



Flitwick Town Council

Financial Statement Year End 2023-2024

(Not Subject to Audit)

Flitwick Town Council
The Rufus Centre, Steppingley Road, Flitwick, Bedfordshire, MK45 1AH
Web: www.flitwick.gov.uk Email: info@flitwick.gov.uk
Tel: 01525 631900

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Council Information

Council Members for the Financial Year 2023-2024

Town Mayor – Andy Snape

Deputy Town Mayor – John Roberts

Other Members:

Clare Coplestone

Clare Thompson

Dan Toinko

Fraser Patterson

Howard Hodges

Ian Blazeby

James Gleave

Martin Platt

Robert Wilsmore

Sue Livens

Tim Parsons

Tina Connell

Toby Harald

Town Clerk & Chief Executive – Stacie Lockey

Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) – Stephanie Stanley

Auditors – Mazars LLP (Smaller Authorities External Audit Team)

Internal Auditors – Auditing Solutions Limited

Introduction

Managing Change

Flitwick Town Council (FTC) has maintained a stable financial status from an accounting perspective. However, it underwent significant but managed change in the 2023-24 financial year. The main change originated from the decision to proceed with budgeting and year-end processes without a contracted Accountant. Officers have embraced this change of direction and have been empowered to increase their skill sets with guidance from external consultants for accounting health checks and year-end.

The Council's Committee Structure has been altered to suit FTC's operations better. The Corporate Services Committee, which was formally responsible for overseeing financial operations, was disbanded, and instead, a Finance Scrutiny Working Group (FSWG) was created. Members elected to this Group have either an interest or a background in finance and accounting. These Members have dedicated their time and expertise to support the Officer team with all aspects of financial operations, including spreading annual costs for the Council's traded service, forecasting, and financial plans for projects. The Council's Financial Regulations have also been revised to reflect the work undertaken at FTC accurately while ensuring that legislation is correctly followed. Significant work has also been done to complete a review of Council assets.

The Ethos of FTC

FTC is not an average Town Council. It prides itself on providing its community with various statutory and discretionary services and operating a traded service from the Rufus Centre. New initiatives are established, business needs are considered, and current services are constantly re-evaluated depending on community needs, balanced with the day-to-day accounting requirements.

Due to this forward-thinking ethos and the fact that it provides more services than an average Town Council, FTC's financial operations are vast. This includes the necessary financial operations of the Town Council services and its traded services (the Rufus Centre and Rendezvous Café) while complying with governance and legal responsibilities.

Priorities for 2024-25

As FTC progresses to 2024-25, financial priorities include further automation of internal processes and formalising the FSWG Group into a Standing Committee of the Council with delegated powers, which will build on its positive impact so far. The Group will also oversee the financial plans for major projects, such as the refurbishment of 3 Station Road.

The Council is set to review its Corporate Strategy and, as always, its financial responsibilities and ensuring best value underpins all operations and service provision.

Council & RFO Responsibilities

The Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and the Corporate Risk Register document the Council's responsibilities. These are reviewed annually, and any revised model versions published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) are reviewed when released to ensure the Council's documents adhere to any changes.

The Council is responsible for:

- Making arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs.
- Appointing one of its Officers to be responsible for administering those affairs. At this Council, that Officer is Stephanie Stanley (Deputy Town Clerk & RFO), and Stacie Lockey (Town Clerk & Chief Executive) has been appointed Deputy RFO.
- Managing its financial affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguarding its assets.
- Approving the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).
- Approving the Financial Statement (not subject to audit).

The RFO has a range of responsibilities, but for the Year End Accounts, they are responsible for:

- Preparing the Unaudited Financial Statement following Part 4 of the 'Governance & Accountability for Local Practitioners – A Practitioner's Guide (England),' so far as applies to this Council.
- Presenting a true and fair view of the Council's financial position at 31st March 2023 and its income and expenditure for the year.
- Preparing the AGAR to reflect the Council's financial position and the associated income and expenditure.
- Facilitating a public consultation, known as a Notice of Public Rights, for 30 working days for members of the public to view the unaudited accounts from 1st July.
- Keeping proper accounting records up to date.
- Taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

RFO Certificate

I certify that the Financial Statement fairly presents the Council's financial position as of 31st March 2024 and its income and expenditure for the year ended 2023-24.

SCStanley

Stephanie Stanley

RFO

18th June 2024

Income & Expenditure

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
<u>FINANCE & General Purposes</u>							
Income	2,944	1,144,961	1,080,059	(64,902)			106.0%
Expenditure	68,812	672,389	532,529	(139,860)	0	(139,860)	126.3%
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(65,868)</u>	<u>472,573</u>					
plus Transfer from EMR	4,605	160,792					
less Transfer to EMR	0	98,072					
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(61,263)</u>	<u>535,293</u>					
<u>BUSINESS Impro & Develop Board</u>							
Income	72,476	858,047	660,300	(197,747)			129.9%
Expenditure	77,521	684,686	646,010	(38,676)	0	(38,676)	106.0%
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(5,045)</u>	<u>173,361</u>					
<u>COMMUNITY Services</u>							
Income	(187)	89,822	84,152	(5,670)			106.7%
Expenditure	47,097	585,184	645,972	60,788	0	60,788	90.6%
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(47,284)</u>	<u>(495,362)</u>					
plus Transfer from EMR	368	368					
less Transfer to EMR	3,972	10,681					
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(50,888)</u>	<u>(505,675)</u>					
<hr/>							
Grand Totals:- Income	75,233	2,092,830	1,824,511	(268,319)			114.7%
Expenditure	193,430	1,942,258	1,824,511	(117,747)	0	(117,747)	106.5%
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(118,197)</u>	<u>150,572</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(150,572)</u>			
plus Transfer from EMR	4,973	161,160					
less Transfer to EMR	3,972	108,753					
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(117,196)</u>	<u>202,978</u>					

Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR)

The Council must submit its Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2023-24 to the External Auditor by 30th June 2024. The accounts contained in this return present fairly the Council's financial position, are consistent with the underlying financial records, and have been prepared based on Income and Expenditure.

The AGAR for 2023-24 is shown below:

		<u>Last Year £</u>	<u>This Year £</u>	<u>General Notes for Guidance</u>
1	Balances brought forward	886,274	1,045,268	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of the previous year.
2	(+) Precept or Rates and Levies	885,564	1,001,205	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3	(+) Total other receipts	1,004,600	1,091,625	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4	(-) Staff costs	906,588	929,651	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5	(-) Loan interest/capital repayments	87,687	76,647	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6	(-) All other payments	736,895	935,961	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7	(=) Balances carried forward	1,045,268	1,195,839	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. [Must equal (1+2+3)-(4+5+6)]
8	Total value of cash and short term investments	1,030,877	1,205,617	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9	Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	5,809,099	7,127,652	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10	Total borrowings	866,892	810,787	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

Balance Sheet

31st March 2023

31st March 2024

Net Value	<u>Fixed Assets</u>	Cost of Asset	Depreciation	Net Value
<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	Long Term Assets			
<u>0</u>			<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	Current Assets			
47,898	DEBTORS	35,906		
8,151	BURIAL GROUND & CEMETRIES	447		
42,906	PREPAYMENTS	39,477		
0	Mthly Business Prepays	5,345		
0	PrePayment for Land Sale	47,844		
0	Accrued Income	4,733		
3,204	Bank Interest Accrued	0		
2,500	Bar Stock	3,886		
4,500	Rendezvous Foodstuffs Stock	4,953		
1,500	GRANT DEBTORS	0		
28,716	GRANT DEBTORS CAPITAL	0		
5,317	Current Bank Ac Barclays 009	5,018		
169,934	Barclays Business Reserve 106	136,295		
1,411	PDQ Account	1,000		
0	Tenants Deposits Account	41,209		
400	Petty Cash Control	400		
400	Float - Main Safe	400		
400	Float - Cafe Safe	400		
15	Float - Reception Safe	15		
0	Float - Cafe Till Drawer	80		
853,000	CCLA PSDF Account	1,020,800		
<u>1,170,252</u>				<u>1,348,208</u>
	1,170,252 Total Assets			1,348,208
	Current Liabilities			
1,195	DEBTORS CNTRL-FUNCTIONS	8,693		
1,803	VAT DUE/REPAYABLE	1,902		
5,806	CREDITORS	23,904		
9,016	ACCRUAL - LOAN INTEREST	8,493		

31st March 2023

31st March 2024

18,584	ACCRUALS	18,438
13,737	PAYE/NI DUE	18,645
16,753	LGPS Pension Control	11,886
0	NEST Pension Control	2,619
6,335	INCOME IN ADVANCE	2,973
6,983	Past Yr TM Charity	5,009
0	Past Yr TM Allow & Civic Recep	1,591
41,425	RENT DEPOSITS	45,751
0	Refundable Deposits (Functions	1,500
3,346	Barclaycard Year End balance	963
<u>124,984</u>		<u>152,369</u>
1,045,268	Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	1,195,839
	Long Term Liabilities	
<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>
1,045,268	Total Assets Less Long Term Liabilities	1,195,839
	Represented By	
718,139	GENERAL RESERVE	453,445
29,000	EMR Youth Provision	0
5,000	EMR Community Involvement	0
202,062	Central Project Fund	106,432
3,704	EMR Election Costs	3,704
0	EMR Do Not Spend Ops Reserves	500,000
0	EMR IT Equipment 24/25	6,457
22,641	EMR Allotments	25,088
5,294	EMR Cost of Living	13,160
0	EMR Steppingley Rd Legal Fees	57,050
500	EMR Youth HUB	0
15,814	EMR Community Events	3,000
28,514	Capital Financing Reserve	0
14,600	Capital Receipts Reserve	14,600
0	PROJ - Nature Park	1,687
0	PROJ - Flitwick Town Sq Defib	722
0	PROJ - Heritage Website	3,800
0	PROJ - Rural Match Fund Bench	2,000
0	PROJ - Lockyer Suite Works	524
0	PROJ - Hub Car Pk Delineation	800
0	PROJ - Office Room 28 Refurb	3,370
<u>1,045,268</u>		<u>1,195,839</u>

31st March 2023

31st March 2024

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the authority as at 31st March 2024 and reflects its income and expenditure during the year.

Signed Chairman

ASnape

Date 18.6.24

Signed Responsible Finance Officer

SCStanley

Date 18.6.24

Supplementary Information for Year End

The following sections have been compiled as supplementary information to be viewed alongside the Council's AGAR submission. FTC aims to give residents clear financial information for transparency and openness.

1. Budgets & Actuals Compared

		23/24 Budget	23/24 Actual	Variance +/-
Finance & General Purposes	Income	1,080,059	1,144,962	64,903
	Expenditure	532,529	672,389	-139,860
	+/-	547,530	472,573	
Business Improvement & Development	Income	660,300	858,047	197,747
	Expenditure	646,010	684,686	-38,676
	+/-	14,290	173,361	
Community Services	Income	84,152	89,822	5,670
	Expenditure	645,972	585,184	60,788
	+/-	-561,820	-495,362	
Flitwick Town Council	Income	1,824,511	2,092,831	268,320
	Expenditure	1,824,511	1,942,259	-117,748
	+/-	0	150,572	
			Overall 23/24 surplus	

2. Surplus/Deficit 2023-24

The Council is pleased to announce that its surplus for 2023-24 is £150,572. The Rufus Centre's traded service (including the Rendezvous Café) is the driving force behind this surplus for Flitwick. Members are due to consider what proportion of the surplus goes to General Reserves and how much is earmarked for specific projects, such as the 3 Station Road refurbishment and Rufus Centre upgrades.

The surplus/deficit by Committee is as follows:

Finance & General Purposes	+£472,573
Business Improvement & Development Board	+£173,361
Community Services	-£495,362
	= +£150,572 (surplus)

The difference between the business and overall surplus can be explained mostly by the £21,499 overspending on Legal Costs. This overspending was largely due to essential professional fees to update the Council's legal records and land registration documents.

The Precept received from Central Bedfordshire Council for the year ended 2023-24 was £1,001,205. The surplus generated demonstrates that the Council has achieved a better financial out-turn than what was budgeted for.

3. Flitwick Town Council Employees

The Council employed 28 employees during 2023-24 (9 part-time). All staff were paid according to the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services pay scales.

Due to the business team (Rufus Centre/Rendezvous) needing assistance with hospitality for private functions and to cover annual leave/busy periods in the Rendezvous Café, several casual staff are included in FTC's monthly payroll.

4. Pension Costs

The pension contributions paid by FTC during 2023-24 amounted to £138,273. The Council operates two pension streams for its employees:

- The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)
- NEST Pension Scheme

Casual staff are not entitled to pension benefits with FTC.

5. Town Mayor's Charity Fundraising & Allowance

Town Mayor's Charity Fundraising

Throughout the Civic Year, from May 2023 to May 2024, the Town Mayor fundraised for his chosen charities (Tibbs Dementia Foundation and SOS Outreach Service). The amounts raised were:

Tibbs Dementia Foundation	£3,355.71
SOS Outreach Service	£2,200.52

As the Civic Year differs slightly from the financial year, the Council chooses to account for funds raised from 01 April 2024 – 21 May 2024 using a 'holding nominal code' before presenting the charities with their fundraised amounts at the end of the term.

During 2023-24, the Council created a separate charity for the Town Mayor's fundraising, complete with a constitution of Trustees (the Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chairman of the Community Services Committee, and Ex-officio Trustee—the Town Clerk). This decision allows for crowdfunding, gift aid benefits for corporate responsibility requirements for business support and additional access to grants, which

will positively impact any Town Mayor's charities selected going forward. The Town Mayor's Charity also fundraises for other community initiatives and projects.

FTC will continue to support the Town Mayor's Charity organisation for any set-up costs and general administrative assistance required. FTC has agreed to support the charity with its bank charges.

Town Mayor's Allowance

The Town Mayor's Allowance is a budget set by the Council annually. A policy is adopted (and subsequently reviewed) that details the expenditure that can be coded to this budget throughout the year. It covers expenses such as mileage costs and ticket entry to civic engagements as the Town Mayor represents the Council as part of their role. The Town Mayor is required to provide receipts for any claim. The Town Mayor's Allowance budget (including the Civic Reception event) for 2023-24 was set at £4,000, all of which was spent.

6. General Power of Competence (GPC)

The GPC gives Councils the freedom to act when there is no specific power. Under the Localism Act 2011, under the GPC, 'a local authority has the power to do anything that individuals generally may do.' The criteria for any Council to adopt the GPC is:

- To have a CiLCA Qualified Clerk
- Two-thirds of Members need to have stood for election

For FTC and the purpose of the year ended 2023-24, there were two qualified Clerks (Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk), and the Council satisfied the criteria of having two-thirds of its Members elected to the Office of Councillor.

The Council's decision to adopt the GPC was accurately recorded at the first meeting of FTC following the elections in May 2022.

7. Asset Register

FTC is required to have an Asset Register, which is submitted to the External Auditor as part of the Year End process. Significant work has been undertaken to review the Council's Asset Register this year to ensure it accurately reflects assets owned in the following categories:

- Land & Buildings
- Vehicles & Equipment
- The Rufus Centre/Rendezvous Café
- Office Equipment

- Civic Regalia
- Community Assets

The Asset Value (Box 9 on the Annual Return) for 2023-24 was £7,127,652. This amounted to £1,318,553 more than in 2022-23 (£5,809,099). The main reasons behind this variance were:

- The in-depth Asset Review – a long overdue piece of work. Many assets were missing from previous years’ registers.
- Purchases relating to the Rufus Centre for upgrades/modernisation of the building (including equipment for the Rendezvous Café).

The variance for next year is not likely to see such a high rise as there will not be any need for another full review, and the Asset Register will be proactively updated throughout the year.

A surplus of £105,572 was achieved irrespective of the increased asset purchases from this financial year.

The 2023-24 Asset Register also lists figures relating to investment and loans separately.

8. Debtors

Debtors include all organisations, suppliers, customers, etc., who owe the Council money as of 31st March 2024. Debtors at year-end can be explained as follows:

	31.03.23	31.03.24
Debtors (including for functions)	£54,854	£27,660
Accrued CCLA Interest	£3,204	£4,733
Stock held (Food & Drink)	£7,000	£8,839
Prepayments	£42,906	£92,666
Total	£107,964	£133,898

The Council operates a robust debt management policy. As the table above indicates, significant work has been undertaken to reduce the general debt within the Council’s sales ledger.

9. Investments & Loans

Public Sector Deposit Fund

The Council opened an investment bank account with Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) in 2021.

Since the Council qualifies as a 'Super Council' as its Precept exceeds £1m and has significant self-generated income from its traded service of the Rufus Centre, it is prudent to have a CCLA account. Through this Public Sector Deposit Fund, the Council benefits from competitive interest rates, and the funds are easily accessible, with withdrawals appearing in the Council's bank account within 24 hours.

CCLA investments qualify as Revenue Investments, and deposits/withdrawals do not fall within the classification of Income and Expenditure on the Annual Return. The end-of-year balance is included in the Bank & Cash Balances (as a Short-Term Investment) in the Annual Return. This year's figure is £1,020,800, which is £167,800 more than the closing balance at the end of 2022-23.

Loans

For the year ended 2023-24, the Council had three loans from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) for the following purchases:

- The Rufus Centre
- Manor Park
- 3 Station Road purchase

The outstanding balances for the loans are listed below:

- The Rufus Centre £9,915.58 (final payment July 2024)
- Manor Park £66,000 (final payment July 2029)
- 3 Station Road purchase £763,291.99 (final payment April 2047)

10. Creditors & Receipts in Advance

	2022-23	2023-24
Creditors		
VAT	£1,803	£1,902
Creditors Control	£5,806	£23,904
Accrued Loan Interest	£9,016	£8,493
General Accruals	£18,584	£18,438
PAYE/NIC	£13,737	£18,645
Pensions	£16,753	£14,505
Rent Deposits	£41,425	£45,751
Refundable Deposits	N/A	£1,500
Barclaycard YE Balance	£3,346	£963
Receipts in Advance		
Income in advance	£6,335	£2,973
TM Charity Allowance income	£6,983	£6,600
Total	£123,788	£143,674

11. Spreading the Cost

The Council needs to spread the cost of its traded service annual expenditure items, including business rates, utility costs, and a selection of annual contract costs (for example, security alarm system, CCTV contract, and kitchen/bar equipment maintenance contract).

Typically, local Town and Parish Councils would not 'spread the cost' of this type of expenditure as there is usually no traded service to Council operations, particularly not on the scale of the Rufus Centre. For these Councils, it is immaterial when this expenditure leaves the bank account. However, for FTC and their need to understand the traded service performance of the Rufus Centre and the Rendezvous Café month by month, these annual fees must be spread over 12 months.

12. Earmarked Reserves

Separate from the General Reserves, the Council has Earmarked Reserves (EMRs), which can be attributed to different projects and initiatives. It also includes separate reserve funds for the statutory service of allotments, as it is a legal requirement for any income received for allotments to be re-invested within the service.

EMRs are set aside for a specific purpose, as approved by the Council, at any given time.

Below is a list of EMRs as of 31st March 2024:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Opening Balance</u>	<u>Net Transfers</u>	<u>Closing Balance</u>
311 EMR Youth Provision	29,000.00	-29,000.00	0.00
312 EMR Community Involvement	5,000.00	-5,000.00	0.00
315 Central Project Fund	202,062.19	-95,629.79	106,432.40
316 EMR Election Costs	3,703.95		3,703.95
319 EMR Do Not Spend Ops Reserves	0.00	500,000.00	500,000.00
320 EMR IT Equipment 24/25	0.00	6,457.00	6,457.00
324 EMR Allotments	22,641.22	2,447.00	25,088.22
330 EMR Cost of Living	5,293.60	7,866.00	13,159.60
331 EMR Steppingley Rd Legal Fees	0.00	57,050.00	57,050.00
333 EMR Youth HUB	500.00	-500.00	0.00
335 EMR Community Events	15,813.84	-12,813.84	3,000.00
340 Capital Financing Reserve	28,513.77	-28,513.77	0.00
350 Capital Receipts Reserve	14,600.00		14,600.00
800 PROJ - Nature Park	0.00	1,687.00	1,687.00
801 PROJ - Flitwick Town Sq Defib	0.00	722.00	722.00
802 PROJ - Heritage Website	0.00	3,800.00	3,800.00
803 PROJ - Rural Match Fund Bench	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
804 PROJ - Lockyer Suite Works	0.00	524.00	524.00
805 PROJ - Hub Car Pk Delineation	0.00	800.00	800.00
806 PROJ - Office Room 28 Refurb	0.00	3,370.00	3,370.00
	<u>327,128.57</u>	<u>415,265.60</u>	<u>742,394.17</u>

Introduced during 2023-24, as part of the Council's General Reserves Policy, an EMR that amounts to 50% of the annual Precept from Central Beds Council (£500,000) has been created. This ensures that six months of net expenditure is ringfenced for contingency funds.

For the 2023-24 year-end, there has been an alteration to the EMRs to include those set up for projects, represented by '800' codes. The budgets for these projects (see 7 above) have been approved by the Council before year-end and will remain EMRs until each project is completed.

Other EMR movements during the year include creating an IT equipment fund to replace Office laptops and transferring unspent EMRs that are no longer needed back into General Reserves.

13. Central Projects Fund

Throughout the year, proposals can be submitted to the Council for consideration for new projects. The Scheme of Delegations states that the Full Council must approve project expenditure, not individual Committees. Projects can be for any area of Council operations, including Community Services and the Business Improvement & Development Board.

For some projects, grant funding will likely be secured to assist with financing the capital projects. For this financial year, grants have been secured from various funding sources, including Central Beds Council (Section 106, Planning Obligation Green Infrastructure Fund, Youth Provision) and Hubbub. These grants have assisted with Council projects, including the Community Fridge initiative and the Nature Park.

As demonstrated in the EMRs section, the accounting process for agreed Council projects has changed. Previously, projects and their approved budgets were accounted for within the revenue budget as expenditure codes. During the year-end process for 2023-24, the Council has been advised to account for projects within its EMRs. This simplifies the accounting processes and allows projects to run over two or more financial years.

For 2023-24, the Central Projects Fund opening balance was £202,062, with an additional £50,000 contribution from the Precept.

The closing balance was £106,432.

The following projects were completed during 2023-24:

- Manor Park Heritage Works
- Skatepark Lighting
- Outdoor PA System Purchase
- Street Furniture for Town Square
- CCTV for Skatepark & Town Square
- CCTV Data Impact Assessment
- Rendezvous Café Mixer Purchase
- Deployable CCTV Camera
- Replacement of Equipment – Davis Suite at the Rufus Centre
- Refurbishment of Tenanted Offices 3, 17, 18 & 19 at the Rufus Centre
- Digital Signage at the Rendezvous Café
- Flooring Works – Lockyer Suite at the Rufus Centre

This shows that the Council has committed significant investment to improving the town's facilities and upgrading the Rufus Centre and its on-site Rendezvous Café.

14. Grant Aid - Benefits in Kind

Local Organisations

The Council is committed to supporting local not-for-profit organisations and charities. It supports several local organisations by providing Council land for their buildings and having a peppercorn rent agreement for these sites (ground leases).

Subsidised ground rent for local organisations is listed below:

Flitwick Girl Guiding - £1,750 per annum

Flitwick Scout Group - £3,500 per annum (original valuation doubled as an estimated new value since the site has been extended)

Flitwick & Ampthill Sea Cadets - £2,500 per annum

Flitwick & District Royal British Legion - £1,000 per annum

Flitwick Gardeners' Association shares a building with the Council's Tractor Store and, like the above organisations, has a lease agreement to occupy the space on Council land for their group.

The Rufus Centre

As a Community Hub, the Rufus Centre offers free space for charity organisations or not-for-profit groups to meet. The Stocksfield Room is the Council's designated room for this purpose, and for the year ended 2023-24, it has accommodated 404 bookings. These bookings were made up of 24 different organisations, and based on the commercial hourly rate for this room (£33.75), the Council has provided a benefit in kind to the value of £31,792.50 in the 2023-24 financial year.

The Council has proactively considered increasing the use of the Rufus Centre space and has an informal agreement with SHARE: Flitwick & Ampthill. This important and well-used community initiative acts as a 'Library of Things', offering the option to borrow items rather than buy something new.

Next Steps

As the Council progresses into 2024-25, it aspires to quantify the social value it offers its community through its operations, and this will form part of the new Corporate Strategy.