 137,476		£ 142,140											Please refer to full project schedule for details
			Historic Project Refund									£ 4,665								Refund from UKPN (Chq rec'd, paying in reference 201765) for historic project dated 25/10/2022 in relation to feeder pillar installation credited to CPF. Refurbishment works to Tractor Store and Play Areas (Fir Tree Close Park & Station Rd Park) funded by: E54,059.80 CBC S106 invoice FTC9193 E12,000 Ops Reserves EMR 319 transfer (Journal 4263). PROJECT COMPLETED & CLOSED - Dec 25
	817	4862 110	Proj - Public Realm Improvements	Community	Del Auth	Jul-25	£ -		£ -	£ 66,060	£ 66,060			£ -	0%	£ 54,060	£ 12,000	£ 66,060	£ 66,060	Refurbishment works to Room 21 of Rufus Centre funded by E6,445 from Ops Reserves EMR 319 transfer (Journal 4303). PROJECT COMPLETED & CLOSED - Nov 25
	818	4863 110	Proj - Room 21 Refurb	Business	5886c	Sep-25	£ -		£ -	£ 6,445	£ 6,717	£ 272		£ -	0%			£ 6,445	£ 6,445	Funded by E5,000 from Ops Reserves EMR 319 transfer (Journal 4462). PROJECT COMPLETED & CLOSED - Nov 25
	819	4864 110	Proj - Community Fridge Door	Business	5934c	Dec-25	£ -		£ -	£ 5,000				£ 5,000	0%			£ 5,000	£ 5,000	Funded by E16,250 from Ops Reserves EMR 319 transfer (Journal 4463).
	820	4865 110	Proj - Manor Park Carriageway	Community	5934h	Dec-25	£ -		£ -	£ 16,250				£ 16,250	0%			£ 16,250	£ 16,250	



**PEOPLE & PLACES**  
*Insight*

**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

**TOWN BENCHMARKING REPORT**

**DECEMBER 2025**

**Mike King**

**Director**

**People and Places Insight**

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## INTRODUCTION

People and Places Insight strive to improve the performance of localities through a series of well-used and advanced Town Centre Services. We have worked with National Government, Business Improvement Districts, Local Authorities, Town Councils, Community and Town Partnerships and Retailers on a wide range of projects including Town Benchmarking, First Time Visitor Reviews, Signage and Wayfinding, Footfall Counts, Event Evaluation, Car Parking Studies, Disability Access Audits and Neighbourhood Planning.

In 2025, Central Bedfordshire Council commissioned People and Places Insight to undertake a Benchmarking Review to measure town centre performance in the following towns:

- Ampthill
- Biggleswade
- Dunstable
- Flitwick
- Houghton Regis
- Leighton Buzzard
- Potton
- Sandy
- Shefford

Previous evaluations in the town centre have taken place by People and Places Insight in 2019 and 2021. The detailed results of the Benchmarking Review can be found in the following report with a breakdown for the towns alongside each other in each KPI and against the National Small Towns average.



## METHODOLOGY

### THE SYSTEM

The People and Places Insight Town Benchmarking System has been developed to address the real issues of how to understand measure, evaluate and ultimately improve town centres. The approach offers a simple way of capturing data on Key Performance Indicators selected by those involved in Town Centre management. By having the tools to measure performance, strategic decision-making is both encouraged and improved. By considering performance, forward strategies and action planning can be more focused and effective.

The Benchmarking system is divided into two sections:

- National Large Towns; consisting of those localities with more than 300 units
- National Small Towns; consisting of those localities with less than 300 units

Towns, depending on their size, contribute to either the Large or Small-Town analysis. The defined town centre areas of the Central Bedfordshire Council Towns are as follows:

TOWN	NO. OF GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL UNITS
<b>Ampthill</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Biggleswade</b>	<b>176</b>
<b>Dunstable</b>	<b>267</b>
<b>Flitwick</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Houghton Regis</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Leighton Buzzard</b>	<b>228</b>
<b>Potton</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Sandy</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Shefford</b>	<b>49</b>

The National figure is the average for all the towns which participated in Benchmarking from July 2022 to January 2024.



## THE REPORTS

The People and Places Insight Town Benchmarking report provides statistical analysis of each of the KPIs. The reports are used by a variety of key stakeholders such as Local Authorities, Town and Parish Councils, Business Improvement Districts, Local Partnerships, Retailers and Universities to assist with;

- Measuring High Street regeneration projects
- Developing Town Centre regeneration
- Measuring the impact of events and festivals against normal trading conditions
- Providing an evidence base for funding applications
- Providing an evidence base for car parking initiatives
- Providing an evidence base for Neighbourhood Planning
- Supporting Business Improvement Districts
- Supporting Community groups

Each KPI in a typical Benchmarking Review is collected in a standardized manner as highlighted in the Table below.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY
KPI: COMMERCIAL OFFER; USE CLASS	Visual Survey of ground floor units in defined Town Centre area.
KPI: COMMERCIAL OFFER; COMPARISON/CONVENIENCE	Visual Survey of A1 ground floor units in defined Town Centre area.
KPI: COMMERCIAL OFFER: TRADER TYPE	Visual Survey of A1 ground floor units in defined Town Centre area.
KPI: COMMERCIAL OFFER: VACANCY RATES	Visual Survey of A1 ground floor units in defined Town Centre area.
KPI: MARKETS	Visual Survey of total number of traders on a Weekday Market
KPI: FOOTFALL	Footfall Survey on a Busy Weekday, Quiet Weekday and Saturday from 10.00-13.00 on each day
KPI: CAR PARKING	Audit of total number of spaces and vacancy rate on a Busy Weekday, Quiet Weekday and Saturday between 11.00-14.00
KPI: BUSINESS CONFIDENCE SURVEYS	Paper Based Surveys
KPI: TOWN CENTRE USER SURVEYS	Face to face/ Paper Based/ Online
KPI: SHOPPERS ORIGIN SURVEYS	Paper Based Surveys



## KEY FINDINGS

### KPI: GROUND FLOOR; USE CLASS

It is important to understand the scale and variety of the “offer” throughout the town. A variety of shops and a wide range of services in a town are important to its ability to remain competitive and continue to attract customers. Sustaining a balance between the different aspects of buying and selling goods and services ensures that the local population (and visitors from outside) can spend time and money there, keeping the generated wealth of the town within the local economy. Importantly, it forms the employment base for a substantial proportion of the community too, helping to retain the population rather than lose it to nearby towns and cities.

The Use Class Order from 1987 was updated into larger segments in 2020. Due to the more in-depth breakdown provision in 1987, People and Places Insight Limited continue to deploy these Use Class classifications.

The following table provides a detailed breakdown of each of the Use Classes:

CLASS	TYPE OF USE	CLASS INCLUDES
A1	Shops	Shops, retail warehouses, hairdressers, travel and ticket agencies, post offices (but not sorting offices), pet shops, sandwich bars, showrooms, domestic hire shops, dry cleaners, funeral directors and internet cafes.
A2	Financial and Professional Services	Financial services such as banks and building societies, professional services (other than health and medical services) including estate and employment agencies and betting offices.
A3	Restaurants and Cafes	Food and drink for consumption on the premises- restaurants, snack bars and cafes.
A4	Drinking Establishments	Public houses, wine bars or other drinking establishments (but not nightclubs).
A5	Hot Food Takeaways	Sale of hot food for consumption off the premises.
B1	Businesses	Offices (other than those that fall within A2) research and development of products and processes, light industry appropriate in a residential area.
B2	General Industrial	General Industrial.
B8	Storage and Distribution	Warehouses, includes open air storage.
C1	Hotels	Hotels, boarding and guest houses where no significant element of care is provided (excludes hostels).
C2	Residential Institutions	Residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres.



C2A	Secure Residential Institution	Use for a provision of secure residential accommodation, including use as a prison, young offenders' institution, detention centre, secure training centre, custody centre, short-term holding centre, secure hospital, secure local authority accommodation or use as a military barracks.
D1	Non-Residential Institutions	Clinics, health centres, crèches, day centres, schools, art galleries (other than for sale or hire), museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court. Non-residential education and training centres.
D2	Assembly and Leisure	Cinemas, music and concert halls, bingo and dance halls (but not nightclubs), swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums or area for indoor or outdoor sports and recreations (except for motor sports, or where firearms are used).
SG	Sui Generis ("unique" establishments)	Theatres, hostels providing no significant element of care, scrap yards. Petrol filling stations and shops selling and/ or displaying motor vehicles. Retail warehouse clubs, nightclubs, laundrettes, taxi business, amusement centres, casinos, haulage yards, transport depots, veterinary clinics, dog parlours, tanning and beauty salons and tattoo studios.

The following table provides a detailed analysis of the offering in the town centres by Use Class.



CLASS	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
A1	51	46	38	49	33	37	49	35	35	32
A2	13	11	10	11	17	2	8	5	5	11
A3	9	18	9	11	10	12	12	5	12	9
A4	4	6	5	3	2	2	5	8	4	9
A5	4	3	7	6	7	10	5	5	7	1
B1	3	6	6	2	7	15	3	13	4	11
B2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
B8	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
C1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C2	0	0	1	1	0	5	0	0	0	0
C2A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
D1	7	1	9	5	12	7	7	13	12	11
D2	1	3	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	2
SG	5	5	12	12	9	10	10	8	11	6



## KPI: GROUND FLOOR UNITS; COMPARISON VERSUS CONVENIENCE

A1 Retail units selling goods can be split into two different types, Comparison and Convenience.

**Convenience goods - Low-cost, everyday items that consumers are unlikely to travel far to purchase.**

Defined as:

- Food and non-alcoholic drinks
- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Newspapers and magazines
- Non-durable household goods

**Comparison goods - All other retail goods.**

Defined as:

- Books
- Clothing and Footwear
- Furniture, floor coverings and household textiles
- Audio-visual equipment and other durable goods
- Hardware and DIY supplies
- Chemists' goods
- Jewellery, watches and clocks
- Bicycles
- Recreational and Miscellaneous goods
- Hairdressing

The presence of a variety of shops in a town centre is important to its ability to remain competitive and continue to attract customers. A balance of both comparison and convenience retail units is therefore ideal in terms of encouraging visitors / potential customers.

The following table provides a percentage of the A1 Shops which sell mainly Comparison Goods/ Convenience Goods.

	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
COM	82	86	76	72	79	60	80	57	76	67
CONV	18	14	24	28	21	40	20	44	24	33



## KPI: GROUND FLOOR UNITS; TRADER TYPES

The vitality of a Town Centre depends highly on the quality and variety of retailers represented. A sustainable balance of key attractors and multiple names alongside local independent shops is likely to have the greatest positive impact on the vitality and viability of a town.

Multiple traders have a countrywide presence and are well known household names. Regional shops are identified as those with stores/units in several towns throughout one geographical region only and Independent shops are identified as those that are specific to a particular town. The following table provides a percentage of the A1 Shops which are Key Attractors, Multiples, Regional and Independent to the locality.

	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
KEY ATT.	8	3	0	5	11	0	8	7	0	0
MULTIPLE	21	8	23	25	21	47	18	21	21	27
REGIONAL	10	19	8	6	16	7	5	14	15	13
INDEPENDENT	61	70	69	64	53	47	70	57	65	60

## KPI: GROUND FLOOR UNITS; VACANCY RATES

Vacant units are an important indicator of the vitality and viability of a Town Centre. The presence of vacant units over a period of time can identify potential weaknesses, whether due to locational criteria, high rent levels or strong competition from other centres.

The following table provides the percentage figure of vacant units from the total number of commercial units.

	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
VACANCY	9	8	7	11	5	9	9	2	8	4



## KPI: MARKETS

Good quality markets provide competition and choice for consumers. A busy and well-used street market can therefore be a good indicator of the vitality of a town centre. Conversely, if a market is in decline (e.g., empty pitches reducing numbers), it can be an indication of potential weaknesses in the town centre e.g., a lack of footfall customers due to an inappropriate retail mix or increased competitor activity. Street markets can also generate substantial benefits for the local economy. Markets can also provide a local mechanism for a diverse range of local enterprises to start, flourish and grow, adding to the sustainable mix of shops services on offer throughout the town.

The following table provides the average number of market traders at the main regular (at least once a fortnight) weekday market within the locality.

	NAT SMALL TOWNS	AMPT 2025	BIGG 2025	DUNST 2025	FLIT 2025	HR 2025	LB 2025	POTT 2025	SANDY 2025	SHEFF. 2025
TRADERS	15	8	2	N/A**	12	N/A	18	N/A	N/A	2

\*\* Dunstable no longer has a specific town centre Weekly Market Day but there are fortnightly Middle Row Markets throughout the year and additional Markets at Christmas. The Middle Row Markets attract on average 30 Traders, double the National Small Towns figure.



## KPI: FOOTFALL

The arrival and movement of people, whether as residents, workers, visitors or a shopper is vital to the success of most businesses within the Town Centre. Measuring passing people in a consistent manner in the same place, at the same time builds up a picture of the town, its traders and their relative success over the weeks and months.

Benchmarking footfall is conducted on weekdays in specific locations for a set period, between 10.00am to 1.00pm, counting the people passing in both directions through a fixed point (e.g., an imaginary line across the road) for a precise ten minutes in every hour (e.g., 10.00–10.10am, 11.20am-11.30am, 12.40pm-12.50pm). Aside from the above basic rules are applied to the process:

- An accurate stopwatch and a hand operated mechanical counter are used
- If a person walks pass more than once they are included in the count each time they pass through the 'line'
- Children under 12 are not included in the count
- Footfall counts are not conducted in weather conditions which will limit the number of town centre users i.e., heavy rain, snow

	NAT SMALL TOWNS	AMPT 2025	BIGG 2025	DUNST 2025	FLIT 2025	HR 2025	LB 2025	POTT 2025	SANDY 2025	SHEFF. 2025
MARKET/BUSY DAY	110	81	128	159	34	57	335	56	59	66
NON- MARKET/QUIET DAY	105	75	154	100	27	44	179	42	40	43
SATURDAY	N/A	137	226	134	31	51	370	66	59	82



## KPI: CAR PARKING

A large proportion of spending customers in a Town Centre come by car. In the rural setting, the car tends to be an essential tool, used by both those who come to spend and those who come to work. The provision of adequate and convenient car parking facilities is therefore a key element of town centre vitality. An acceptable number of available spaces with a regular, quick turn-over for shoppers are the ideal while adequate longer stay, less convenient spaces for local owners/ workers and visitors must be considered too.

Within the town on street and off parking within the core commercial offering were identified as being integral to the study. The following tables provide a summary of the Car Parking offering broken down into;

- Overall percentage of short stay, long stay and disabled spaces
- Overall percentage of vacant spaces on a Market Day, Non-Market Day and Saturday

	NAT SMALL TOWN (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF. 2025 (%)
SHORT STAY SPACES: (4 HOURS AND UNDER)	48	56	59	39	41	81	24	89	46	80
LONG STAY SPACES: (OVER 4 HOURS)	47	38	36	54	55	10	69	3	51	16
DISABLED SPACES:	5	6	5	7	4	9	7	8	3	4
NOT REGISTERED	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
VACANT SPACES ON A MARKET/BUSY DAY:	27	7	38	45	30	51	16	16	29	22
VACANT SPACES ON A NON- MARKET/QUIET DAY:	33	9	40	49	35	51	42	20	39	27
VACANT SPACES ON A SATURDAY	N/A	9	37	37	44	47	38	27	47	15



## KPI: BUSINESS CONFIDENCE SURVEY

With regards to the ‘business confidence’ by establishing the trading conditions of Town Centre businesses, stakeholders can focus their regeneration efforts on building on existing strengths and addressing any specific issues.

The following percentage figures are based on the returned Business Confidence Surveys.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF YOUR BUSINESS?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
RETAIL	N/A	25	36	69	42	50	63	N/A	64	N/A
FIN./PROF. SERVICES	N/A	0	27	12	21	0	21	N/A	18	N/A
PUBLIC SECTOR	N/A	0	9	0	8	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
FOOD AND DRINK	N/A	50	27	12	17	50	17	N/A	9	N/A
ACCOMMODATION	N/A	0	0	6	0	0	0	N/A	9	N/A
OTHER	N/A	25	0	0	13	0	0	N/A	0	N/A

WHAT TYPE OF BUSINESS ARE YOU?	NAT SMALL TOWN (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
MULTIPLE	11	0	18	7	0	25	17	N/A	0	N/A
REGIONAL	6	0	9	21	0	25	12	N/A	18	N/A
INDEPENDENT	83	100	73	71	100	50	71	N/A	82	N/A

HOW LONG HAS YOUR BUSINESS BEEN BASED IN THE TOWN?	NAT SMALL TOWN (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
LESS THAN A YEAR	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
ONE TO FIVE YEARS	20	0	18	19	0	25	8	N/A	18	N/A
SIX TO TEN YEARS	13	50	9	0	0	0	13	N/A	0	N/A
MORE THAN TEN YEARS	59	50	73	81	100	75	79	N/A	82	N/A



COMPARED TO LAST YEAR HAS YOUR TURNOVER?	NAT SMALL TOWN (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
INCREASED	39	0	18	31	20	100	35	N/A	40	N/A
STAYED THE SAME	27	50	64	19	20	0	22	N/A	40	N/A
DECREASED	34	50	18	50	60	0	43	N/A	20	N/A
COMPARED TO LAST YEAR HAS YOUR PROFITABILITY?	NAT SMALL TOWN (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
INCREASED	30	0	27	19	20	100	17	N/A	40	N/A
STAYED THE SAME	32	50	36	12	20	0	22	N/A	40	N/A
DECREASED	39	50	36	69	60	0	61	N/A	20	N/A
OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS DO YOU THINK YOUR TURNOVER WILL....?	NAT SMALL TOWN (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
INCREASE	42	0	18	20	0	75	18	N/A	44	N/A
STAY THE SAME	39	25	64	53	50	25	36	N/A	33	N/A
DECREASE	19	75	18	27	50	0	46	N/A	22	N/A



WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF HAVING A BUSINESS LOCATED IN THE TOWN CENTRE?	NAT SMALL TOWN (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	50	100	54	47	0	50	50	N/A	36	N/A
CLEANLINESS	N/A	0	23	13	0	50	27	N/A	9	N/A
PROSPERITY OF THE TOWN	42	100	31	27	0	50	41	N/A	18	N/A
LABOUR POOL	15	0	0	0	0	0	14	N/A	0	N/A
GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION	47	33	69	40	80	50	45	N/A	18	N/A
MIX OF RETAIL OFFER	50	33	31	13	40	50	18	N/A	9	N/A
POTENTIAL TOURIST CUSTOMERS	36	33	8	7	0	25	14	N/A	9	N/A
POTENTIAL LOCAL CUSTOMERS	74	33	77	53	60	75	68	N/A	64	N/A
AFFORDABLE HOUSING	16	0	0	7	0	25	18	N/A	0	N/A
TRANSPORT LINKS	41	0	54	40	80	25	23	N/A	55	N/A
FOOTFALL	31	0	31	33	20	0	41	N/A	36	N/A
CAR PARKING	27	0	31	40	20	50	14	N/A	45	N/A
SAFETY	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
RENTAL VALUES/ PROPERTY COSTS	12	33	8	33	0	75	9	N/A	27	N/A
MARKET(S)	13	0	31	27	0	0	41	N/A	0	N/A
EVENTS/ACTIVITIES	20	33	31	40	20	50	41	N/A	18	N/A
MARKETING/PROMOTIONS	10	33	23	27	0	25	9	N/A	9	N/A
LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS/ ORGANISATIONS	20	33	15	13	20	50	9	N/A	0	N/A



WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF HAVING A BUSINESS LOCATED IN THE TOWN CENTRE?	NAT SMALL TOWN (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	N/A
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	18	0	36	31	60	25	22	N/A	40	N/A
CLEANLINESS	N/A	0	27	31	40	25	30	N/A	20	N/A
PROSPERITY OF THE TOWN	22	25	36	50	40	50	26	N/A	50	N/A
LABOUR POOL	16	75	18	19	0	0	9	N/A	20	N/A
GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION	8	25	9	6	0	25	13	N/A	10	N/A
MIX OF RETAIL OFFER	25	0	36	25	20	0	35	N/A	30	N/A
NUMBER OF VACANT UNITS	N/A	25	36	75	60	0	52	N/A	20	N/A
POTENTIAL TOURIST CUSTOMERS	13	25	18	25	20	0	17	N/A	0	N/A
POTENTIAL LOCAL CUSTOMERS	5	0	0	12	0	0	13	N/A	10	N/A
AFFORDABLE HOUSING	14	25	0	6	0	0	13	N/A	0	N/A
TRANSPORT LINKS	15	25	0	31	0	25	26	N/A	10	N/A
FOOTFALL	23	25	9	44	20	25	39	N/A	60	N/A
CAR PARKING	44	75	64	50	80	75	61	N/A	70	N/A
SAFETY	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
RENTAL VALUES/ PROPERTY COSTS	25	25	18	38	20	25	39	N/A	0	N/A
MARKET(S)	9	0	0	31	0	25	13	N/A	10	N/A
LOCAL BUSINESS COMPETITION	21	0	9	25	20	50	13	N/A	10	N/A
COMPETITION FROM OUT-OF-TOWN LOCATIONS	39	25	55	31	20	25	70	N/A	10	N/A
COMPETITION FROM OTHER TOWNS/CITIES	29	25	18	31	20	25	13	N/A	30	N/A
COMPETITION FROM THE INTERNET	44	25	36	25	0	0	48	N/A	10	N/A
EVENTS/ACTIVITIES	N/A	0	9	12	0	0	9	N/A	10	N/A
MARKETING/ PROMOTIONS	N/A	0	9	13	0	0	9	N/A	10	N/A
LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS/ ORGANISATIONS	N/A	0	9	6	0	0	13	N/A	10	N/A

HAS YOUR BUSINESS SUFFERED FROM ANY CRIME OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS?	NAT SMALL TOWN (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
YES	27	33	46	44	20	25	61	N/A	36	N/A
NO	73	66	54	56	80	75	39	N/A	64	N/A
IF YES, WHAT TYPE OF BUSINESS CRIME HAVE YOU SUFFERED?	NAT SMALL TOWN (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
THEFT	66	100	100	100	100	100	73	N/A	75	N/A
CRIMINAL DAMAGE	27	0	0	39	0	0	40	N/A	25	N/A
ABUSE	12	0	0	29	0	100	47	N/A	0	N/A
OTHER	8	0	0	14	0	0	17	N/A	0	N/A



## TOWN CENTRE USERS SURVEY

The aim of the Town Centre Users Survey is to establish how your town is seen by those people who use it. By asking visitors, of all types, a more detailed picture can be obtained as what matters to regular visitors can be different to someone who has never been to the place before.

The following percentage figures are based upon the total number of respondents to each question.

GENDER/ AGE	NAT SMALL TOWN (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
MALE	32	26	55	30	41	43	31	44	50	44
FEMALE	67	71	42	68	52	57	66	53	50	55
NON-BINARY	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PREFER NOT TO ANSWER	1	2	3	2	7	0	3	2	0	1
UNDER 16	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16-25	6	3	3	3	3	0	2	2	5	2
26-35	15	6	14	7	3	8	17	6	17	7
36-45	24	15	8	16	14	8	17	9	26	12
46-55	23	29	14	19	31	31	15	17	21	14
56-65	17	27	11	26	22	23	16	18	24	21
OVER 65	N/A	19	52	25	21	31	29	46	7	42
PREFER NOT TO ANSWER	1	2	0	3	5	0	3	3	0	2

WHAT DO YOU GENERALLY VISIT THE TOWN CENTRE FOR?	NAT SMALL TOWN (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
WORK	N/A	4	17	7	0	18	3	2	5	2
CONVENIENCE SHOPPING	N/A	42	68	39	83	55	39	53	51	63
COMPARISON SHOPPING	N/A	4	8	8	6	0	9	2	2	7
ACCESS SERVICES	N/A	6	3	12	4	9	13	17	27	8
EATING AND DRINKING OUT	N/A	26	2	N/A	6	9	21	15	N/A	9
LEISURE	N/A	7	3	11	0	0	5	1	8	1
OTHER	N/A	10	0	14	0	9	10	10	7	9



CBC TOWN BENCHMARKING REPORT 2025

HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT THE TOWN CENTRE?	NAT SMALL TOWN (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
DAILY	23	22	15	14	17	18	12	17	9	14
MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK	37	47	34	32	45	45	38	48	46	46
WEEKLY	21	18	26	21	21	18	29	18	20	23
FORTNIGHTLY	7	5	6	12	6	0	9	7	9	6
MORE THAN ONCE A MONTH	5	5	6	10	2	9	7	4	7	7
ONCE A MONTH OR LESS/ FIRST VISIT	8	4	12	11	9	9	5	7	10	4

HOW DO YOU NORMALLY TRAVEL INTO THE TOWN CENTRE?	NAT SMALL TOWN (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
ON FOOT	40	51	55	46	62	55	39	47	N/A	41
BICYCLE	1	2	0	1	2	0	4	1	N/A	1
MOTORBIKE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	0
CAR	55	45	45	46	34	36	49	51	N/A	55
BUS	2	2	0	2	0	9	5	1	N/A	1
TAXI	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	1
OTHER	0	1	0	4	2	0	3	1	N/A	2

ON AVERAGE, ON YOUR NORMAL VISIT TO THE TOWN CENTRE HOW MUCH DO YOU NORMALLY SPEND?	NAT SMALL TOWN (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
NOTHING	3	2	12	5	0	0	0	2	4	0
£0.01-£5.00	11	2	9	7	4	18	3	6	15	4
£5.01-£10.00	23	12	28	23	15	27	18	23	31	14
£10.01-£20.00	32	30	37	27	28	50	35	37	31	30
£20.01-£50.00	26	37	12	28	41	5	33	26	15	38
MORE THAN £50.00	6	16	2	10	11	0	9	4	3	12



CBC TOWN BENCHMARKING REPORT 2025

WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE TOWN CENTRE?	NAT SMALL TOWN (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	45	77	50	11	9	0	45	79	15	49
CLEANLINESS	40	53	34	14	20	27	36	63	37	51
RETAIL OFFER	22	41	11	8	9	9	19	36	8	21
CUSTOMER SERVICE	24	18	45	4	4	9	10	34	9	10
CAFES/RESTAURANTS	56	81	38	30	24	36	62	59	33	42
ACCESS TO SERVICES	57	48	45	30	18	73	53	66	43	49
LEISURE FACILITIES	14	6	13	15	9	0	9	3	0	2
CULTURAL ACTIVITIES/EVENTS	20	13	7	19	7	0	29	15	3	7
PUBS/ BARS/ NIGHTCLUBS	29	51	7	7	7	0	39	41	11	25
PUBLIC TOILETS	20	18	11	6	0	27	43	14	9	6
TRANSPORT LINKS	14	3	32	20	51	27	12	9	19	10
EASE OF WALKING AROUND THE TOWN CENTRE	59	46	84	34	44	82	66	64	54	57
CONVENIENCE	69	74	70	63	73	82	66	74	68	76
SAFETY	23	18	59	4	16	9	16	24	12	19
CAR PARKING	27	9	50	10	29	18	23	21	47	40
MARKET(S)	25	29	30	13	38	N/A	61	17	1	18
OTHER	6	3	2	9	2	0	7	8	4	4

WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF THE TOWN CENTRE?	NAT SMALL TOWN (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	25	2	34	53	73	78	18	1	30	9
CLEANLINESS	19	6	36	31	36	44	19	3	16	9
RETAIL OFFER	47	13	72	64	61	44	55	18	61	44
CUSTOMER SERVICE	7	1	16	9	7	0	4	3	5	3
CAFES/RESTAURANTS	12	2	22	16	27	11	9	4	21	13
ACCESS TO SERVICES	12	8	20	48	64	0	31	8	36	20
LEISURE FACILITIES	27	15	25	12	27	11	24	18	42	33
CULTURAL ACTIVITIES/EVENTS	20	5	33	13	34	11	13	7	27	17
PUBS/ BARS/ NIGHTCLUBS	14	3	30	21	27	33	5	2	16	12
PUBLIC TOILETS	25	14	22	44	43	33	10	18	35	34
TRANSPORT LINKS	19	18	28	12	7	11	11	20	8	16
EASE OF WALKING AROUND THE TOWN CENTRE	10	23	14	12	16	0	3	4	3	2
CONVENIENCE	3	0	14	2	0	0	4	1	1	2
SAFETY	16	11	22	32	16	56	26	10	10	11
CAR PARKING	43	81	20	55	39	44	37	72	24	21
MARKET(S)	15	3	36	39	7	N/A	4	6	27	12
OTHER	17	19	5	18	5	11	20	13	18	22



HOW LONG DO YOU STAY IN THE TOWN CENTRE?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
LESS THAN AN HOUR	35	20	38	40	50	45	23	51	64	48
1-2 HOURS	44	55	37	43	43	36	59	37	25	43
2-4 HOURS	13	20	11	13	7	0	23	8	5	6
4-6 HOURS	3	3	0	1	0	0	2	1	4	2
ALL DAY	4	1	14	2	0	9	1	1	2	0
						9				

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND A VISIT TO THE TOWN CENTRE?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
YES	75	95	67	25	18	45	69	88	36	70
NO	25	5	33	75	82	55	31	12	64	30

## KPI: SHOPPERS ORIGIN SURVEY

The Shoppers Origin Survey tracks the general area that your town centre visitors originate from. The data can be used to target local marketing or promotional literature. It can also be used as evidence of the success of such campaigns by gauging the penetration into the population. The post codes gathered from businesses are split into 3 categories to be able to compare with other towns. The categories are:

- Locals; those who live within a Post Code covering the town
- Visitors; those who live within a Post Code less than a 30-minute drive away
- Tourists; those who live within a Post Code further than a 30-minute drive away

	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	AMPT 2025 (%)	BIGG 2025 (%)	DUNST 2025 (%)	FLIT 2025 (%)	HR 2025 (%)	LB 2025 (%)	POTT 2025 (%)	SANDY 2025 (%)	SHEFF 2025 (%)
LOCALS	55	N/A	41	77	80	N/A	73	N/A	50	N/A
VISITORS	19	N/A	58	22	20	N/A	21	N/A	45	N/A
TOURISTS	15	N/A	1	1	0	N/A	6	N/A	5	N/A



**PEOPLE & PLACES**  
*Insight*

**FLITWICK**

**TOWN BENCHMARKING REPORT**

**September 2025**

**Mike King**

**Director**

**People and Places Insight**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### OVERVIEW

People and Places Insight strive to improve the performance of localities through a series of well-used and advanced Town Centre Services. We have worked with National Government, Business Improvement Districts, Local Authorities, Town Councils, Community and Town Partnerships and Retailers on a wide range of projects including Town Benchmarking, First Time Visitor Reviews, Signage and Wayfinding, Footfall Counts, Event Evaluation, Car Parking Studies, Disability Access Audits and Neighbourhood Planning.

In 2025 Central Bedfordshire Council commissioned People and Places Insight to undertake a Benchmarking Review in Flitwick to measure town centre performance. Previous evaluations in the town centre have taken place by People and Places Insight in 2019 and 2021. The detailed results of the Benchmarking Review can be found in the following report whilst the Executive Summary provides the headline findings.

### GENERAL

#### Commercial Offer

- 33% of the ground floor units in the defined Flitwick town centre area are A1 Shops, 18% lower than the National Small Towns average, whilst 17% are A2 Financial and Professional Services, 4% higher than the National average.
- 79% of the A1 Shops mainly sell 'Comparison Goods'.
- 53% of the A1 Shops in Flitwick are unique to the town centre, 8% lower than the National Small Towns figure
- 5% of the ground floor units in the defined town centre were vacant during the audit in April 2025, 4% lower than the National Small Towns average.

#### Town Centre Use

- 50% of Town Centre users stay in Flitwick for 'Less than an Hour'.
- As in previous evaluations 'Convenience Shopping' (83%) was the key reason for Town Centre Users to visit Flitwick.

#### Footfall

- The Saturday footfall average of 31 persons per ten minutes highlights that numbers are consistent throughout the trading week, ranging from 27 to 34 persons per ten minutes.



## Car Parking

- 30% of all car parking provision was vacant on the 'Market Day, 9% lower than in 2021 and 3% higher than the National Small Towns average. Similarly, 35% of spaces were vacant on the 'Non-Market Day', 12% lower than 2021 and 2% higher than the National figure. Saturday vacancy rates were the highest at 44%.

## POSITIVE

### Local Customers

- 83% of Town Centre Users visit Flitwick at 'Least Once a Week', with 62% travelling 'On Foot', 22% higher than the National average and 'Convenience' (73%) being rated the most positive aspect of Flitwick Town Centre.
- 62% of Town Centre Users travel into Flitwick Town Centre 'On Foot', 22% higher than the National Small Towns average.

### Location

- Geographical Location (80%) and 'Transport Links' (80%) were classed as positive aspects of trading from Flitwick Town Centre.

### Customer Spend

- 52% of Town Centre Users reported that they spend 'More than £20.00' on a normal visit to Flitwick, identical to the 2019 evaluation and 20% higher than the National average.

### Markets

- For a relatively Small Town, Flitwick boasts a relatively large Market with 12 traders, double the 2019 figure and slightly lower than the National Small Towns average of 15.
- 38% of Town Centre Users rated 'Markets' as a positive aspect, noticeably higher than the 2019 figure (12%) and the National Small Towns average (25%).

## ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

### Visit Recommendation

- 82% of Town Centre Users would not recommend a visit to Flitwick, similar to the 2019 figure of 81% and vastly higher than the National Small Towns average of 25%.

### Footfall

- Following the precedent set in the 2021 Benchmarking evaluation in Flitwick, footfall on both the Market Day and the Non-Market Day had dropped significantly from the 2019 averages. The 2019 average of 61 persons per ten minutes reduced to 34 persons per ten minutes in 2025 and similarly



the 2019 Non-Market average day of 62 persons per ten minutes dropped to 27 persons per ten minutes.

### Physical Appearance

- As in 2019, 'Physical Appearance' (73%) was classed as the most negative aspect of Flitwick Town Centre, 48% higher than the National Small Towns average.

### Access to Services

- 'Access to Services' (64%) was also rated as a negative aspect, vastly higher than the 2019 (12%) and National (12%) figure.

### Public Toilets

- 43% of Town Centre Users rated 'Public Toilets' as a negative aspect of Flitwick



## METHODOLOGY

### THE APPROACH

The People and Places Insight Town Benchmarking System has been developed to address the real issues of how to understand measure, evaluate and ultimately improve town centres. The approach offers a simple way of capturing data on Key Performance Indicators selected by those involved in Town Centre management. By having the tools to measure performance, strategic decision-making is both encouraged and improved. By considering performance, forward strategies and action planning can be more focused and effective.

### THE SYSTEM

The Benchmarking system is divided into two sections:

- National Large Towns; consisting of those localities with more than 300 units
- National Small Towns; consisting of those localities with less than 300 units

Towns, depending on their size, contribute to either the Large or Small-Town analysis. The defined town centre area of **FLITWICK** consists of **61** units and is thus classed as a **Small** Town. A list of all the Commercial Units in the defined town centre area are listed in the Appendix.

The analysis provides data on each KPI for the Benchmarked town individually and in a National and Longitudinal. The National figure is the average for all the towns which participated in Benchmarking from July 2022 to January 2024.

### THE REPORTS

The People and Places Insight Town Benchmarking report provides statistical analysis of each of the KPIs. The reports are used by a variety of key stakeholders such as Local Authorities, Town and Parish Councils, Business Improvement Districts, Local Partnerships, Retailers and Universities to assist with;

- Measuring High Street regeneration projects
- Developing Town Centre regeneration
- Measuring the impact of events and festivals against normal trading conditions
- Providing an evidence base for funding applications
- Providing an evidence base for car parking initiatives
- Providing an evidence base for Neighbourhood Planning
- Supporting Business Improvement Districts
- Supporting Community groups

Each KPI in a typical Benchmarking Review is collected in a standardized manner as highlighted in the Table below.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY
KPI: COMMERCIAL OFFER; USE CLASS	Visual Survey of ground floor units in defined Town Centre area.
KPI: COMMERCIAL OFFER; COMPARISON/CONVENIENCE	Visual Survey of A1 ground floor units in defined Town Centre area.
KPI: COMMERCIAL OFFER: TRADER TYPE	Visual Survey of A1 ground floor units in defined Town Centre area.
KPI: COMMERCIAL OFFER: VACANCY RATES	Visual Survey of A1 ground floor units in defined Town Centre area.
KPI: MARKETS	Visual Survey of total number of traders on a Weekday Market
KPI: FOOTFALL	Footfall Survey on a Busy Weekday, Quiet Weekday and Saturday from 10.00-13.00 on each day
KPI: CAR PARKING	Audit of total number of spaces and vacancy rate on a Busy Weekday, Quiet Weekday and Saturday between 11.00-14.00
KPI: BUSINESS CONFIDENCE SURVEYS	Paper Based Surveys
KPI: TOWN CENTRE USER SURVEYS	Face to face/ Paper Based/ Online
KPI: SHOPPERS ORIGIN SURVEYS	Paper Based Surveys



## KEY FINDINGS

### KPI: GROUND FLOOR; USE CLASS

It is important to understand the scale and variety of the “offer” throughout the town. A variety of shops and a wide range of services in a town are important to its ability to remain competitive and continue to attract customers. Sustaining a balance between the different aspects of buying and selling goods and services ensures that the local population (and visitors from outside) can spend time and money there, keeping the generated wealth of the town within the local economy. Importantly, it forms the employment base for a substantial proportion of the community too, helping to retain the population rather than lose it to nearby towns and cities.

The Use Class Order from 1987 was updated into larger segments in 2020. Due to the more in-depth breakdown provision in 1987, People and Places Insight Limited continue to deploy these Use Class classifications.

The following table provides a detailed breakdown of each of the Use Classes:

CLASS	TYPE OF USE	CLASS INCLUDES
A1	Shops	Shops, retail warehouses, hairdressers, travel and ticket agencies, post offices (but not sorting offices), pet shops, sandwich bars, showrooms, domestic hire shops, dry cleaners, funeral directors and internet cafes.
A2	Financial and Professional Services	Financial services such as banks and building societies, professional services (other than health and medical services) including estate and employment agencies and betting offices.
A3	Restaurants and Cafes	Food and drink for consumption on the premises- restaurants, snack bars and cafes.
A4	Drinking Establishments	Public houses, wine bars or other drinking establishments (but not nightclubs).
A5	Hot Food Takeaways	Sale of hot food for consumption off the premises.
B1	Businesses	Offices (other than those that fall within A2) research and development of products and processes, light industry appropriate in a residential area.
B2	General Industrial	General Industrial.
B8	Storage and Distribution	Warehouses, includes open air storage.
C1	Hotels	Hotels, boarding and guest houses where no significant element of care is provided (excludes hostels).
C2	Residential Institutions	Residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres.



C2A	Secure Residential Institution	Use for a provision of secure residential accommodation, including use as a prison, young offenders' institution, detention centre, secure training centre, custody centre, short-term holding centre, secure hospital, secure local authority accommodation or use as a military barracks.
D1	Non-Residential Institutions	Clinics, health centres, crèches, day centres, schools, art galleries (other than for sale or hire), museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court. Non-residential education and training centres.
D2	Assembly and Leisure	Cinemas, music and concert halls, bingo and dance halls (but not nightclubs), swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums or area for indoor or outdoor sports and recreations (except for motor sports, or where firearms are used).
SG	Sui Generis ("unique" establishments)	Theatres, hostels providing no significant element of care, scrap yards. Petrol filling stations and shops selling and/ or displaying motor vehicles. Retail warehouse clubs, nightclubs, laundrettes, taxi business, amusement centres, casinos, haulage yards, transport depots, veterinary clinics, dog parlours, tanning and beauty salons and tattoo studios.

The following table provides a detailed analysis of the offering in the town centre by Use Class.

The figures are presented as a percentage of the 58 occupied units recorded.

CLASS	TYPE OF USE	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
A1	SHOPS	51	33	37	38
A2	FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	13	17	19	20
A3	RESTAURANTS AND CAFES	9	10	12	10
A4	DRINKING ESTABLISHMENTS	4	2	2	4
A5	HOT FOOD TAKEAWAYS	4	7	5	4
B1	BUSINESSES	3	7	5	6
B2	GENERAL INDUSTRIAL	1	0	0	0
B8	STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION	0	0	0	0
C1	HOTELS	1	0	0	0
C2	RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS	0	0	0	0
C2A	SECURE RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTION	0	0	0	0
D1	NON-RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS	7	12	9	8
D2	ASSEMBLY AND LEISURE	1	3	4	2
SG	SUI GENERIS	5	9	7	8

33% of the ground floor units in the defined Flitwick town centre area are A1 Shops, 18% lower than the National Small Towns average, whilst 17% are A2 Financial and Professional Services, 4% higher than the National average.

## KPI: GROUND FLOOR UNITS; COMPARISON/CONVENIENCE

The presence of a variety of shops in a town centre is important to its ability to remain competitive and continue to attract customers. A balance of both comparison and convenience retail units is therefore ideal in terms of encouraging visitors / potential customers.

A1 Retail units selling goods can be split into two different types, Comparison and Convenience.

### Convenience goods - Low-cost, everyday items that consumers are unlikely to travel far to purchase.

Defined as:

- Food and non-alcoholic drinks
- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Newspapers and magazines
- Non-durable household goods

### Comparison goods - All other retail goods.

Defined as:

- Books
- Clothing and Footwear
- Furniture, floor coverings and household textiles
- Audio-visual equipment and other durable goods
- Hardware and DIY supplies
- Chemists' goods
- Jewellery, watches and clocks
- Recreational and Miscellaneous goods
- Hairdressing
- Bicycles

The following table provides a percentage of the A1 Shops which sell mainly Comparison Goods/ Convenience Goods.

	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
COMPARISON	82	79	76	74
CONVENIENCE	18	21	24	36

79% of A1 Shops in Flitwick mainly sell 'Comparison Goods'.

## KPI: GROUND FLOOR UNITS; TRADER TYPES

The vitality of a Town Centre depends highly on the quality and variety of retailers represented. A sustainable balance of key attractors and multiple names alongside local independent shops is likely to have the greatest positive impact on the vitality and viability of a town.

The following shops are considered Key attractors by Experian Goad.

### DEPARTMENT STORES

- Marks and Spencer
- Debenhams
- House of Fraser
- John Lewis

### MIXED GOODS RETAILERS

- Wilkinson
- Argos
- Boots
- TK Maxx
- WH Smith

### SUPERMARKETS

- Waitrose
- Sainsbury's
- Tesco

### CLOTHING

- Burton
- Dorothy Perkins
- H & M
- New Look
- Primark
- River Island
- Topman
- Topshop

### OTHER RETAILERS

- Carphone Warehouse
- Clarks
- Clintons
- O2
- Superdrug
- Phones 4 U
- Vodafone
- Waterstones

Multiple traders have a countrywide presence and are well known household names. Regional shops are identified as those with stores/units in several towns throughout one geographical region only and Independent shops are identified as those that are specific to a particular town. The following table provides a percentage of the A1 Shops which are Key Attractors, Multiples, Regional and Independent to the locality.

	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
KEY ATTRACTOR	8	11	5	5
MULTIPLE	21	21	26	24
REGIONAL	10	16	21	14
INDEPENDENT	61	53	47	57

53% of the A1 Shops in Flitwick are unique to the town centre, 8% lower than the National Small Towns figure.



## KPI: GROUND FLOOR UNITS; VACANCY RATES

Vacant units are an important indicator of the vitality and viability of a Town Centre. The presence of vacant units over a period of time can identify potential weaknesses, whether due to locational criteria, high rent levels or strong competition from other centres.

The following table provides the percentage figure of vacant units from the total number of commercial units.

	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
VACANCY	9	5	2	7

5% of the ground floor units in the defined town centre were vacant during the audit in April 2025, 4% lower than the National Small Towns average.

## KPI: MARKETS

Good quality markets provide competition and choice for consumers. A busy and well-used street market can therefore be a good indicator of the vitality of a town centre. Conversely, if a market is in decline (e.g., empty pitches reducing numbers), it can be an indication of potential weaknesses in the town centre e.g., a lack of footfall customers due to an inappropriate retail mix or increased competitor activity. Street markets can also generate substantial benefits for the local economy. Markets can also provide a local mechanism for a diverse range of local enterprises to start, flourish and grow, adding to the sustainable mix of shops services on offer throughout the town.

The following table provides the average number of market traders at the main regular (at least once a fortnight) weekday market within the locality.

	NAT SMALL TOWNS	FLITWICK 2025	FLITWICK 2021	FLITWICK 2019
MARKET TRADERS	15	12	14	6

For a small Town, Flitwick boasts a relatively large Market with 12 traders, double the 2019 figure and slightly lower than the National Small Towns average of 15.

## KPI: FOOTFALL

The arrival and movement of people, whether as residents, workers, visitors or a shopper is vital to the success of most businesses within the Town Centre. Measuring passing people in a consistent manner in the same place, at the same time builds up a picture of the town, its traders and their relative success over the weeks and months.

Benchmarking footfall is conducted on weekdays in specific locations for a set period, between 10.00am to 1.00pm, counting the people passing in both directions through a fixed point (e.g., an imaginary line across the road) for a precise ten minutes in every hour (e.g., 10.00–10.10am, 11.20am-11.30am, 12.40pm-12.50pm). Aside from the above basic rules are applied to the process:

- An accurate stopwatch and a hand operated mechanical counter are used
- If a person walks pass
- more than once they are included in the count each time they pass through the ‘line’
- Children under 12 are not included in the count
- Footfall counts are not conducted in weather conditions which will limit the number of town centre users i.e., heavy rain, snow

	NAT SMALL TOWNS	FLITWICK 2025	FLITWICK 2021	FLITWICK 2019
MARKET DAY	110	34	37	61
NON-MARKET DAY	105	27	35	62
SATURDAY	N/A	31	N/A	N/A

Following the precedent set in the 2021 Benchmarking evaluation in Flitwick, footfall on both the Market Day and the Non-Market Day had dropped significantly from the 2019 averages. The 2019 average of 61 persons per ten minutes reduced to 34 persons per ten minutes in 2025 and similarly the 2019 Non-Market average day of 62 persons per ten minutes dropped to 27 persons per ten minutes. The Saturday footfall average of 31 persons per ten minutes highlights that numbers are consistent throughout the trading week.



The following tables provide full details of the footfall counts.

FOOTFALL- MARKET DAY	
STATION/TOWN SQUARE	
	FRIDAY 7 <sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025
10.30-10.40	14
11.30-11.40	9
12.30-12.40	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41</b>
AVERAGE	14

TESCO'S CAR PARK TO JOHNSONS	
	FRIDAY 7 <sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025
10.30-10.40	20
11.30-11.40	28
12.30-12.40	29
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>77</b>
AVERAGE	26

BRIDGE	
	FRIDAY 7 <sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025
10.30-10.40	26
11.30-11.40	39
12.30-12.40	36
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>101</b>
AVERAGE	34

OUTSIDE BARCLAYS, STATION ROAD	
	FRIDAY 7 <sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025
10.30-10.40	30
11.30-11.40	41
12.30-12.40	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>81</b>
AVERAGE	27



FOOTFALL- NON- MARKET DAY	
STATION/TOWN SQUARE	
MONDAY 10 <sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025	
10.30-10.40	14
11.30-11.40	11
12.30-12.40	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>12</b>

TESCO'S CAR PARK TO JOHNSONS	
MONDAY 10 <sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025	
10.30-10.40	18
11.30-11.40	31
12.30-12.40	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>27</b>

BRIDGE	
MONDAY 10 <sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025	
10.30-10.40	22
11.30-11.40	39
12.30-12.40	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>25</b>

OUTSIDE BARCLAYS, STATION ROAD	
MONDAY 10 <sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025	
10.30-10.40	18
11.30-11.40	19
12.30-12.40	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>17</b>



FOOTFALL- SATURDAY	
STATION/TOWN SQUARE	
SATURDAY 7 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2025	
10.30-10.40	24
11.30-11.40	19
12.30-12.40	34
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>77</b>
AVERAGE	26

TESCO'S CAR PARK TO JOHNSONS	
SATURDAY 7 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2025	
10.30-10.40	46
11.30-11.40	19
12.30-12.40	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75</b>
AVERAGE	25

BRIDGE	
SATURDAY 7 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2025	
10.30-10.40	24
11.30-11.40	18
12.30-12.40	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>
AVERAGE	19

OUTSIDE BARCLAYS, STATION ROAD	
SATURDAY 7 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2025	
10.30-10.40	50
11.30-11.40	17
12.30-12.40	26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>93</b>
AVERAGE	31



## KPI: CAR PARKING

A large proportion of spending customers in a Town Centre come by car. In the rural setting, the car tends to be an essential tool, used by both those who come to spend and those who come to work. The provision of adequate and convenient car parking facilities is therefore a key element of town centre vitality. An acceptable number of available spaces with a regular, quick turn-over for shoppers are the ideal while adequate longer stay, less convenient spaces for local owners/ workers and visitors must be considered too.

Within the town on street and off parking within the core commercial offering were identified as being integral to the study. The following tables provide a summary of the Car Parking offering broken down into;

- Overall percentage of short stay, long stay and disabled spaces
- Overall percentage of vacant spaces on a Market Day, Non-Market Day and Saturday

	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
<b>OVERALL</b>				
SHORT STAY SPACES: (4 HOURS AND UNDER)	48	41	44	48
LONG STAY SPACES: (OVER 4 HOURS)	47	55	52	49
DISABLED SPACES:	5	4	3	3
NOT REGISTERED	0	0	0	0
VACANT SPACES ON A MARKET DAY:	27	30	39	26
VACANT SPACES ON A NON-MARKET DAY:	33	35	47	30
VACANT SPACES ON A SATURDAY	N/A	44	N/A	N/A

30% of all car parking provision was vacant on the 'Market Day', 9% lower than in 2021 and 3% higher than the National Small Towns average. Similarly, 35% of spaces were vacant on the 'Non-Market Day', 12% lower than 2021 and 2% higher than the National figure. Saturday vacancy rates were the highest at 44%.

## KPI: BUSINESS CONFIDENCE SURVEY

With regards to the ‘business confidence’ by establishing the trading conditions of Town Centre businesses, stakeholders can focus their regeneration efforts on building on existing strengths and addressing any specific issues.

The following percentage figures are based on the **10** returned Business Confidence Surveys.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF YOUR BUSINESS?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
RETAIL	N/A	60	N/A	43
FINANCIAL/PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	N/A	0	N/A	43
PUBLIC SECTOR	N/A	0	N/A	0
FOOD AND DRINK	N/A	20	N/A	14
ACCOMMODATION	N/A	0	N/A	0
OTHER	N/A	20	N/A	0
WHAT TYPE OF BUSINESS ARE YOU?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
MULTIPLE	11	0	N/A	0
REGIONAL	6	0	N/A	29
INDEPENDENT	83	100	N/A	71
HOW LONG HAS YOUR BUSINESS BEEN BASED IN THE TOWN?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
LESS THAN A YEAR	8	0	N/A	0
ONE TO FIVE YEARS	20	0	N/A	0
SIX TO TEN YEARS	13	0	N/A	0
MORE THAN TEN YEARS	59	100	N/A	10029

60% of Business Survey respondents are based in the ‘Retail’ sector, all of them are ‘Independent’ and based in the Town Centre for ‘More than Ten Years’.

COMPARED TO LAST YEAR HAS YOUR TURNOVER?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
INCREASED	39	20	N/A	29
STAYED THE SAME	27	20	N/A	0
DECREASED	34	60	N/A	71
COMPARED TO LAST YEAR HAS YOUR PROFITABILITY?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
INCREASED	30	20	N/A	29
STAYED THE SAME	32	20	N/A	14
DECREASED	39	60	N/A	57
OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS DO YOU THINK YOUR TURNOVER WILL....?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
INCREASE	42	0	N/A	14
STAY THE SAME	39	50	N/A	14
DECREASE	19	50	N/A	71

60% of Businesses reported that their ‘Turnover’ has ‘Decreased’ over the last year and the same figures in terms of ‘Profitability’. In terms of Trading Confidence, 50% of Businesses stated that they expect their ‘Turnover’ to ‘Stay the Same’ and 50% ‘Decrease’.



WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF HAVING A BUSINESS LOCATED IN THE TOWN CENTRE?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	50	0	N/A	33
CLEANLINESS	N/A	0	N/A	N/A
PROSPERITY OF THE TOWN	42	0	N/A	33
LABOUR POOL	15	0	N/A	0
GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION	47	80	N/A	67
MIX OF RETAIL OFFER	50	40	N/A	17
POTENTIAL TOURIST CUSTOMERS	36	0	N/A	17
POTENTIAL LOCAL CUSTOMERS	74	60	N/A	83
AFFORDABLE HOUSING	16	0	N/A	17
TRANSPORT LINKS	41	80	N/A	100
FOOTFALL	31	20	N/A	17
CAR PARKING	27	20	N/A	17
SAFETY	N/A	0	N/A	N/A
RENTAL VALUES/ PROPERTY COSTS	12	0	N/A	33
MARKET(S)	13	0	N/A	N/A
EVENTS/ACTIVITIES	20	20	N/A	0
MARKETING/PROMOTIONS	10	0	N/A	0
LOCALPARTNERSHIPS/ ORGANISATIONS	20	20	N/A	0

‘Geographical Location’ (80%) and ‘Transport Links’ (80%) were classed as positive aspects of trading from Flitwick Town Centre.

WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF HAVING A BUSINESS LOCATED IN THE TOWN CENTRE?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	18	60	N/A	29
CLEANLINESS	N/A	40	N/A	0
PROSPERITY OF THE TOWN	22	40	N/A	14
LABOUR POOL	16	0	N/A	0
GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION	8	0	N/A	0
MIX OF RETAIL OFFER	25	20	N/A	0
NUMBER OF VACANT UNITS	N/A	60	N/A	0
POTENTIAL TOURIST CUSTOMERS	13	20	N/A	0
POTENTIAL LOCAL CUSTOMERS	5	0	N/A	0
AFFORDABLE HOUSING	14	0	N/A	0
TRANSPORT LINKS	15	0	N/A	0
FOOTFALL	23	20	N/A	43
CAR PARKING	44	80	N/A	71
SAFETY	N/A	0	N/A	N/A
RENTAL VALUES/ PROPERTY COSTS	25	20	N/A	29
MARKET(S)	9	0	N/A	0
LOCAL BUSINESS COMPETITION	21	20	N/A	43
COMPETITION FROM OUT-OF-TOWN LOCATIONS	39	20	N/A	29
COMPETITION FROM OTHER TOWNS/CITIES	29	20	N/A	14
COMPETITION FROM THE INTERNET	44	0	N/A	43
EVENTS/ACTIVITIES	N/A	0	N/A	0
MARKETINGG/ PROMOTIONS	N/A	0	N/A	0
LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS/ ORGANISATIONS	N/A	0	N/A	0

‘Physical Appearance’ (60%) and ‘Number of Vacant Units’ (60%) were classed as negative aspects of trading from the Town Centre.



HAS YOUR BUSINESS SUFFERED FROM ANY CRIME OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
YES	27	20	N/A	29
NO	73	80	N/A	71
IF YES, WHAT TYPE OF BUSINESS CRIME HAVE YOU SUFFERED?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
THEFT	66	100	N/A	50
CRIMINAL DAMAGE	27	0	N/A	0
ABUSE	12	0	N/A	50
OTHER	8	0	N/A	0

80% of Businesses have not suffered any 'Crime' over the last 12 months.

### WHAT SUGGESTIONS WOULD YOU MAKE TO IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE OF THE TOWN CENTRE?

- More variety of commerce.
- More parking
- Stop allowing the same type of Businesses to open
- Parking needed
- Clean up the town
- More Events
- More Police

## TOWN CENTRE USERS SURVEY

The aim of the Town Centre Users Survey is to establish how your town is seen by those people who use it. By asking visitors, of all types, a more detailed picture can be obtained as what matters to regular visitors can be different to someone who has never been to the place before.

In total **116** surveys were completed. The following percentage figures are based upon the total number of respondents to each question.

GENDER/ AGE	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
MALE	32	41	N/A	34
FEMALE	67	52	N/A	63
NON-BINARY	N/A	0	N/A	N/A
PREFER NOT TO ANSWER	1	7	N/A	3
UNDER 16	N/A	0	N/A	N/A
16-25	6	3	N/A	3
26-35	15	3	N/A	9
36-45	24	14	N/A	24
46-55	23	31	N/A	21
56-65	17	22	N/A	22
OVER 65	N/A	21	N/A	19
PREFER NOT TO ANSWER	1	5	N/A	2

52% of Town Centre Users are ‘Female’ and 41% ‘Male’. 74% of respondents are aged ‘46 or Over’.

From those respondents who do not use Flitwick Town Centre the following comments were provided:

- Not needed
- Not a town centre, just barbers, Indian and chicken takeaways
- Nothing to interest me. I only visit Tesco
- There is no bank or post office and with very limited shops which I don't use regularly and the lack of parking .
- Nothing there, cannot call it a town centre.
- Other than Tesco there's nothing I need or want in town centre
- It doesn't have one!
- Full of barbers estate agents and takeaways.
- There are no shops or services in Flitwick and particularly on the High Street



WHAT DO YOU GENERALLY VISIT THE TOWN CENTRE FOR?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
WORK	N/A	0	N/A	3
CONVENIENCE SHOPPING	N/A	83	N/A	65
COMPARISON SHOPPING	N/A	6	N/A	0
ACCESS SERVICES	N/A	4	N/A	19
EATING AND DRINKING OUT	N/A	6	N/A	
LEISURE	N/A	0	N/A	5
OTHER	N/A	0	N/A	8

As in previous evaluations 'Convenience Shopping' (83%) was the key reason for Town Centre Users to visit Flitwick.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT THE TOWN CENTRE?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
DAILY	23	17	N/A	22
MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK	37	45	N/A	53
WEEKLY	21	21	N/A	17
FORTNIGHTLY	7	6	N/A	3
MORE THAN ONCE A MONTH	5	2	N/A	3
ONCE A MONTH OR LESS/ FIRST VISIT	8	9	N/A	3

83% of Town Centre Users visit Flitwick at 'Least Once a Week'.

HOW DO YOU NORMALLY TRAVEL INTO THE TOWN CENTRE?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
ON FOOT	40	62	N/A	39
BICYCLE	1	2	N/A	1
MOTORBIKE	0	0	N/A	0
CAR	55	34	N/A	59
BUS	2	0	N/A	0
TRAIN	2	0	N/A	N/A
TAXI	N/A	0	N/A	N/A
OTHER	0	2	N/A	1

62% of Town Centre Users travel into Flitwick Town Centre 'On Foot', 22% higher than the National Small Towns average.



ON AVERAGE, ON YOUR NORMAL VISIT TO THE TOWN CENTRE HOW MUCH DO YOU NORMALLY SPEND?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FFLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
NOTHING	3	0	N/A	4
£0.01-£5.00	11	4	N/A	6
£5.01-£10.00	23	15	N/A	14
£10.01-£20.00	32	28	N/A	24
£20.01-£50.00	26	41	N/A	34
MORE THAN £50.00	6	11	N/A	18

52% of Town Centre Users reported that they spend ‘More than £20.00’ on a normal visit to Flitwick, identical to the 2019 evaluation and 20% higher than the National average.

WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE TOWN CENTRE?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FFLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	45	9	N/A	4
CLEANLINESS	40	20	N/A	10
RETAIL OFFER	22	9	N/A	11
CUSTOMER SERVICE	24	4	N/A	5
CAFES/RESTAURANTS	56	24	N/A	13
ACCESS TO SERVICES	57	18	N/A	52
LEISURE FACILITIES	14	9	N/A	24
CULTURAL ACTIVITIES/EVENTS	20	7	N/A	2
PUBS/ BARS/ NIGHTCLUBS	29	7	N/A	8
PUBLIC TOILETS	20	0	N/A	2
TRANSPORT LINKS	14	51	N/A	49
EASE OF WALKING AROUND THE TOWN CENTRE	59	44	N/A	15
CONVENIENCE	69	73	N/A	65
SAFETY	23	16	N/A	6
CAR PARKING	27	29	N/A	16
MARKET(S)	25	38	N/A	12
OTHER	6	2	N/A	7

As in previous evaluations, ‘Convenience’ (73%) and ‘Transport Links’ (51%) were classed as the most positive aspects of Town Centre Users. 38% of Town Centre Users rated ‘Markets’ as a positive aspect, noticeably higher than the 2019 figure (12%) and the National Small Towns average (25%).



WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF THE TOWN CENTRE?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FFLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	25	73	N/A	75
CLEANLINESS	19	36	N/A	31
RETAIL OFFER	47	61	N/A	67
CUSTOMER SERVICE	7	7	N/A	12
CAFES/RESTAURANTS	12	27	N/A	38
ACCESS TO SERVICES	12	64	N/A	12
LEISURE FACILITIES	27	27	N/A	13
CULTURAL ACTIVITIES/EVENTS	20	34	N/A	35
PUBS/ BARS/ NIGHTCLUBS	14	27	N/A	31
PUBLIC TOILETS	25	43	N/A	53
TRANSPORT LINKS	19	7	N/A	8
EASE OF WALKING AROUND THE TOWN CENTRE	10	16	N/A	32
CONVENIENCE	3	0	N/A	3
SAFETY	16	16	N/A	24
CAR PARKING	43	39	N/A	42
MARKET(S)	15	7	N/A	17
OTHER	17	5	N/A	15

As in 2019, 'Physical Appearance' (73%) was classed as the most negative aspect of Flitwick Town Centre, 48% higher than the National Small Towns average. 'Access to Services' (64%) was also rated as a negative aspect, vastly higher than the 2019 (12%) and National (12%) figure. 'Public Toilets' (43%) and 'Car Parking' (39%) similarly, were identified as negative aspects.

HOW LONG DO YOU STAY IN THE TOWN CENTRE?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
LESS THAN AN HOUR	35	50	N/A	60
1-2 HOURS	44	43	N/A	33
2-4 HOURS	13	7	N/A	3
4-6 HOURS	3	0	N/A	1
ALL DAY	4	0	N/A	2

50% of Town Centre users stay in Flitwick for 'Less than an Hour'.

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND A VISIT TO THE TOWN CENTRE?	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FFLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
YES	75	18	N/A	19
NO	25	82	N/A	81

82% of Town Centre Users would not recommend a visit to Flitwick, similar to the 2019 figure of 81% and vastly higher than the National Small Towns average of 25%.



## WHAT WOULD YOU MAKE TO IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE OF THE TOWN CENTRE?

**\*Please note comments are copied directly from respondents and include grammatical errors**

‘Improving the Retail Offer’ was a key theme to emerge for comments concerning improving the daytime economy:

- Retail offer is limited but Tesco does dominate and offer everything
- Bakery
- More independent retailers- not food outlets or beauty points
- varied retail offer
- Larger variety of shops
- Better choice of shops
- Wider range of shops
- Expand the offer
- More retail units other than barbers and estate agents
- Less barber shops, more independent shopping
- Improved retail offering
- Better variety of shops and services
- More retail
- More retail shops
- Independent Retail

For improvements to the Evening Economy, Town Centre Users want to see an ‘Improved Food and Drink Offer’:

- Food and Drink offering is very limited but the town centre is small
- More family friendly pub
- Family restaurant
- A respectable family restaurant/bar
- nice restaurants for all the family and different offers
- More range in bars and restaurants
- More cafes restaurants bars
- More restaurants
- Less takeaways, more restaurants comparable in quality to Ampthill
- More restaurants.
- Some decent places to eat
- A restaurant that isn't Chinese or Indian
- Improving eating out
- Restaurants

## KPI: SHOPPERS ORIGIN SURVEY

The Shoppers Origin Survey tracks the general area that your town centre visitors originate from. The data can be used to target local marketing or promotional literature. It can also be used as evidence of the success of such campaigns by gauging the penetration into the population. The post codes gathered from businesses are split into 3 categories to be able to compare with other towns. The categories are:

- Locals; those who live within a Post Code covering the town
- Visitors; those who live within a Post Code less than a 30-minute drive away
- Tourists; those who live within a Post Code further than a 30-minute drive away

	NAT SMALL TOWNS (%)	FLITWICK 2025 (%)	FLITWICK 2021 (%)	FLITWICK 2019 (%)
LOCALS	55	80		41
VISITORS	19	20		57
TOURISTS	15	0		2

80% of the Shoppers Post Codes gathered were from ‘Flitwick’ residents.



## ADDITIONAL KPI INFORMATION

A successful 21<sup>st</sup> Century Market Town must be a blend of a commercial offer suitable for locals and visitors, a place of employment, have a strong culture and events-based offer and provide leisure and recreation opportunities both during the day and in the evening.

*\*Please note those in Italics are outside of the defined Town Centre Area for Benchmarking purposes.*

### Public

- Flitwick Village Hall
- The Hub
- *Flitwick Town Council*
- *The Rufus Centre*

### Religious Offer:

- King's Church

### Leisure:

- *Flitwick Leisure Centre*
- Flitwick Bowls Club

### Education:

- Flitwick Scouts

### Public Transport Links

- Flitwick Train Station; Thameslink line direct to Bedford and Three Bridges including stops in St. Albans, London St. Pancras International and Gatwick Airport.
- Direct Bus Services to Milton Keynes, Ampthill, Dunstable, Bedford, Woburn, Harlington, Hitchin, Barton le Clay, Maulden, Silsoe, Clophill, Shefford, Eversholt, Broom, Ridgmont, Biggleswade, Woburn Sands



## MOVING FORWARD

A successful 21<sup>st</sup> Century Small Town must be a blend of a commercial offer suitable for locals and visitors, a place of employment, have a strong culture and events-based offer and provide leisure and recreation opportunities both during the day and in the evening.

Flitwick is a very well-connected small-town servicing local residents and those in the surrounding hinterland. One area of concerns from the Benchmarking Report is the 'Physical Appearance' of the Town Centre, however improvements have been made following the revamp of the square by the previously occupied Barclays Bank.

Flitwick is one of the smallest localities in the Benchmarking System thus the longitudinal tracking of data is more important than comparisons to the National Small Towns averages. The following section highlights potential projects/ areas for improvement in Flitwick Town Centre:

### Catering for Homeworkers

'Homeworking' is on the increase in Britain. Before the first Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020, over 1.5 million people worked from home, up from 880,000 in 2010. 'Homeworking' is particularly prevalent in Ampthill with the 2021 Census indicating that 36% of employed Flitwick residents work from home with 34% in Managerial, Directorial, Profession and Senior Official roles. Recent studies have highlighted that despite increased productivity from being home-based there are negative aspects such as social isolation leading to mental health issues. People and Places Insight conducted a study in 2017 in Bidford on Avon, Warwickshire on the use of empty premises in town centres and the key feedback from home-based workers was that vacant commercial units should be used as shared office space. Respondents stated that by having the opportunity to use shared office space on a regular basis they would also increase customer spend in the town centre by also using the local coffee shops, cafes, pubs for lunches and meetings.

In Swadlincote, South Derbyshire a vacant ex furniture store and cafe was successfully transformed into a shared office space called In Hub. The commercial unit has been transformed into separate work pods, informal meeting space and a meeting and training room which can be booked. The inhouse café offers the opportunity for catering whilst free Wi-Fi is available with printing, scanning and mailbox services. Clients simply need to register to become members of the In Hub and can rent a desk for £20 a day or make longer term commitments for £87 for 5 full days a month or £147 for 10 full days a month. Customers include homeworkers, freelancers and SME's across a range of sectors.

Whilst commercial units suitable for the sole purpose of accommodating 'Homeworkers' may not be readily available in Ampthill, ensuring that this essential cohort have the opportunity to visit and work in the existing premises in the town centre at points during the week is hugely important. Local Businesses should be looking to offer incentives for 'Homeworkers' to visit the town centre. 'Homeworkers' both increase footfall and spend in individual businesses but may also spend money during their visit in other businesses and engage with the wider leisure and cultural offering.



## Disability Inclusivity

On the High Street, £249 Billion is being lost across the country every year due to the barriers that disabled people face. Considering these startling figures, People and Places Insight have built an audit that specifically looks at disability and access to good and services within a defined town centre area.

We have noticed from our reviews that there are multiple barriers that disabled people are facing when trying to buy and access goods and services in town centres. The aim of the audit is to highlight the barriers that people face due to their disability and celebrate what Local Authorities are already doing well to remove those barriers.

The Single Equalities Act 2010 was introduced to update and replace all existing equalities legislation. All areas are covered including gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion and ethnicity. As a result of the Act, all providers of goods and services are legally required to make reasonable adjustments to enable a disabled person to be able to access and use your good and services. A reasonable adjustment is something that removes a barrier for a disabled person to be able to access goods and services. Reasonable means is the adjustment practical, within a reasonable cost and will it benefit disabled people.

Example of Council's working with businesses and organisations to improve town centres for disabled people include town accessibility maps, business advice service around making a business more accessible, making sure car parking spaces are in the right place, providing drop kerbs, making sure footpaths are accessible and free of street clutter, providing support for people, induction loops for hearing impaired people and having well developed shop mobility services.

The Disability Access Audit covers:

- Public Transport
- Public Toilets
- Changing Facilities
- Street Furniture
- Highways and Pavements
- Car Parking
- Access to Shops and Services
- Mystery Shop of a sample of Shops and Services reviewing the experience for a Disabled User
- Digital Review



# APPENDIX

## COMMERCIAL OFFER

STREET	NAME	USE	TYPE	TYPE	NOTES
CONISTON ROAD	FLITWICK LIBRARY	D1	N/A	N/A	
CONISTON ROAD	TESCO	A1	CONV	KEY	
CONISTON ROAD	TESCO PHARMACY	A1	COMP	KEY	
CONISTON ROAD	THE LOUNGE COFFEE SHOP	A3	N/A	N/A	
CONISTON ROAD	TIMPSONS	A1	CONV	MULT	
CONISTON ROAD	THE HUB	D1	N/A	N/A	
CONISTON ROAD	BUMBLEBEE	A3	N/A	N/A	
COWLGROVE PARADE	FLITWICK NAIL BAR	SG	N/A	N/A	
COWLGROVE PARADE	KEECH HOSPICE CARE	A1	COMP	REG	
COWLGROVE PARADE	BOX OF DELIGHTS	A1	COMP	IND	
COWLGROVE PARADE	THE CHICKEN HOUSE	A5	N/A	N/A	
COWLGROVE PARADE	BEST KEBAB	A5	N/A	N/A	
COWLGROVE PARADE	JOHNSONS DRY CLEANERS	A1	COMP	MULT	
COWLGROVE PARADE	BONESS VETS	SG	N/A	N/A	
COWLGROVE PARADE	HARROLD OPTICIANS	A1	COMP	MULT	
DUNSTABLE ROAD	VILLAGE HALL	D1	N/A	N/A	
DUNSTABLE ROAD	MODERN BEAUTY	SG	N/A	N/A	
DUNSTABLE ROAD	THE HUB	D1	N/A	N/A	
HIGH STREET	MICHAEL JAMES	A1	COMP	IND	
HIGH STREET	THE NAIL HAUS	SG	N/A	N/A	
HIGH STREET	OLIVE	A3	N/A	N/A	
HIGH STREET	TOP GEAR	A1	COMP	IND	
HIGH STREET	BETWEEN FLITWICK MOTORS AND TOP GEAR	N/A	N/A	N/A	VACANT
HIGH STREET	FLITWICK MOTORS	B1	N/A	N/A	
HIGH STREET	URBAN AND RURAL	A2	N/A	N/A	
HIGH STREET	YORKSHIRE BUILDING SOCIETY	A2	N/A	N/A	
HIGH STREET	COSTA	A3	N/A	N/A	
HIGH STREET	BETWEEN COSTA AND MORE CHOICE	N/A	N/A	N/A	VACANT
KINGS ROAD	AIR EQUIPMENT	B1	N/A	N/A	
KINGS ROAD	CHINA INN	A5	N/A	N/A	
KINGS ROAD	KINGS CHURCH	D1	N/A	N/A	
KINGS ROAD	BOWLS CLUB	D2	N/A	N/A	
KINGS ROAD	THE SWAN	A4	N/A	N/A	
KINGS ROAD	AIR EQUIPMENT (OFFICE)	B1	N/A	N/A	
RUSSELL CENTRE	COUNTRY PROPERTIES	A2	N/A	N/A	



RUSSELL CENTRE	I LOVE HOMES	A2	N/A	N/A	
RUSSELL CENTRE	TAYLORS	A2	N/A	N/A	
RUSSELL CENTRE	CONNELLS	A2	N/A	N/A	
RUSSELL CENTRE	ALLDERS	A1	COMP	REG	
RUSSELL CENTRE	CORAL	A2	N/A	N/A	
RUSSELL CENTRE	DOMINOS	A5	N/A	N/A	
RUSSELL CENTRE	CO OP	A1	CONV	MULT	
STATION ROAD	BARCLAYS	N/A	N/A	N/A	VACANT
STATION ROAD	DG SHORT	A1	COMP	IND	
STATION ROAD	FLITWICK MOTORCYCLES	SG	N/A	N/A	
STATION ROAD	BOB COWELL HALL	D1	N/A	N/A	
STATION ROAD	FLITWICK SCOUTS	D2	N/A	N/A	
STATION SQUARE	MORE CHOICES	A2	N/A	N/A	
STATION SQUARE	MORE CHOICE MORTGAGE CENTRE	A2	N/A	N/A	
STATION SQUARE	DODD AND VAUGHTON	B1	N/A	N/A	
STATION SQUARE	UKCAMERASTORE.CO.UK	A1	COMP	IND	
STATION SQUARE	ALI BARBER	A1	COMP	IND	
STATION SQUARE	KYNANS	A1	COMP	IND	
STATION SQUARE	M AND M PROPERTIES	A2	N/A	N/A	
STATION SQUARE	PEARL OF BENGAL	A3	N/A	N/A	
STATION SQUARE	I LOVE VAPOUR	A1	CONV	REG	
STATION SQUARE	FLITWICK JEWELLERS	A1	COMP	IND	
STATION SQUARE	LOWE-GO'S	A1	COMP	IND	
STATION SQUARE	THE ORIGINAL FLITWICK SANDWICH BAR AND CAFE	A3	N/A	N/A	
STATION SQUARE	FLITWICK FLOWERS	A1	COMP	IND	
STATION SQUARE	AMPHILL AND FLITWICK PHYSIOTHERAPY CENTRE	D1	N/A	N/A	



## CAR PARKING

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Steppingley Road</b>
<b>On Street/ Car Park:</b>	<b>Car Park</b>
<b>Total Spaces:</b>	<b>232</b>
<b>Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>Disabled Spaces:</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024:</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on: Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on: Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Russell Centre</b>
<b>On Street/ Car Park:</b>	<b>Car Park</b>
<b>Total Spaces:</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Disabled Spaces:</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024:</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on: Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on: Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Station</b>
<b>On Street/ Car Park:</b>	<b>Car Park</b>
<b>Total Spaces:</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>Disabled Spaces:</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024:</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on: Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on: Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Tesco</b>
<b>On Street/ Car Park:</b>	<b>Car Park</b>
<b>Total Spaces:</b>	<b>345</b>
<b>Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)</b>	<b>325</b>
<b>Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Disabled Spaces:</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024:</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on: Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on: Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>	<b>80</b>



<b>Name:</b>	<b>Market Car Park</b>
<b>On Street/ Car Park:</b>	<b>Car Park</b>
<b>Total Spaces:</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Disabled Spaces:</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024:</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on: Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on: Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Station Road Car Park</b>
<b>On Street/ Car Park:</b>	<b>Car Park</b>
<b>Total Spaces:</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Disabled Spaces:</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024:</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on: Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on: Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Barclays</b>
<b>On Street/ Car Park:</b>	<b>On Street</b>
<b>Total Spaces:</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Disabled Spaces:</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024:</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on: Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Vacant Spaces on: Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>	<b>2</b>

	A	B	C	D	E
1	APPLICATION	DATE REC	ADDRESS	FTC DECISION	COMMENTS
2	APP/P0240/W/25/3372878	14.10.2025	Land South of Steppingley Road	N/A -Appeal	
3	CB/25/01582/FULL	28.10.2025	17 Chapel Road	Support	No comment
4	CB/25/02922/FULL	29.10.2025	45 Vicarage Hill	Support	No comment
5	CB/25/03130/LB	04.11.2025	17 Church Road	Support	No comment
6	CB/25/03279/FULL	23.10.2025	Land to the North East of Steppingley Road	FTC Application	FTC Application
7	CB/25/03264/OUT	13.11.2025	Land off Trafalgar Drive & Salisbury Road	Object	<a href="#">Click here</a>
8	CB/25/03389/FULL	25.11.2025	22 Gardeners Close	Support	No comment
9	CB/25/03822/FULL	15.12.2025	27 Water Lane	Support	
10	CB/TRE/25/00545	16.12.2025	11 Naseby Place	Support	
11	CB/25/02526/FULL	16.12.2025	6 High Street	Support	There is a functioning car maintenance / repair workshop at the rear of the property, which also offers MOT tests. This would expose users of the proposed communal garden to noise, fumes, visitor traffic etc. associated with a working garage. We would question whether the outside space is a good idea
12	CB/25/03483/FULL	16.12.2025	6 Kings Road	Support	
13	CB/25/03904/RD	18.12.2025	Footbridge for Flitwick Railway Station		
14	CB/25/03806/FULL	23.12.2025	14 Willow Way	Support	
15	CB/25/03328/FULL	07.01.2026	53 Station Road		
16	CB/25/03850/VOC	09.01.2026	Land to the rear of 2 High Street		

	F
1	<b>CBC DECISION</b>
2	
3	
4	Granted
5	Granted
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8	Granted
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11	
12	
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14	
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