

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SIMPSON CENTRE, STOTFOLD ON FRIDAY 3RD OCTOBER 2008 AT 7.30PM

Councillors present:

B Collier (Chairman)

Mrs S Bundock

A Cooper

Mrs D Haslett-Saunders

Mrs J Hyde

M Smith

Mrs C Turner

Mrs M Cooper

S Hayes

B Saunders

L Stoter

Mrs L Wilding

Also present:

six members of the public, one member of the press and the Clerk

7962. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded Members that the Civic Service is being held on Sunday 12th October at St Mary's Church, 3pm.

He has received information that Regent Street is likely to be resurfaced within the next two to three months. They will be stripping away the top surface and laying a new one.

7963. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Councillor Mrs Hyde declared an interest in minute 5683 of the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands and Lighting Committee meeting held on 10th September, and an item on the expenditure list relating to her nephew.

Councillor Mrs Bundock declared an interest in an item on the receipts list, as did Councillor Collier.

7964. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs Clarey, Savill, District/County Councillor Saunders, Councillor Mrs Lewin and PC Ryan.

7965. REPORT FROM A REPRESENTATIVE OF BEDFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY

The crime figures for the last month were circulated to those present and are appended to these minutes. PC Ryan's apologies were forwarded as he was policing a ceremony in Luton to the fallen Officer Jon Henry who was murdered one year ago in the course of his duties.

In his absence, the Chairman read a report from PC Ryan. Overall crime is 17 for September, the lowest since PC Ryan started two years ago. Antisocial behaviour calls are at 9 calls for September, again, the lowest ever amount of calls. This number will go up with Halloween and Bonfire Night pending, but that is to be expected.

It was noticeable that the summer has been a lot quieter than in previous years, in terms of antisocial behaviour, and thanks are to be forwarded to PC Ryan for his efforts.

A local business has pointed out that the Police used to make regular visits to his premises, which was very useful, however this has stopped. The Clerk will ask PC Ryan to reinstate his regular visits to local businesses when time permits.

7966. ORAL QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS

There were no questions from electors at this stage.

7967. NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER 2008

The non-confidential minutes of the Council meeting held on Friday 5th September 2008 having been previously circulated, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

7968. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

CORRESPONDENCE

7969. Communities and Local Government – A Consultation – The Making and Enforcement of Byelaws

There is an opportunity to comment on the Communities in Control: The Making and Enforcement of Byelaws consultation, which invites views on the proposed new procedure which will enable authorities to make certain byelaws without the need for scrutiny by the Secretary of State and about proposals for enforcement. Comments are to be submitted by 20th November. As the consultation is a lengthy document, a copy can be obtained from the Clerk on request.

7970. Stotfold Green Infrastructure Plan Workshop

Two representatives of the Council are invited to attend the above event taking place on Tuesday 21st October, 7.30pm to 9.30pm at Stotfold Mill. The workshop will be followed by a drop in session (Thursday 13th November, 12pm to 8pm) and a second workshop (Thursday 11th December, 7.30pm to 9.30pm). Councillors Mrs Clarey and Mrs Cooper will attend on behalf of the Town Plan Steering Group, two other Council Members are also invited to attend. Councillors Mrs Hyde and Smith will attend on behalf of the Town Council.

7971. Bedfordshire County Council – Chairman’s Reception

An invitation has been received for the Chairman to attend the above event taking place on Friday 24th October at County Hall, Bedfordshire, 7pm to 9pm. Councillors Cooper and Mrs Cooper will attend, diary permitting.

7972. Sandy Town Council – Mayor’s Charity Dinner

An invitation has been received for the above event taking place on Wednesday 12th November at 7pm for 7.30pm at the China Express Restaurant, Sandy. Tickets are £16.50 each, with proceeds going to MacMillan Cancer Support and The Leprosy Mission. Any Member wishing to attend is to advise the Clerk.

7973. BAPTC – Annual General Meeting

An invitation has been received for two delegates from this Council to attend the above event taking place on Wednesday 22nd October, 7.30pm in Henlow Parish Hall. Any Member wishing to attend is to advise the Clerk.

7974. Mid Beds District Council – Launch of the Public Consultation: New Design Guide for Mid Bedfordshire

An invitation has been received for a launch event for the public consultation of the new Design Guide, being held at the District Council offices in Chicksands on 3rd November from 11.15am until 1.30pm. The Design Guide will encompass the range of development in the district, town centre and infill, large

footprint building, shop fronts and signage, the historic environment, home extensions and alterations as well as new residential development. It is intended as a working tool to assist negotiation between developers, designers, agents, members of the public and the local planning authority. Councillor Mrs Hyde will attend on behalf of the Council.

7975. NHS Constitution

Our views are being sought on the proposed NHS Constitution, which sets out principles and stipulates important rights for both patients and staff. Parliament will review the NHS Constitution every 10 years. The closing date for comments is 17th October. Two copies of the draft Constitution have been provided. It is suggested that any Member wishing to make comment should obtain a copy of the draft document from the Clerk, and respond direct – due to the short timescales provided.

7976. The following items of correspondence can be obtained from the Clerk

- Direct Information Service – Issues 692 and 693

7977. Road Closures

Information has been received on the following road closures:

Fen End

Full length from the junction with Astwick Road for resurfacing works. Works are expected to take place on either Sunday 9th or Sunday 16th November 2008 between the hours of 8am and 6pm.

Arlesey Road/Stotfold Road

From the A507 roundabout extending east to the 40mph speed limit for patching and surface dressing works. Up to three road closures will take place during the period Monday 3rd November 2008 to Friday 23rd October 2009 during weekends only.

Road closure 1: (patching works) expected to take place for two days during the period Monday 3rd November to Wednesday 31st December 2008 between 7.30am and 6pm.

Road closure 2: (further patching works) expected to take place for one day during the period Friday 1st May to Tuesday 30th June 2009 between 7.30am and 6pm.

Road closure 3: (surface dressing) expected to take place for one day during the period Wednesday 1st July to Monday 31st August 2009 between 7.30am and 6pm.

The above details will be forwarded to those Councillors with email access, and via memo for those without.

7978. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM A DISTRICT COUNCILLOR ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO STOTFOLD

District Councillor Mrs Turner gave the following report:

- With regard to a query at the September meeting, she advised that swimming for the over 60's in the Mid Beds area will commence 1st April 2009, which is when funding will be available from the new Central Bedfordshire Authority. She will find out whether residents of Stotfold will be able to use swimming facilities in North Herts District.
- On 18th September Alistair Burt MP, District Councillors Street, Delgarno and Mrs Turner attended a meeting of the Fairfield Park Residents Association regarding Gypsy and Traveller sites for Stotfold and Arlesey. She advised that the public consultation events scheduled for the 14th and 20th of this month have been postponed. This is a direct result of the campaigning by the District Councillors for Stotfold and Arlesey, in advising the District Council that the proposed sites are inappropriate and have been put forward with total disregard to residents wishes. The consultation will now take place later in the year.
- She also attended a Street Fair at Fairfield with Councillors Street and Delgarno.

- A MacMillan Coffee Morning at the Arlesey Resource Centre was well attended, and raised £250. A similar event at Priory House raised over £600.
- She attended the District Council Chairman's Civic Service at St Mary's Church, Biggleswade.
- The Stotfold and Arlesey Problem Solving Group have met, where a number of matters were discussed, including the situation with a problem tenant in Vaughan Road. This resident has now been re-housed. Illegal parking on footpaths and concerns over motorbikes going through the Fairfield estate to the Blue Lagoon area were also discussed. The District Council and PC Ryan are monitoring these situations and are trying to address the problems.
- The District Council were commended on starting the kitchen waste scheme.

A Member referred to the letter from the three District Councillors that was in the recent edition of the Stotfold News regarding the new Community Building for the Land South of Stotfold. As has previously been pointed out, the suggested use by the District Councillors is different to the Town Council's view on what the building should house. There were concerns that it could be viewed from the public's perspective that the District and Town Councillors are disagreeing on the matter, and are not working together to find a solution.

Resolved that a Special Council meeting be held, preferably on a Wednesday, between the Town Council and the three District Councillors to discuss a way forward with the use of the Community Building for the Land South of Stotfold. This meeting is to be held before the previously requested meeting with Andrew Goodchild takes place.

7979. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM A COUNTY COUNCILLOR ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO STOTFOLD

County Councillor Street gave the following report:

- He also attended the two MacMillan Coffee Morning events, which were very enjoyable.
- Members were reminded that the Central Bedfordshire Rural Conference is taking place on 11th October at Whipsnade Zoo. Councillors Collier and Mrs Turner will be attending.
- John Healey, Minister of State for Local Government will be meeting Councillors at Priory House on Tuesday to discuss the forthcoming changes in local government in Bedfordshire.
- With regard to the speed limit outside Etonbury School, last December the Executive at the County Council heard the request to reduce the speed limit to 20mph ideally, but 30mph if not. Following this meeting, all schools in Bedfordshire were recommended to have speed limits outside them reduced, although in the case of Etonbury this has been fast-tracked. Although we have previously been advised that speed limits could only be reduced from 40mph to 30mph, and 30mph to 20mph, the County Council and Police have agreed that this can be changed so that limits can be dropped from 40mph to 20mph. County Highways were waiting for Etonbury School to produce a Travel Plan, and following a meeting last week at Etonbury with Highways representatives the Plan has now been produced.

The 20mph speed will be indicated on an illuminated speed limit sign and will be applicable during the rush hours – 8am to 9am and 3.30pm to 4.30pm, although these are just guidance times at this stage. Outside those hours a 40mph limit will be applicable. They are also hoping to lay a different colour road surface to show the area where the speed limit applies. Minor adjustments will be made to the pavement layout outside the school over the next month. It is anticipated that the change in speed limit will be in force in January/February of next year. Councillor Street will check the exact length of road to be covered by the speed limit reduction.

- In response to a query over when the cycle track along High Street will be built, he advised that it would be about another 2 years before work is scheduled to take place. The work will also

include a reduction in speed limit to 20mph and traffic calming measures. The same will apply to Hitchin Road.

- Councillor Street has previously advised Highways of the very bad state of the Hitchin Road underpass and shared cycle/footway to Fairfield, and will chase them on the matter.
- He was asked to check with the County Council that the tenant farmer on the land for the proposed Leisure Centre at Arlesey Road won't be able to plant a new crop, now that he appears to be harvesting.

7980. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM MEMBER REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from Member representatives.

7981. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE COMMUNITY LEISURE CENTRE

Councillor Collier advised that Julian Pagliano of Transition UK Ltd is the consultant for the Football Club bid and is putting together the development plan document required for the submission. Information required from Councillor Collier and the Clerk has been passed to him and the draft is almost ready. The application is for £500,000 to finance the third generation (3G) pitch.

A Member queried what contingency plans were in place with the downturn of the market, and was advised that Adrian Lear, Project Manager, has been working on the matter. We are still in negotiations with the District Council regarding the Land South of Stotfold Section 106 monies, and Levitts are currently marketing Roker Park. The District Council won't release the grant money until they know that all other finances are in place, but Councillor Ken Matthews at the District Council has said that at this stage they won't be taking the matter of the Land South of Stotfold Section 106 monies any further until the 200th house has been built. The tenders from the six construction companies will be received early November, and until then we won't know how much the actual construction of the building will cost. It is acknowledged that there will be a shortfall, but at this stage it is not known how much.

A suggestion was made whereby the Football Club could remain at Roker Park, and use the Football Association grant money to upgrade the Club's facilities, and still go ahead with the Leisure Centre using the money we actually have. It was pointed out that this would probably not work as not selling Roker Park would leave the project even shorter with funding, this is why phasing of the construction is being considered. The £500,000 from the Football Association is not for stadium upgrade, the money for that is only in the region of £200,000. However, the suggestion of not moving the Football Club will be looked at to see if it is at all possible.

With regard to the rifle range, four members of the Stotfold Rifle and Pistol Club have recently visited the St Ivo range. They feel that it is imperative that the architects for the Leisure Centre project visit the range whilst it is in use and the Clerk has been asked to arrange a visit with the architects.

7982. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE TOWN PLAN STEERING GROUP

In the absence of the Chairman of the Steering Group Councillor Mrs Clarey, Councillor Mrs Cooper gave the following report:

Minutes of the last Town Plan Steering Group meeting on 4th September were previously circulated to Members. This was the final meeting to discuss any minor amendments in the questionnaire and to deal with ideas put forward by the printer. The final document is currently in storage at the Simpson Centre. The next meeting is on Monday 6th October to finalise details of the delivery and collection.

The Town Council has supported the work of the Group and a plea was therefore made for any Councillor that can help with delivery and collection of the questionnaires to advise the Clerk or

Councillor Mrs Cooper of the road they are able to do. The Group would like to receive as many completed questionnaires as possible so that they have as wide a view from residents as possible.

7983. TO RECEIVE THE PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS RECORDS FOR SEPTEMBER 2008

Resolved that all monies on the payments list be paid, and the receipts list be noted.

7984. TO RECEIVE THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE RECORD FOR END SEPTEMBER 2008, TOGETHER WITH THE BANK BALANCES AS AT END SEPTEMBER 2008

Resolved that the income and expenditure record for end September 2008, together with the bank balances as at end September 2008 be noted.

7985. TO RECEIVE THE COMPLETED AUDIT AND ANNUAL RETURN FROM THE AUDITORS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2008, TOGETHER WITH THE AUDITOR'S REPORT
Members were previously provided with a copy of the signed Audit Certificate and Annual Return from the Auditors, together with the Auditor's report and Clerk's comments.

1) Review of effectiveness of internal audit

The Auditor recommends that a more robust review is carried out before the end of this financial year. The review is recommended to be undertaken when reviewing the risk assessment.

Resolved that a more detailed review than last year be carried out on the effectiveness of internal audit before the end of this financial year.

2) Comparatives differ by £1

This is a minor error which the auditors wished to bring to our attention. There is no need for action on this.

Resolved that this section of the Auditor's report be noted.

3) Asset Valuations

The Council undertook an asset valuation by the insurers over five years ago. Auditors recommend that we should consider obtaining valuations for our properties and reviewing our asset register to enable the Council to prepare a more accurate assessment of the market valuation of assets owned.

Resolved that asset valuations should be updated every five years, starting this financial year.

4) Risk Assessment

The Council did not undertake a risk assessment during the year ended 31st March 2008. The Council have taken steps to assess the risks they face after the year end, which has not been reviewed. The Clerk had put together a draft risk assessment, which has now been updated.

Resolved that the new draft risk assessment document be put to the Establishment Committee in November for consideration. This will then go to full Council in December for approval.

The Chairman advised that a potential risk the Council may face is from the possibility that a particular political party may freeze Council Tax for two years if they are elected into Government. If this

includes Town Councils there is a risk as utilities, salaries, etc will still increase. Councils would need to consider increasing Council Tax for the forthcoming year to cover the next three years.

Members were advised that the Clerk and Assistant Clerk have been invited to meet the Rural Business Solutions team who provide our financial accounts package, and hope to use this opportunity to discuss and suggest improvements to the system that may help reduce financial risk to the Council.

7986. TO RECEIVE A REPORT AND APPROVE NECESSARY ACTION REGARDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED SECTION 137 GRANTS

Local Government Act 1972 Section 137 gives Councils the power to spend up to a fixed sum per elector per annum for things which are of direct benefit to the area, or part of it, or all or some of its inhabitants. Benefit obtained under Section 137 must be commensurate with the expenditure incurred. Section 137 may not be used if a specific power exists.

After taking advice it has become apparent that several of the grants awarded under Section 137 which this Council has recently made and also over a period of time are actually covered by another specific power.

Resolved that the Clerk corrects the accounts for Section 137 grants as required, with the funds to come from an alternative budget line – Council will be advised at next meeting of action taken. The Establishment Committee is to ensure that a new budget is added for next financial year to allow for grants which are not Section 137.

7987. PLANNING COMMITTEE

10th September 2008

Councillor Cooper asked Members of the Planning Committee to receive, confirm and approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10th September 2008.

The minutes were carried.

Councillor Cooper then asked Members of the Town Council to receive and adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 10th September 2008.

These were then carried.

24th September 2008

Councillor Cooper asked Members of the Planning Committee to receive, confirm and approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24th September 2008.

The minutes were carried with the following amendment:

Councillor Saunders' apologies are to be added.

Councillor Cooper then asked Members of the Town Council to receive and adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 24th September 2008.

These were then carried as amended.

7988. RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS AND LIGHTING COMMITTEE

Councillor Mrs Cooper asked Members of the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands and Lighting Committee to receive, confirm and approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10th September 2008.

The minutes were carried.

Councillor Mrs Cooper then asked Members of the Town Council to receive and adopt the minutes of the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands and Lighting Committee meeting held on Wednesday 10th September 2008.

These were then carried.

7989. BUILDINGS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Councillor Mrs Bundock asked Members of the Buildings Management Committee to receive, confirm and approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17th September 2008.

The minutes were carried.

Councillor Mrs Bundock then asked Members of the Town Council to receive and adopt the minutes of the Buildings Management Committee meeting held on Wednesday 17th September 2008.

These were then carried.

7990. CEMETERY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Councillor Mrs Hyde asked Members of the Cemetery Management Committee to receive, confirm and approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24th September 2008.

The minutes were carried.

Councillor Mrs Hyde then asked Members of the Town Council to receive and adopt the minutes of the Cemetery Management Committee meeting held on Wednesday 24th September 2008.

These were then carried.

7991. TOWN ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

Councillor Collier asked Members of the Town Enhancement Committee to receive, confirm and approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17th September 2008.

The minutes were carried.

Councillor Collier then asked Members of the Town Council to receive and adopt the minutes of the Town Enhancement Committee meeting held on Wednesday 17th September 2008.

These were then carried.

7992. QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS

Glen Rickwood, Wrayfields

Queried what was happening to the comments received from residents following the consultation on the Community Building for the Land South of Stotfold. The comments have now been forwarded to Andrew Goodchild, Planning Officer at the District Council.

Queried whether the food waste collection was for the whole of Stotfold, as he hadn't receive his collection bin. The scheme is for the whole of the town, and if he doesn't receive his bin he should contact the District Council Environmental Team.

Ross Cooper, Mowbray Crescent

Pointed out that he had come across two people on separate occasions dumping their personal waste at the Cemetery. One put items in the skip and the other deposited garden waste at the burning area. This matter has been passed to the office.

7993. THE CHAIRMAN PROPOSED THE FOLLOWING, THAT:

It is advisable in the public interest that the press and public are temporarily excluded whilst matters pertaining to financial issues are discussed and that they be instructed to withdraw from the meeting

This was passed by Members.

7994. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER 2008

Councillor Collier asked Members of the Council to receive and approve the confidential minutes of the Council meeting held on Friday 5th September 2008.

These were carried.

7995. CONFIDENTIAL - ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

Confidential minute 7995 is appended for Members only.

7996. NON-CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

It was suggested that an addition is made to our Stotfold News page to invite members of the public to write to the Town Council to suggest improvements to the town, including recreational facilities, rather than sending a letter to be included in the Stotfold News magazine.

There being no further relevant business the meeting was declared closed at 9.01pm

CHAIRMAN

DATED