

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30TH APRIL 2008 AT 7.00PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SIMPSON CENTRE, STOTFOLD

Committee Members present: B Collier (Chairman)

Mrs S Bundock
T Grant
S Hayes

Mrs A Clarey
Mrs D Haslett-Saunders
B Saunders

Also in attendance: Councillors Mrs C Turner, Mrs M Cooper, Mrs J Hyde, A Cooper and the Clerk

221. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

222. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Although not a Committee Member, Councillor Mrs Hyde declared an interest in the following item, as she is the Council's representative on the Trustees.

223. TO CONSIDER A FURTHER RESPONSE TO THE SITE SUBMISSION H145 LAND AT COMMON ROAD, STOTFOLD, IN THE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S ISSUES AND OPTIONS SITE ALLOCATIONS DOCUMENT IN THE LIGHT OF FURTHER INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Members were advised that the District Council had spotted the words 'statutory allotments' on the H145 site submission, as submitted by one of the charities. They have subsequently visited the site and as a result a meeting was requested between Simon Andrews of the Local Development Framework Team and Council representatives. Councillor Mrs Hyde attended because of her knowledge of the charities of Stotfold, Councillor Mrs Cooper attended as Chairman of the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands and Lighting Committee, Councillor Collier as Chairman of the Town Enhancement Committee, and the Clerk also attended.

Simon Andrews advised that they acknowledge there is some need for extra allotment space in Stotfold, and have uncovered various areas in Mid Beds where there is potential allotment land which is not being used.

The current waiting list for the Norton Road allotment site is around twenty people and this number could easily fill the statutory allotment space at Common Road, but with the increase in population the rest of the land marked on the site submission could also be used for allotments. The whole area may not be needed straight away, but what is not used as allotments could be maintained as open space until it is required.

The statutory allotment status for Common Road was discovered when the Diocesan Board was checking whether the Brook Street allotments were statutory prior to selling it for development, and it was established that three acres of the Common Road allotments are statutory, the remaining five acres is not. Statutory allotment land cannot be used for anything other than allotments, unless an alternative suitable area can be identified, and this would be a very difficult process.

The Common Road allotment charity is currently administered by two Town Council appointees, the Vicar and two people appointed by those three. This charity will shortly be amalgamated with the Eleemosynary Charity/Brook Street allotments.

The Eleemosynary Charity is currently administered by the Vicar, the Church Wardens and two Town Council appointees.

The new amalgamated charity will be administered by two Church Wardens, the Vicar and two Town Council appointees; however Councillor Mrs Hyde will not be one of them.

When this Council was formed there was a charities committee which meant that a number of charities in the town had Council representatives on them.

It is up to the Trustees as to whether they use the money from the amalgamation to set up and maintain the Common Road allotment land as allotments. They are currently trying to change their terms for the charity, which may allow them to do this, so that money is used for the benefit of the town.

Simon Andrews has suggested that if this Council feels that there is sufficient need for extra allotment land in Stotfold, we should add more flesh to our comments previously submitted for this particular site submission. Although the deadline for comments on the consultation has passed, they will be able to add our letter to support our previous comments. These will be taken into consideration when they look at each site submission in more detail.

Councillors Mrs Cooper and Mrs Hyde read some suggested comments to the Committee to support using the land for allotments, and not housing development.

Recommended that a letter be sent to the Local Development Framework Team to enhance our comments on the H145 site submission in the Issues and Options Site Allocation consultation to illustrate that there is a demand for extra allotment land in Stotfold, particularly on this site, rather than using it for housing development. This is shown in the length of the current waiting list, the increase in residential properties in the town – many with small gardens, increased interest in growing your own food, the very good condition of soil in that area for growing food, together with points from the suggestions made by Councillors Mrs Cooper and Mrs Hyde. Also point out that this Council has already previously offered clerical assistance in running the allotments.

224. ANY ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

There were no items for information.

There being no further relevant business the meeting was declared closed at 7.30pm

CHAIRMAN

DATED