



# Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

## Minutes of a meeting of the Full Council of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council held at Sports Hall - Newton Leys Pavilion on Tuesday, 22nd November, 2022 commencing at 7.30 pm

**Present:** Cllrs E Kelly-Wilson, R Graham, S Elhasoglu, A Palmer, G Bedford, S Browne, K Ely, R Haine, E Hume, E O'Rourke, S Porter, A Segebrecht, T Stephens, M Wymer, I Hussein and U Osumili

**Absent:** Cllrs L Campbell, M Imran and A Khanom

**Apologies:** Cllrs S Clark and M McDonald

**In attendance:** Delia Shephard (Town Clerk), John Fairclough (Support Services Manager) and Alison Brown (Finance Manager)

### Min Ref

FC22/23-68 **Councillors' apologies for absence**  
It was RESOLVED that the apologies for absence and the absences without apologies as listed above be noted.

FC22/23-69 **Councillors' declarations of interest in matters on the agenda**  
No declarations of interest were made.

FC22/23-70 **Draft minutes of meeting of full council held Tuesday, 4 October 2022**  
It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the last meeting be approved as a correct record.

FC22/23-71 **Variation of order of business**  
It was RESOLVED that the order of business be amended to allow item 8 on the agenda concerning Coronation Hall to be dealt with next.

FC22/23-72 **Coronation Hall**  
Members were reminded of the council's previous decision made on 5 May 2022 (minute reference FC21/22-103) to take on the role of sole custodian trustee for Water Eaton Coronation Hall and noted a report from the clerk summarising communications and meetings between the charity, the council and the council's legal advisors.

It was RESOLVED that the town council's original decision to act as custodian trustee for the Coronation Hall property be confirmed.

It was agreed that the town council's solicitors would be instructed to act in this matter and the legal costs of the transfer of custodian trustees would be met by the council and recharged to the charity with their agreement. It was further noted that the change of trustees would trigger first registration of the property with the land registry and again the town council's solicitors would be instructed to effect the registration and the fees would be recharged to the charity with their agreement. The legal fees were anticipated to be c £2,500 plus any land registry fees.

FC22/23-73 **Public Speaking**  
There were no representations from members of the public.



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FC22/23-74 **Draft minutes of recent meetings of committees of the council for noting and consideration of any recommendations therein**

FC22/23-74.i **Draft minutes of meeting of the Community Committee held on Tuesday, 11 October 2022**

It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2022 be noted.

FC22/23-74.ii **Draft minutes of meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee held on Tuesday, 25 October 2022**

It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2022 be noted.

### **Recommendations:**

i Minute reference FC22/23-35i

It was RESOLVED that the draft investment policy recommended by the committee be approved and adopted with immediate effect.

ii Minute reference FC22/23-35ii

It was RESOLVED that the draft procurement policy recommended by the committee be approved and adopted with immediate effect.

iii Minute reference FC22/23-36

It was RESOLVED that the draft scale of charges recommended by the committee be approved and adopted with effect from the financial year beginning 1 April 2023.

FC22/23-74.iii **Draft Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Planning Committee held on 9 November 2022**

It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2022 be noted.

### **Recommendations**

i Minute reference EPC22/23-17i

It was RESOLVED that the scheme of delegations be amended to change the status of the Climate Change Subcommittee and the Community Events Subcommittee to that of working groups with immediate effect.

ii Minute reference EPC22/23-17ii

It was RESOLVED that the draft environmental policy recommended by the committee be approved and adopted with immediate effect.

FC22/23-75 **Co-option to the casual vacancy in the Newton Leys ward of the town council**  
It was RESOLVED that Uche Osumili be co-opted to the council to fill the casual vacancy in the ward of Newton Leys

Cllr Osumili made his declaration of acceptance of office and was welcomed to the council by the chair on behalf of all members and officers.

FC22/23-76 **Election of councillors to vacancies on current committees**



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Following discussion it was RESOLVED that the scheme of delegations be amended to increase the size of the Environment and Planning Committee from 10 members to 11.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Hussein be elected to the Environment and Planning Committee and to the Sycamore Buildings working group.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Elhasoglu be elected to the Community Committee and to the Community Events working group.

It was noted that Cllr Osumili had not yet joined a committee and that membership of committees would be considered again at the January meeting of full council.

FC22/23-77

### **Use of funding from 2021-22 and 2022-23 allocated through the town council's canalside partnership with the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Trust on specific projects**

A report had been provided by the Support Services Manager detailing funding requests made by the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Trust. The funds requested were to be drawn down from £5,000 allocated for the year for 2021-2022 and £5,000 allocated for the year 2022-2023 as part of a three-year funding commitment of £15,000 towards canal-based projects in Bletchley and Fenny which were to be undertaken in partnership with Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterways Trust.

Following discussion it was RESOLVED that the following spending be approved

- i A sum of £5,000 to be contributed towards a feasibility study for a Fenny Stratford Eco Mooring
- ii A sum of £1,300 to be contributed towards a shore unit for the Electra Community boat at Campbell Wharf Marina
- iii A sum of £3,000 to be contributed towards biodiversity research studies from Fenny Lock and towpath usage research which would inform local heritage trails.

Members noted this left funding of £700 from the funding allocation for the first two years of the partnership unspent and an agreement to provide £5,000 in 2023-24 remained and had been included in the draft budget.

FC22/23-78

### **Cost of living crisis funding from Milton Keynes City Council**

It was RESOLVED that correspondence from Milton Keynes City Council offering the town council funding of up to £12,000 as part of the City Council's Cost of Living Plan be noted. The funding was intended to help local councils open 'warm places' and run pop up cafes and other informal social activities where people can meet up, as well as to be warm and enjoy a hot meal.

Since accepting the funding on behalf of the council officers had undertaken an online survey seeking residents' views about what would be most helpful and some preliminary work had been done with partners to explore the best ways of using the funding.



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It was RESOLVED that the acceptance of the funding be confirmed and that approval of the way this funding should be used be delegated to the town council's community committee.

FC22/23-79

### **Application for planning permission for changes to Sycamore Hall and House**

The clerk noted that there had been delays in completion of some of the planning application documents needed for submission of the planning application previously agreed at council on 4 October 2022. The finalised drawings were now anticipated to be ready for submission to MK Council by 25 November and the following outstanding information

- heritage statement
- ecology report
- statement of need
- summary of visitor numbers and feedback from public consultation event

would be available in the next few days. The chair noted that the feedback from the consultation event on the proposed plan to improve disabled access and link the two buildings had not resulted in any changes and residents had been supportive of the design.

It was expected that all the documentation would be ready for submission by the end of the week beginning 28 November 2022.

It was RESOLVED that in view of the length of time required for validation the clerk would be authorized to submit the application and arrange payment of the necessary fee in consultation with the chair and the vice-chair once the documents were ready. However all councillors would have the opportunity to view and comment on the application before this delegated authority was used.

FC22/23-80

### **Customer service and communication standards policy**

A draft customer service and communications standards policy had been circulated before the meeting and this was discussed.

It was RESOLVED that the draft document be approved with one amendment which was to remove entirely the following sentence on page 4 in the section headed Payments

"Council officers are not authorized to accept cash in payment for council services."

FC22/23-81

### **Revised equality and diversity policy**

Following review it was RESOLVED that a revised version of the town council's existing Equality and Diversity Policy be approved and adopted with immediate effect. (The policy had been amended to include an appendix which described the different types of unlawful discrimination but was otherwise unchanged.)

FC22/23-82

### **Policy on the awarding of community grants**

Ad new draft community grant policy had been circulated before the meeting and this was discussed.

It was RESOLVED that the draft policy be adopted with immediate effect with one amendment on page 3. The sentence reading "The community grant funding scheme cannot be used to fund running costs, accommodation or staff salaries." would be amended to read "The community grant funding scheme cannot be used to fund running costs, accommodation or staff salaries unless these costs relate directly to the



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project being delivered.”

FC22/23-83

### **Submission of an application for Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council to become accredited under the Local Council Award Scheme**

Members discussed the council’s aspiration (included in its current delivery plan) to achieve accreditation under the Local Council Award Scheme.

It was RESOLVED that all documentation and information was now in place to meet the requirements for the Quality Award.

Specifically the council had published the following documentation on its website:

- 1 standing orders
- 2 financial regulations
- 3 code of conduct and link to councillors’ registers of interests
- 4 publication scheme
- 5 last annual return
- 6 transparent information about council payments
- 7 calendar of all meetings including the annual meeting of electors
- 8 minutes for at least one full year of full council meetings and committee and sub-committee meetings
- 9 current agendas
- 10 budget and precept information for the current or next financial year
- 11 complaints procedure
- 12 accessibility statement
- 13 privacy notice
- 14 council contact details and councillor information in line with the Transparency Code
- 15 action plan for the current year
- 16 evidence of consulting the community
- 17 publicity advertising council activities
- 18 evidence of participating in town and country planning
- 19 draft minutes of all council and committee meetings within four weeks of the last meeting
- 20 health and safety policy
- 21 policy on equality
- 22 councillor profiles
- 23 community engagement policy
- 24 grant awarding policy
- 25 evidence showing how electors contribute to the annual town meeting
- 26 an action plan and related budget responding to community engagement and setting out a timetable for action and review
- 27 evidence of community engagement, council activities and the promotion of democratic processes
- 28 evidence of helping that community plan for its future.
- 29 a scheme of delegations

and confirmed by resolution that the town council has the following in place:

- 30 a risk management scheme
- 31 a register of assets
- 32 contracts for all members of staff
- 33 up to date insurance policies that mitigate risks to public money
- 34 disciplinary and grievance procedures
- 35 policy for training and development of staff and councillors



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- 36 record of all training undertaken by staff and councillors in the last year
- 37 clerk who has achieved 12 CPD points in the last year
- 38 at least two thirds of its councillors who stood for election
- 39 an annual report actively shared with the community
- 40 evidence of customer service in how the council handles correspondence with the public
- 41 a qualified clerk
- 42 formal appraisal process for all staff

The clerk was instructed to make the submission for accreditation at the next possible opportunity.

FC22/23-84 **Report from the chair of the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and to note the completed scoping document to be used with the planning consultants**

The chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group gave a short oral report on progress with the development of the plan and drew attention to the scoping document prepared by the Steering Group's planning consultants and circulated before the meeting.

It was RESOLVED that the document and the report be noted.

FC22/23-85 **Report from the clerk on recent meetings of the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal Board**

It was RESOLVED that the clerk's written report be noted.

FC22/23-86 **Lease of premises at Barton Road, Bletchley and to approve the lease (if available) or to delegate approval of the lease by the Finance and Governance Committee in December 2022**

The clerk advised that there had been delays with completion of the lease documentation for the town council's depot building which were no fault of the town council's solicitors. It was hoped that the lease would be ready for completion by 13 December and it was RESOLVED that authority to approve the lease document be delegated to the Finance and Governance Committee.

FC22/23-87 **Financial matters**

FC22/23-87.i **Implementation of NJC pay award with effect from 1 April 2022**

It was RESOLVED to note the revised 2022-23 NJC pay scales which had been implemented in accordance with the council's contractual obligations. Back pay due from 1 April 2022 had been included in the November payroll.

FC22/23-87.ii **List of payments made or due to be made by the council before the next meeting of the Finance & Governance Committee**

It was RESOLVED that the list of payments made or due to be made by the town council be ratified.

FC22/23-87.iii **Financial report showing income and expenditure against budget to date**

It was RESOLVED that the financial report showing income and expenditure against budget be noted.

FC22/23-88 **Draft 2023-2024 budget and to seek comments and further proposals from members prior to detailed scrutiny of the budget at the meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee on 6 December 2022**



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A draft budget for the year 2023-2024 was tabled for information and discussion followed. Officers noted that further information was still awaited, and the draft budget would be discussed in detail at the meeting of the Finance Committee on 13 December which all councillors were welcome to attend. A revised draft would then be presented to full council for adoption and agreement on the setting of the precept on 24 January 2023.

The meeting closed at 8.53 pm