



**FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL**  
**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)