



FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Community Services Committee meeting held on Tuesday 2nd July 2024 at the Rufus Centre

Present:

Cllr Thompson (Chairman)
Cllr Toinko (Vice Chair)
Cllr Platt
Cllr Wilsmore
Cllr Connell
Cllr Livens
Cllr Snape
Cllr Earles

Stacie Lockey - Town Clerk (TC)
Susan Eldred - Community Services and Amenities Manager
Sarah Burgess – Amenities Officer
Darren Bushey - Public Realm Supervisor
Sue Quinn - Community Services Officer (CSO, SQ)
Zoe Putwain - Community Services Officer (CSO, ZP)
Mattew Earles - Business and Facilities Manager (Remote)

1 Member of the public

1185. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Gleave due to work commitments.

No apologies were received by Cllr Clare Copleston

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies from Cllr Gleave due to work commitments.

1186. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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

1187. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked everybody including Officers and Members who were involved in making the Family Fun Day a success and those that supported the Pride Picnic.

The Chairman also raised the long agenda and the frequency of the Community Services Committee. The need to potentially increase the meetings to monthly rather than bimonthly was suggested to Members.. No Members raised concerns about the increase in meetings with the hope that the increase would allow for smaller agendas.

Action – TC / Reception

1188. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No members of the public chose to address the Committee at this time

1189. INVITED SPEAKER

There were no invited speakers at the meeting.

1190. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

In previous meetings a tour with CBC Highways Officers was suggested, with a delay in implementation due to the change in the Committee. The Community Services and Amenities Manager was asked to investigate possible dates and create a poll for Members on availability and attendance.

Action – CSAM

1191. MINUTES

- a. For Members to receive and adopt the minutes of the Community Services meeting held on **Tuesday 7th May 2024**. with no amendments.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Community Services Minutes held on Tuesday 7th May with no amendments.

Action – Reception

1192. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Members asked for clarification as to the progress of the new proposed introduction to dog bins at high waste areas, specifically Naseby and Trafalgar sites previously discussed. The Amenities Officer confirmed that there had been a decline in use of the bins and as such correspondence with CBC was not required at this time.

1193. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. **Election of Vice Chair**

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Toinko as Vice Chair of the Community Services Committee.

b. **Working Groups Membership**

The Committee was asked to elect members to the Allotment Working Group, Public Art Working Group and Nature Park Working Group.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept Cllr Livens, Cllr Platt and Cllr Thompson as appointed members of the **Allotment Working Group**.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept Cllr Wilsmore, Cllr Platt and Cllr Thompson as appointed members of the **Public Art Working Group**.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept Cllr Wilsmore, Cllr Toinko and Cllr Thompson as appointed members of the **Nature Park Working Group**.

c. **Event Review**

Members received an extensive report from the Community Services & Amenities Manager and considered recommendations within the report. The report looked into the current Community Services activities and events and how they impacted the Community. The

Chairman introduced the report and clarified that a lot of the profit and loss reports identified losses, however these were expected and that the Community Services budget was not expected to make always make profits. The purpose of the report was to identify if the losses incurred were acceptable, given the outcome they achieved.

The CSAM, clarified to members that the level of loss included staff costs and room hire and if these were removed the level of loss would be reduced with a majority of activities breaking even.

Members discussed all the events that had been recommended to be removed. There were extensive discussions in relation to various options and suggestions.

Friday Market Stall – suggested to be reduced from the last Friday of every month to 4 times a year in keeping with the Big Knit dates as there were increased users on those days.

Information drop-in sessions – suggested to stop due to the availability of other organisations being able to attend.

Job Club – suggested to stop due to Officer time and limited interest. An alternative suggestion was made to have a specified time at the Rufus Centre when an Officer is available to assist with enquiries and offer support if required.

Lunch Club – there was a lengthy discussion about whether Lunch Club should continue, and Members questioned the Community value that is received from it. Members were concerned with the impact on the Rufus Centre as it currently takes up a whole day to allow for set up and pack down. It also impacts the Rendezvous significantly. Some Members felt strongly against removing the Lunch Club from the Community Services programme. Members tasked Officers with looking at alternative options for the delivery of Lunch Club. This would be presented to the September meeting.

Tea Dance – It was suggested that the Tea Dance was more of a commercial event as opposed to Community and as such would work more with the Rufus Team.

Older Peoples Christmas Lunch - Members were concerned with the level of impact this event had on Officer time and the Rendezvous Café. There were also comments regarding the number of attendees that were non-Flitwick residents. Cllr Livens strongly felt that the event should remain and commented that it would be a significant loss for the attendees that had been coming for a number of years.

Painting Circle - Due to the low volume of users and community impact, it was suggested to remove this from the Community Service program and to offer the group the opportunity to run it themselves as a drop-in. It was noted that the group would be offered the Stocksfield Room, as per other Community activity.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to

- Reduce the Friday Market visits to four a year in line with the Big Knit.
- Stop delivering the information drop-in sessions.
- Reallocating the Job Club to a drop-in session at the Rufus Centre on specific days/times.
- Stop delivering the Tea Dances as a Community event but offering it to the Rufus Centre as a commercial event.
- Removing the Painting Circle from the Community Services programme and offering the group to run it themselves as a drop-in session.
- Removing the Over 60s Christmas Lunch from the events calendar with immediate effect.

Action – CSO (SQ & ZP)

d. **Play Areas – Updated Forward Capital Plan**

Members received a report from the Amenities Officer and considered the recommendations within the report in relation to the Play areas and predicted expenditure.

Members expressed that the play parks were high on the Annual Residents Survey as important to residents, and it was felt that an increased budget and priority may be required.

Members felt that the Millennium Park required some improvements and suggested this be prioritised. The Town Clerk commented that any improvements to this park would need justification as Officers were not in favour of replacing equipment that was currently fit for purpose. A suggestion was made to carry out some community engagement with users of the park to see what, if any, improvements residents would like to see.

Action – AO

e. Fees review for Burial Ground, Allotments and Football Pitches

Members received a report from the Amenities Officer and considered the recommendations within the report.

It was **RESOLVED** to not increase Allotment fees for 2026/27, Football Pitch fees 2025/26 and Burial Fees for 2025/26

f. Road Closure Training

Members received a report from the Community Services Officer and considered the recommendations within the report in relation to the training of staff to implement road closures and the purchase of signage to allow for the implementation of the training.

Concerns were raised about the abuse staff might receive when manning the road closures.

It was suggested that other local parishes be approached to see if there was an interest in sharing the attendance and cost of activity.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to accept quote A for the purchase of signs at a cost of £2,453.13. This would require £1,453.13 to be allocated from the Projects Fund.

It was **RESOLVED** to train up to 12 Members of staff in 'Traffic Management for Community Events' at a cost of £1,130.00.

Action – CSO (ZP)

g. Public Art Consultation Results

Members received a report from the Community Services Officer and considered the recommendations within the report in relation to suggestions of Public Art projects.

Members discussed the various options suggested with the Musical Park in Hinksley being received well, although concerns as to the location being near residential dwellings being raised.

The Graffiti wall had a positive response with the location suggested as the Skate Park, It was suggested that the location would need to be thought about to ensure that it was not

obstructing any CCTV cameras or supporting any anti-social behaviours by creating less visible areas. Members discussed the option of carved benches in Manor Park, it was felt that benches were a good option but alternative styles to carved benches should be investigated.

Both the suggestion of Illuminations at Manor Park and the Portraits of the Town were not deemed an avenue worth considering at this time.

It was **RESOLVED** to investigate the costings for the Musical Park, Graffiti Wall and Benches. This would be discussed at the September meeting.

Action – CSO (SQ)

h. Community Fridge Update and Forward Plans

Members received a detailed report from Cllr Snape and the Community Services Officer.

Cllr Snape addressed Members confirming an increase in volunteers, the relocation of the Community Fridge and challenges due to other charity allocations of collection slots in the local area.

The Flitwick Community Fridge has been working in partnership with Clophill Food Hub, Ampthill Food Bank and the Need project to distribute surplus food. To help reduce food waste further, out of date food was taken to Animal Edge and utilised on the farm. Purchasing a van, subject to funding, to improve access and distribution was suggested as a way in which to enhance the service. The possibility of having an electric van and charging point was mentioned.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- 1 - Endorsed a 'Community Food Hub' style service from the Rufus Centre when the fridge is relocated.
- 2 - Allocated time for the Community Services Officer to make a National Lottery Grant Application to fund the purchase of a 'Caddy' style van.
- 3 – Extended the service of the Community Fridge to include taking fresh fruit and vegetables to deprived areas in Flitwick at least twice a week in a van.
 - *Action – CSO (SQ)*

i. UKSPF Community Grant Match Funding

Members received a report from the Amenities Officer and considered the recommendations within the report in relation to a request to allocate £8000 from the Projects Fund to match fund the UKSPF Grant at 20%. The purpose of the application to be an extension of the Skate Park.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to allocate £8000 from the Project Fund to match fund the UKSPF Community Grant at 20% for extension to the Skate Park.

j. Central Bedfordshire Council - Arts and Culture Strategy

Members decided not to respond as a Council but discussed responding as residents. It was also suggested that the Communications & Marketing Manager could share via social media.

Action – CMM

k. Annual Residents Survey

Members considered the Annual Residents Survey comments related to Community Services. It was noted that a majority of the comments from the survey related to CBC services and not FTC and due to the time scale of the collation of the data, some of the comments had already been addressed with the CBC authority.

It was expressed that the comments should be shared with CBC in a more structured format to show the concerns of Flitwick residents.

It was noted that learnings would be taken under consideration when reviewing the upcoming strategy.

Action – TC

1194. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Community Financial Report

Members received and noted a report from the Senior Finance Officer

b. Officer Update

Members received and noted the Officer update report from the Community Services & Amenities Team and Public Realm Team.

c. Wildflower Maintenance Schedule

Members received and noted the wildflower maintenance schedule.

d. Hinksley Road Playing Field Site Plan – Projects

e. Members received and noted the Hinksley Road playing field plan.

1195. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No items.

1196. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

a. Youth Report

Members received a report from the youth provider. Members requested additional information in relation to the outreach provision, with further details of the Mentor Support programme and volume of Flitwick young people.

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

•

Action – CSAO

Meeting ended at 21.55 pm