

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON FRIDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2009 AT 7.30PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SIMPSON CENTRE, STOTFOLD**

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Members present:

B Collier (Chairman)

Mrs S Bundock

Mrs A Clarey

Mrs M Cooper

A Cooper

Mrs D Haslett-Saunders

S Hayes

Mrs J Hyde

B Saunders

D Savill

M Smith

Also present:

District/County Councillor Saunders, three members of the public and the Clerk

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**8132. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

**8133. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of Members interests.

**8134. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs Lewin, Mrs Wilding, Mrs Turner, Stoter, District/County Councillor Street and P.C. Ryan.

**8135. REPORT FROM A REPRESENTATIVE OF BEDFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY**

There were no crime figures for presentation this month.

**8136. ORAL QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS**

There were no questions from electors.

**8137. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2009**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2009, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**8138. To receive a report from a County Councillor on matters pertaining to Stotfold (see minute 8077)**

A response has been received from the School Admissions Service at the County Council to advise that an analysis of the number of children living in the St Mary's VC Lower School and Roecroft Lower School catchment areas shows that there are sufficient places, in one or other of those schools, to accommodate all the children living in the two catchment areas who sought a lower school place. The children who have been offered a place at a school outside the community are those who were unsuccessful in gaining a place at St Mary's VC Lower School and whose parents failed to list their catchment area school, Roecroft Lower School, as an alternative preference. However, Roecroft Lower School was oversubscribed with applications from parents living outside of the catchment area and legislation does not permit admission authorities to hold back places for children whose parents have not expressed a preference for the school. If they are unable to offer a place at the parent's

preferred school, they have a duty to make a place available at the next nearest school with places – in this case, Southlands Lower School in Biggleswade.

It has now been possible to accommodate some additional children at St Mary's VC Lower School as a result of reorganising the teaching groups. This may in turn release sufficient places at Roecroft Lower School to enable places to be offered to the catchment area children, provided their parents have submitted a late request for a place at the school.

With regard to Fairfield Park Lower School, although the school was oversubscribed it was possible to offer some additional places as some of the other year groups in the school are below capacity. All of the children living in the catchment area for Fairfield Park Lower School will be accommodated at the school.

In terms of future planning, there are proposals to provide additional places at Roecroft Lower School when the school is relocated. Colleagues in Central Bedfordshire have been informed of possible future pressures at Fairfield Park Lower School.

**8139. To consider holding a Civic Service in 2009 (see minute 8118)**

The possibility of holding a Civic Service in either the Fairfield Community Hall or Fairfield Lower School is being pursued. It was pointed out that the Church would have to pay for the use of the Fairfield buildings, and they also provide the refreshments at their cost. The matter of a donation towards hire of the buildings and provision of refreshments will be looked at again once a venue has been confirmed.

**8140. To consider a request from Fairfield Bowls Club for a grant under Local Government (Misc Provs) Act 1976 to complete works to a new Bowls Club pavilion (see minute 8121)**

Mid Beds District Council have advised that PJ Livesey are in breach of the Section 106 Agreement dated 16<sup>th</sup> October 2008 (a copy is being obtained for office records) which states that the building of the pavilion must be completed within three months of the date of the Agreement and the leases must be sorted within six months.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

**8141. Mid Beds District Council – Gypsy and Traveller site consultation**

A letter has been received from the Leader of the District Council to offer their apologies to this Council if any offence was caused over the letter we received advising that some of our comments for the consultation could be considered as racist. A copy of the letter was previously circulated to Members.

Regarding whether District Councillors had sight of the original District Council letter before it was sent out to residents and it was pointed out that there were three different letters which were circulated depending on the level of apparent racist comments. The letters were put on the table at a Local Development Framework meeting regarding the gypsy and traveller site consultation, but at that point all staff in the District Council were called to the Unitary Authority announcement, they subsequently went back to their meeting and didn't look at or discuss the letters any further. Members were therefore asked to read the letters and to contact Officers if they had any problems, there was no response from Council Members. At the following District Council meeting all Councillors were issued with copies of the letters, and no comments were made at that stage either. At that point, the letters had already gone out to residents. However, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Tricia Turner, has pointed out that if such a thing occurs again, all letters must be vetted by her before they go out.

**8142. The following items of correspondence can be obtained from the Clerk**

- Local Council Review Volume 60 March 2009
- Direct Information Service – Issue no. 703
- Bedfordshire Bugle – Issue 2 March 2009

The Clerk is to obtain more information on the power of well-being referred to in the Bedfordshire Bugle.

**8143. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM A DISTRICT COUNCILLOR ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO STOTFOLD**

District Councillor Saunders gave the following report:

- He is currently arranging the tidy up of the Mill Meadows area to help compliment the other nearby green areas.
- The River Ivel from Stotfold Mill to Taylor's Mill in Astwick is to be dredged in the near future, and will help further enhance the whole area of land either side of the river.

**8144. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM A COUNTY COUNCILLOR ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO STOTFOLD**

County Councillor Saunders gave the following report:

- He first stood as a County Councillor twenty years ago. He feels very privileged to have been a County Councillor, and in particular when he was Chairman of the Council for two years. He is very proud of the work he put in getting Randall's Mill up and running. He feels the County Councillors have built a better community, and thanked Members for supporting him, and for the odd rapping of the knuckles over the years! He hopes that this Council will continue to invite Central Bedfordshire Authority Councillors to future Town Council meetings.
- In response to a question regarding the Central Beds Authority Leader and Chief Executive, he confirmed that Councillor Mrs Tricia Turner will be the Interim Leader and Mrs Jaki Salisbury will be the Chief Executive. They will remain in post until the elections on the 8<sup>th</sup> June. There are indications that there are several challenges to the position of Leader.

In County Councillor Street's absence the following verbal report was given by the Chairman:

- Due to the recent exceptionally bad weather the condition of some roads in the County have been affected and large potholes have formed. In order that the County Council can hand over the roads to the new Central Bedfordshire Authority in good condition, they have launched a new scheme called 'Wot Holes' and have allocated a special budget of £400,000. If any resident spots a pot hole in the road larger than 8-9 inches and more than a couple of inches deep they are asked to telephone County Highways who will send out a team to fill in the hole. If the team see another pot hole in the vicinity they have been instructed to fill that too.

Members felt that appreciation should be given for the hard work put in by the County and District Councillors, and it was:

**Resolved** that a letter of thanks is sent to our dual hatted District/County Councillors Street and Saunders and District Councillor Mrs Turner for the hard work they have put in for Stotfold and its community during their time as District and County Councillors.

**8145. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM MEMBER REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

Councillor Mrs Bundock gave a report as a member of the Roecroft School Governors (report appended). She confirmed that the awaited letter from the LEA referred to in the report has now been received.

**8146. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE COMMUNITY LEISURE CENTRE PROJECT**

Councillor Collier advised that the Section 106 document for Roker Park has been agreed between the District Council Planners, Levitt Partnership and our Solicitors.

David Gibson (Architects), Rob Baker (Quantity Surveyor), Adrian Lear (Project Manager), Councillor Collier and the Clerk have recently met to discuss the project and the valuation received for the sale of Roker Park. Arrangements are being made for four out of the six construction companies to be provided with the appropriate information to see what they can build for the money available. They will all meet in April to go through the options and proposals will then go to the Project Board and then full Council for a decision. It is hoped that with the current economic climate, construction costs will be lower than originally estimated.

Once the Central Bedfordshire Authority is up and running the matter of the Land South of Stotfold Section 106 monies will be pursued. The last letter we received from Planning Portfolio Holder Councillor Ken Matthews was a holding letter, as at the time the District Council couldn't make any decisions on finance as the sum being sought is more than the limit set in readiness for the change to unitary.

**8147. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE COPY FOR INFORMATION OF THE SECTION 106 AGREEMENT FOR ROKER PARK**

Members were previously provided with a copy of the document. The sums quoted include a reduction of £117,000 because that is the sum which would have been paid to us by the developers anyway as part of their Section 106 contribution. This should therefore make the sale more attractive. Once the document is signed, the planning application should be submitted.

There were no question or queries on the document, and it was therefore:

**Resolved** that the Section 106 Agreement for Roker Park be noted.

**8148. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE TOWN PLAN STEERING GROUP**

Councillor Mrs Clarey gave the following report:

- The minutes of the last Town Plan Steering Group meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> January – the day before the first Town Council meeting of 2009 have already been presented. Their next meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> February was cancelled, largely because of the weather. The next meeting is scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2009 at 7.30pm.
- Members were provided with copies of bullet pointed notes of the two meetings of a presentation/publications group set alongside the members of the team working on data analysis. On both occasions (one daytime meeting/one evening meeting) they were joined by Jemma McLean from the BRCC. They are looking at the best ways of presenting the Plan to those who will be on the receiving end.
- Members were referred to the 'responses' to the comments in the February edition of Stotfold News and the inclusion in both the Editor's Newsletter and Pam Manfield's 'Wildlife Gardening' in the March edition. Pam Manfield has agreed to edit the Town Plan and her column has encouraged another resident to volunteer to input data.
- A report on the progress of the Town Plan was also given at the Annual Town Meeting.

A query was raised over a reference in one of the presentation/publications meetings to the Chairman of the Council endorsing the Plan, as it should be the whole Council which endorses it and not an individual Councillor. Councillor Mrs Clarey confirmed that it was their intention to make sure that

the Plan is presented to full Council to endorse, the Chairman will only be asked for 'his endorsement' for publication/presentation purposes.

**8149. TO CONSIDER VENUES FOR THE ANNUAL TOWN DINNER**

Each Member will pay out of his/her own pocket for this dinner and the cost will not be met from Council Tax. Members were previously provided with copies of menus from The Bushell & Strike – Ashwell, The Jester – Odsey near Ashwell, Tudor Oaks Restaurant – Stotfold, Five Bells – Henlow, and The Stag – Stotfold. A further suggestion of Doughty's Brasserie at Fairfield Park was made, and it was:

**Resolved** that the Clerk obtain a menu from Doughty's Brasserie at Fairfield Park and circulates it to Members. Members are to choose a first and second preference of venue and subsequent meal choice for both venues and forward to the Clerk at the earliest opportunity. The Clerk will book the venue with the majority preference and advise Members accordingly. The dinner will be held on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

**8150. TO RECEIVE THE ASSET AND INSURANCE VALUATION REPORT, AND APPROVE ANY NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S INSURANCE COVER**

The full report with ordnance survey plans, etc, will be forwarded before the end of the financial year. It was noted that the last valuation was carried out in 1992 and therefore the increases in insurance cover required are to be expected. The valuation will need to be carried out at least every five years and this should prevent future large increases in one financial year.

**Resolved** that any necessary adjustments to the Council's insurance cover as per the current asset and insurance valuation report be carried out before the end of the current financial year. The Clerk will advise on any subsequent increase in insurance premium.

**8151. TO ADOPT THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EACH COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL, FORMING PART OF STANDING ORDERS**

**Resolved** that the Terms of Reference for each Committee of the Council, forming part of the Council's Standing Orders, be adopted and dated 6<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

**8152. TO RECEIVE THE PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS RECORDS FOR FEBRUARY 2009**

Members were previously provided with copies of the payments and receipts records and it was:

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

**8153. TO RECEIVE THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE RECORD FOR END FEBRUARY 2009, TOGETHER WITH THE BANK BALANCES AS AT END FEBRUARY 2009**

Members were previously provided with copies of the income and expenditure record and the bank balance for end of February 2009.

**Resolved** that the income and expenditure record for end February together with the bank balances as at end February 2009 be noted.

**8154. TO APPROVE THE VIREMENT OF MONIES WITHIN INDIVIDUAL COMMITTEE BUDGETS FOR THE CEMETERY MANAGEMENT, ESTABLISHMENT AND TOWN ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEES WHO HAVE NOT ALREADY RECEIVED APPROVAL TO ENSURE THERE ARE NO OVERSPENT BUDGETS**

Members were provided with copies of budget reports for the above Committees, and were given time to read through them.

**Resolved** that the Clerk be given authority to vire any necessary funds within the Committee budget headings to ensure there are no overspent budgets.

**8155. PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Councillor Cooper asked Members of the Planning Committee to receive, confirm and approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

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 18<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

These were then carried.

**8156. 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 18<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

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 18<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

These were then carried.

**8157. QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS ON ITEMS ARISING FROM THE MEETING**

There were no questions from electors.

**8158. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY**

Councillor Collier was commended for the manner in which he Chaired a very difficult Annual Town Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

There being no further relevant business the meeting was declared closed at 8.25pm

**CHAIRMAN**

**DATED**