

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BUILDINGS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER 2008 AT 8PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SIMPSON CENTRE, STOTFOLD

Committee Members present: Mrs S Bundock (Chairman)
Mrs A Clarey B Collier
Mrs M Cooper Mrs D Haslett-Saunders
S Hayes

Also in attendance: Councillor Mrs Wilding and the Clerk

Councillor Mrs Wilding attended the meeting, and spoke on items, but did not take part in voting.

3290. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Cooper and Savill.

3291. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interests.

3292. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising to report.

3293. CLERK'S REPORT FOR INFORMATION

- Mr Palmer has carried out various painting works in the Memorial Hall and Simpson Centre in the sum of £410 + vat.
- Mr Drewett has repaired the creaking stairs to the side of the Memorial Hall stage at a cost of £136.00.
- Mr Drewett has put in a French Drain to the side of the Memorial Hall adjacent to the gent's toilet wall, at a cost of £150.00.
- Anti-climb paint has been applied to suitable positions in the Simpson Centre and Memorial hall, and cost £31.48. Appropriate signage has also been fixed in the sum of £6.60.
- To date there have been no expressions of interest in leasing Room 2 of the Simpson Centre.
- No additional suggested documents have been put forward for this Committee's document list.

3294. CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items of correspondence to report.

3295. TO APPROVE EXECUTIVE ACTION TAKEN BY THE CLERK IN PERMITTING PC RYAN TO INCREASE USE OF THE POLICE ROOM IN THE SIMPSON CENTRE

P.C. Ryan is currently using the Police Room on a Wednesday morning and on other irregular occasions. He is seeking approval from his superiors to use the Police Room more regularly as a base, to ensure he is spending as much time in Stotfold as possible, rather than being on the road travelling to and from Biggleswade Police Station. The Clerk has also permitted him to set up a computer in his office (once approved by his superiors) and to install a new router to allow him to have secure shared access to our broadband connection. This will be at no cost to the Council and

we will benefit from a new, faster, broadband connection. The Police may also be providing him with a new replacement storage cabinet in his office in which to keep high visibility jackets, and other Police equipment. The old cabinet currently in the Police Room will be used elsewhere in Council owned buildings once replaced.

Resolved that executive action taken by the Clerk in permitting PC Ryan to increase use of the Police Room in the Simpson Centre, installing a computer and using our broadband connection, and to replace the storage cabinet, be approved. This Committee would like to support PC Ryan is assisting him in spending more time in Stotfold, and not at the Police Station in Biggleswade.

3296. TO APPROVE EXECUTIVE ACTION TAKEN BY THE CLERK, FOLLOWING A BREAK-IN AT THE SIMPSON CENTRE OFFICES, TO PURCHASE A SECURITY KEY PAD FOR THE OFFICE DOOR, AT A COST OF £129.00, INCLUDING FITTING

The key pad has now been fitted to the office door but we are still waiting for the outcome of investigations into how the reception window could be made more secure.

Resolved that executive action taken by the Clerk in purchasing a security key pad for the office door at the Simpson Centre at a cost of £129.00 be approved. Funds to come from Buildings General – Maintenance budget.

3297. TO CONFIRM AND NOTE FULL COUNCIL'S APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE ACTION TAKEN BY THE CLERK IN SWITCHING ELECTRICITY PROVIDER FOR THE SIMPSON CENTRE AND MEMORIAL HALL TO BRITISH GAS, FOLLOWING A RECENT INCREASE IN PRICES AND NOTIFICATION THAT THEY INCREASED AGAIN ON 2ND SEPTEMBER

Resolved that full Council's approval of executive action by the Clerk in switching electricity provider (Council minute 7943) be confirmed and noted.

3298. TO CONFIRM COUNCIL'S RECOMMENDATION THAT THIS COMMITTEE PERMITS CLIFF ANDREWS OF BEDFORDSHIRE RURAL COMMUNITIES CHARITY A FREE LET OF THE SIMPSON CENTRE OR MEMORIAL HALL WHEN CARRYING OUT HIS CONSULTATION FOR THE COMPILATION OF THE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Resolved that Cliff Andrews of BRCC be given a free let of the Simpson Centre or Memorial Hall when carrying out his consultation for the Green Infrastructure Plan for Stotfold, and is to fit in around our regular bookings.

3299. TO CONSIDER PURCHASING THE NEARLY NEW EXECUTIVE CHAIR AS PREVIOUSLY USED IN THE NOW VACANT ROOM 2 OF THE SIMPSON CENTRE

Although purchase of office equipment is the remit of the Establishment Committee it was felt that this Committee would be more appropriate to consider the matters, as if it were purchased, the chair would remain in situ once the room is leased, with the desk already in place. As there has been no interest in leasing the room to date, it was felt prudent to not spend money at this stage on items which are not at present required.

Resolved that the owner of the executive chair, as previously used in the now vacant Room 2 of the Simpson Centre, be advised that we do not wish to purchase the chair.

3300. TO CONFIRM THE UPDATED TERMS OF REFERENCE SHEET, AS PER JULY'S MEETING OF THIS COMMITTEE, TO BE RECOMMENDED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE FOR APPROVAL

Members were previously circulated the updated Terms of Reference sheet for approval. Minor amendments were suggested and it was:

Recommended that the final Terms of Reference Sheet, for this Committee be forwarded to the Establishment Committee for approval.

3301. TO RECEIVE THE COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS AT THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT ON THE COMMUNITY BUILDING FOR THE LAND SOUTH OF STOTFOLD DEVELOPMENT, HELD ON MONDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER 2008.

These comments will be forwarded to the District Council Planners only at this stage (as per Council minute 7942). A copy of the summary of comments was provided for Members prior to the meeting, and the individual comments from residents was available to view on request.

The Chairman thanked those Councillors who manned the consultation. Approximately 136 residents attended the event, which is a very low percentage of the population of the town, with only 58 reply slips being submitted. Three main subjects were answered: should we keep the Memorial Hall; should we keep the Simpson Centre; and the new building content.

The majority of residents who attended the event, and also those who submitted reply slips, were very supportive of the Town Council's suggestions for the building. Most also appreciated that the new building would probably not be big enough to take the current users of the Memorial Hall and new building users, if the Memorial Hall were to go. Some also queried why the new Land South of Stotfold development should have all the new facilities. Views were also expressed over the fact that moving the Town Council offices to the new location would help to reinforce the feeling of a town centre in that area. Many people felt that they didn't want to have to pay for the new building.

The display at the event started with what we currently have, what the Section 106 agreement for the building says we can have, our questions regarding the doubling up of facilities already available elsewhere in the town, the Town Council's current buildings, the Town Council's suggestions for the new building, suggestions from other interested parties in the new building and our current buildings, together with further information regarding a vastly expanded library and building on the site.

With regard to the last piece of information available, this was from County/District Councillor John Street. It was pointed out that this is only a suggestion and isn't to be included as what is 'on offer', as there is no definite indication of where funding for this large scale building would come from.

Members were circulated a copy of a letter from Leigh Johnson of Wimpeys to Andrew Goodchild, District Council Planning Officer, (appended for Members). Although the letter is dated 1st July, it was copied to us just before the public consultation event. They were also provided with a copy of Councillor Cooper's thoughts on this matter, in his absence. The Clerk has been chasing Andrew Goodchild for a response regarding costs involved in the building, and after a long period of time he responded. The letter of response was read to those present, and is appended for Members.

Members present were asked for their thoughts on the comments received. All said that the summary of comments should be forwarded as it is to Andrew Goodchild, and many requested a meeting in the very near future with Mr Goodchild. Many felt that they would like a grander building, but realised that this would involve large costs. Concerns were expressed over the funding for a larger scale building, and that we should go for what we aspire but modify the plans to suit the town's needs and the money available. If the District Councillors wish for a grander building they must obtain the funding, with the Town Council not being involved in the funding process. A bigger building would involve a second floor, and would no doubt take up a bigger footprint, which would eat into much needed car park space. If the District Councillors wish to pursue the option of a larger, grander building, they would need to put something before the Central Bedfordshire Authority Shadow Board, or the County Council Executive for consideration regarding approval and funding.

Resolved that the summary of comments be forwarded to Andrew Goodchild, showing percentage figures rather than actual numbers to give a more meaningful interpretation.

It was further

Resolved that Andrew Goodchild is asked to attend a meeting with this Committee, and all non Committee Members of the Council, to discuss the matter of the community building in the light of Leigh Johnson's letter, his response to the Clerk, and the outcome of the public consultation event.

3302. TO CONSIDER ITEMS OF CORRESPONDENCE FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR STREET AND THE LIBRARY SERVICE REGARDING THE LAND SOUTH OF STOTFOLD COMMUNITY BUILDING, AS PER MINUTE 3286 OF THIS COMMITTEE

A copy of the letter from Councillor Street was previously circulated to Members, and showed the County Library Service's suggested design brief for a new library at the Land South of Stotfold development. It was pointed out that this is an 'off the shelf' design brief for a new build library, many agreed that a big building would be good, but until someone comes forward with the funding for such a building, the matter can't go any further forward.

Recommended that thanks are sent to the author of the design brief at the County Library Service for putting the suggestions forward. Suggest that until the matter has been through the relevant Committees of higher level Councils and it has their agreement, then we will pursue our current suggested use for the building. Whilst we understand the proposal, we don't believe it can be delivered in the current financial climate, and we feel that our suggestion is deliverable.

3303. ANY OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

A Member pointed out that the brush for the Memorial Hall floor is not adequate and queried whether the caretaker/cleaner had a better floor cleaner available. A soft sweeper is used by the caretaker/cleaner, but it is not available for public use. The Clerk will ensure the caretaker/cleaner is happy with the equipment she has for cleaning the Memorial Hall floor.

There being no further relevant business the meeting was declared closed at 9.08pm

CHAIRMAN

DATED