

WHITTLESEY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20th February 2025 at 6.30pm at Peel House, 8 Queen Street, Whittlesey, PE7 1AY.

Present: Cllr Miscandlon, Bibb, Dickinson, Dorling, Laws, Mockett, Nawaz, Sennitt-Clough, Wainwright, Wicks.

Officer in Attendance: Sue Piergianni – Town Clerk & RFO

Recording: The recording is made as an aide memoir for the Clerk

F18/2025 To receive apologies from absent members and the reason for the apology.

Cllrs Arman, Boden, Gerstner, Singh-Gill (all personal).

F19/2025. To receive members' declarations of disclosable pecuniary, non-disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests in relation to any agenda items discussed later in the agenda and the Council to decide which items are to be discussed as confidential under agenda item number F36/2025.

Cllr Sennitt-Clough - Agenda item 5 - Member of FDC Planning

Cllr Wainwright – F/26/2025 Item 5 - Member of WTC Planning and does not want to predetermine any future planning applications.

Cllr Bibb - – F/26/2025 Item 5 - Member of WTC Planning

Cllr Miscandlon – Agenda item 5 - Member of WTC Planning

Confidential Items

Residential Flats update.

Drain Quote

Honorary Freeman

F20/2025. Street Scene Officer Report & CCTV update

Members received the report.

F21/2025. Police Report – Councillor only

No police report due to workload, Cllr Miscandlon will investigate the lack of meetings to the Inspector.

F22/2025. To confirm and sign the Minutes from the Full Council Meeting on Thursday 23rd January 2025.

Ratified: The minutes were approved and signed as a true record.

F23/2025 – Presentation by Tracey Macintosh – Funding Events for Military Veterans'

The Great Tommy sleep out was set up by Royal British Legion Industries and this year is on the 29th March at Decoy Lakes. The event raises money to help veterans who are struggling with many issues from PTSD, homelessness, clothing, counselling, retraining and additions. Whittlesey last year had fifty-five participants who raised £4000.00.

This year they are hoping for it to be bigger, they already have the Scouts, The Bearded Villains (East Anglia), veterans, RBL members and many7 more. They have already organised a music night at Childers which was given to them FOC and Stevie B will be performing.

At the music night 50% of the raffle proceeds will go to the Whittlesey ex-servicemen's club, which is run by Malcolm Clifford.

If Whittlesey Town Council could assist with publicity that would be fantastic and if they wish to join in, they would be welcome.

F24/2025 – Presentation by Ashley Dolling, FDC environmental Fenland Project Officer – Country Park

He has been working with Cllr Laws on the viability of resurrecting the country park project, Location will be the same – East of Lattersey Field, South of Half Acre Drove approximately 52 / 56 acres of land. It is listed in WTC local plan, also FDC Nature Recovery Plan. The landowners are interested in selling the land providing a suitable offer is made. The land in theory will be purchased from WTC via grant funding. (Natural Cambridgeshire – Expressions of interest close at end of March). Cambridgeshire Acre interested in taking on the project development, they have provided a proposal and will take on any ongoing additional development including sourcing any revenue and grant funding. There are still some issues which require attention, access etc. He is looking for Town Council support.

Cllr Wicks who will be liable for the ongoing maintenance and management once the project has been completed. Mr Dolling will develop a plan which is commercially viable and look at similar country park models that are self sustaining with Cafés that are self generating. WTC could take on the management or ask the Wildlife Trust to manage it.

Cllr Dorling – The land is sparsely populated – Mr Dolling primary goal to add to the biodiversity plan and to also be self sustaining financially.

If this goes ahead it will be Fenland District Councils first country park.

F25/2025 Public Forum

Twenty-three members of the public

To allow any member of the public to address the council. Time allowed 15 minutes in total to be split equally between the total amount wishing to speak.

Whittlesey resident -medical professional – concern is decline in the infrastructure in Whittlesey – Elderly people standing out in the cold waiting to get a GP App. No further housing should be built until the infrastructure is in place.

Dry Bread Road in disgusting state - wheel washers need to be on site, large vehicles are breaking the speed limit, more signage needs to be present to slow the large vehicles.

Alan Bessant – Would councillors attending the EMWM Liaison group meeting consider asking for public input beforehand and ensure any outcomes are made public. Could the Saxongate Group be advised who is attending the meetings with Johnsons and how many meetings have taken place. Saxongate have noted that CCC have indicated they may stop attending the multi-agency meeting, they are under the impression that the community group has insisted on running it / taken it over. This is not the case; would the Town Council consider taking back control of the meeting and take all the minutes. Could the council please respond to these points.

Andy Stimpson – The A605 is in appalling condition, vehicles are swerving to miss potholes. No white lines at end of Bellman's, these were not replaced after the issue with the sewers 5 years ago.

Patrick Nightingale – Wisbech appear to be getting £5.4 million to be spent for the town over the next 25 years from the proposed Incinerator project, With talk of Whittlesey science parks, battery storage farms, large housing developments and a doubling of Incinerator bottom ash processing, increased HGV traffic etc will any similar ringfenced community funding ever be negotiated for our Town? Please can council to respond on this point?

William Kelman – New development of approx. two hundred homes just off March Road. Coates already suffers with sewage issues, with tankers having to take waste away. No further development should take place.

Robert Windle – Friends of the manor set up 3 years ago, next Tuesday is bimonthly meeting encouraging people to attend, a presentation will be made to the friends of the manor with FDC Findings, what is going to happen at the manor.

Robert Windle – Country Park good to hear about it, but it seems a bit rushed, would it go to public consultation.

Lisa Whitwell – Station Recreation Ground, there is a meeting at FDC on 24th February, where a decision will be made. Three Councillors are against the sale, are all other councillors supporting the proposal to not sell the park for housing.

F26/2025 Agenda items for Discussion.

1. Country Park concept and proposal – Cllr Laws

3 weeks ago, project brought to her attention, she would like to think WTC would be behind this to enable an expression of interest for grant funding to be submitted, it is currently agricultural land (56 acres). Landowners approached and onboard for selling, not for building. We would go out to consultation. A constitution was in place for the previous discussions, the country park would offer areas to camp for cubs/scouts, guides, track around outside, a flower meadow etc. Possible franchise for the cafeteria. A lot of groundwork was undertaken for the previous application. There is many funding opportunities open to us to facilitate this park.

Management - Would there be an obligation on WTC to manage the park and would every resident be subject to the cost liability. The main difference between this and previous proposals is this would become a WTC asset. Previously the yearly maintenance was 30K, this really needs to be outsourced as the cost has gone up.

Cllr Laws proposed that we support this in principle, it was seconded by Cllr Nawaz with a unanimous vote in favour.

2. Proposal to elect a councillor to sit on the liaison group from Eastern Waste Management – Metal Recycling – Cllr Miscandlon proposed Cllr Mockett, seconded Cllr Laws with a unanimous vote in favour. Cllr Mockett advised members that minutes would be circulated when approved.

3. Proposal – Future use of the Tennis Courts – the Chair Cllr Miscandlon asked Cllr Bibb to give an update which is as follows.

Cllr Bibb met today with officers of FDC and advised that things have moved quickly, the tennis and netball club have formed a CIC to run and manage the courts which will be a community asset, there are six named directors three from each organisation, Initial thoughts for the name was Whittlesey Manor Community Courts, but companies house do not like the word court as the CIC have no legal title to use the word court, it will be known as 'WMCC'.

The CIC will be responsible for the day to day running who will be the leaseholder. FDC have agreed that as the surface was not up to a decent standard, they will meet the cost for any surface repairs. FDC have also committed to cover any large expenditure in the early days before the CIC has raised funds, they cannot foresee any large costs, unless an act of vandalism occurs. Cllr Bibb advised the light issues are being resolved now to ensure any groups can use the facility into the evenings. They have plans to raise funds through grants to improve the area. There will be a small social area with storage for all to use accessible from within the court area.

Cllr Bibb was advised there had been questions of how people access the courts for bookings and was asked to get the information for the Clerk. He further advised that the courts are still under the auspices of the FDC and run by Freedom Leisure who do not let anyone book on an ad hoc basis as they do not have the staff to open. He has spoken to Members of the public and advised that if Freedom can get a message to him, he can open the courts.

Councillor Laws advised that via CPCA funding there have been improvements to the surface and relining, could he explain why the courts have been left unused for so long. This is a community asset and not a club asset the facilities should be more open to the public for

example, online booking, timed lighting, locking codes. Part of the reason the tennis club existed was to bring people in and offer tuition. Cllr Bibb advised there is about twenty members in the club, and he is the only qualified Level 2 coach, with good courts, the tennis club would thrive, and the membership would increase. Cllr Bibb advised that during the 'Big Bash' he has carried out coaching and has a list of names from parents who brought their children to coaching, he would be happy to continue coaching for a small fee, and would not exclude children if they did not have the means to pay.

Cllr Bibb concurred with Cllr Laws that it is disgraceful that courts have not been used very much but he is not responsible for them what he is trying to do is become responsible when the CIC comes into existence. Cllr Bibb reiterated that it is still FDC through Freedom Leisure who are responsible for these courts, what he is offering not a problem but a solution.

Cllr Sennitt Clough advised she had lots of questions; she is aware the improvements to the courts were funding by CPCA and had visited the courts with Carol Pilson who a very good Tennis player and she is did not think there was any issue with the courts. Cllr Sennitt Clough suggested that a tennis court booking is like a running track booking, Peterborough running track is let out through the equivalent of Freedom, a simple signing out of the key and deposit would be suitable. She has concern that the brand-new courts are just sitting there and Cllr Bibb is the only one with a key. This is taxpayers' money and therefore should be available to all residents. She has been contacted by residents advising they cannot access the courts.

A heated exchange between Cllrs Sennitt-Clough and Cllr Bibb occurred where remarks were made that moved beyond the scope of discussion.

The Chair suspended the meeting due to interruptions from the public, eighteen members of the public left and the meeting was resumed.

Cllr Laws sought clarification that the courts would be open to members of the public, the committee do not take complete charge, have the key, and restrict usage. Cllr Laws was advised that initially the tennis club was offered the lease, and that the netball is huge playing in lots of different leagues, and they needed to be included in the lease, hence the idea of the CIC. Any hire fees will be just from Tennis bookings and will go to the CIC and is ring fenced for repairs, improvements, and refurbishments to ensure long term it remains a community asset. Therefore, both clubs will have equal access to the courts, and no one can dominate, other clubs can hire for the day and would be encouraged.

Cllr Mockett, days away from signing a 25-year lease and no one knows about it, suggested holding off on the lease until all feel comfortable, the item is on the FDC cabinet meeting. There needs further clarification on the usage. As this area is owned by FDC at the end of the lease will it revert to them or will an extended lease be offered. The lease will not be signed by WTC but will be signed by the CIC.

Cllr Miscandlon as Portfolio holder advised the lease will be discussed with him as this will be a shared asset for Whittlesey the cabinet will make the final decision.

4. 20MPH – Funding 2025/26 application process open – Closing date is 28th March 2025 – Cllr Miscandlon. Cllr Mockett suggested he complete the form for yellow lines outside New Road School, the Clerk was asked to forward the details.
5. Proposal - Whittlesey Town Council supports growth and understands the need for more housing. However, in view of the current disparity between the housing developments and available infrastructure, that is, schools, GPs, and roads on the one hand and the needs of the residents on the other hand, it calls for a temporary pause in larger housing developments. It further asks FDC and CCC to add the suitability of infrastructure as a criterion to assess planning applications – Cllr Nawaz

Cllrs Sennitt Clough and Laws stepped away from the table.

Cllr Nawaz proposed the above statement seconded Cllr Mockett, all other councillors abstained.

F27/2025. To receive Councillor & outside body reports.

1. Local Liaison Committee Meeting 26th November 2024 – Cllr Mockett advised that the minutes from the meeting are still in draft form, once approved they will be available. Cllr Mockett meeting the Chair of Johnsons and MVV contractors (incinerator) to discuss the vehicle movements if the IBA does come from the Wisbech Incinerator.

F28/2025. To report the minutes from the Finance & Policy Meeting on Monday 17th February 2025 and accept the minutes from Monday 20th January 2025.

Ratified: The Minutes from the F & P meeting on 20th January were accepted and the minutes from the 17th of February were reported

F29/2025 To report the financial documents.

- To report the bank reconciliation to 31st January 2025
- To report the list of payments & uncashed payments. £21,069.00 vouchers 228 – 258 proposed Cllr Mockett, seconded Cllr Miscandlon with a unanimous vote in favour.
- To report the year-to-date figures

F30/2025. To report the minutes from the Planning Meeting on Monday 17th February 2025 and accept the minutes from Monday 3rd February 2025

Ratified: The Minutes from the Planning meeting on 3rd February were accepted and the minutes from the meeting on the 17th of February were reported.

F31/2025. Consultations

1. Consultation on the proposed 2025 revision of the local validation list for planning applications for the county council's own development and for waste management. Revised draft available, closing date for comments is 10th March 2025

F32/2025 Information only.

1. Tennis & Netball courts at the Manor – report from Cllr Bibb
2. Whittlesey Street Pride update – report from Cllr Dorling
3. Whittlesey Street Pride Initiatives 2025 – report from Cllr Dorling
4. First Repair Café – report from Cllr Dorling
5. VE day – Are the council arranging an event – Cllr Mockett
6. Heathwatch feedback – report from Cllr Wicks

F33/2025 Invitations.

There were no invitations.

F34/2025. Date of next meeting –Thursday 20th March 2025

F35/2025 – Exclusion of the press & public

F36/2025. To discuss those items previously agreed at agenda item F19/2025

Meeting closed: 21:00

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Cllr Alex Miscandlon
Chairman
Whittlesey Town Council