

MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7TH OCTOBER 2020, AT 7PM

Committee Members present:

A Cooper - Chairman, S Buck, Mrs S Bundock, Mrs A Clarey, B Collier, Mrs M Cooper, S Dhaliwal, S Hayes, Mrs J Hyde, D Matthews, C Phelps, H Pickering, B Saunders (& CBC Cllr), J Talbot

Also present:

Town Clerk – Mrs K Elliott-Turner, Central Beds Ward Member S Dixon, Nicola King – Grand Union Housing, Youth Team, and one member of the public

110/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G Russell who will be arriving late, as will Nicola King of Grand Union Housing, and apologies for absence from Central Beds Council Ward Member N Harris.

111/20 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS ON MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE AGENDA

Nothing to declare. Members were reminded that if at any time during the meeting they feel they have an interest in an item being discussed, they should declare it at that point.

112/20 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

Present, but no indication of a wish to speak.

113/20 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Correspondence

- Central Beds Council Sustainability Plan
- Central Beds Council Safer Communities & Partnership Team – Multi Agency Information Form training

As Nicola King, Grand Union Housing, hadn't arrived at this point, members agreed to defer the particular agenda item relating to an update from their youth team, until she arrives.

114/20 COUNCIL MINUTES

To note and sign as a correct record, the minutes of a meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 2nd September 2020 and Extra meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 16th September 2020.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on Wednesday 2nd September 2020 and Extra meeting of the Council meeting held on Wednesday 16th September 2020 be taken as read and confirmed and signed as a correct record.

115/20 GRANT CONSIDERATION

Despite our usual advertising that applications for grants were open, and to be considered at a September Establishment Committee meeting, none have been received. This is likely to be due to the Coronavirus pandemic and that for the period between the first consideration of grants this financial year in April and the

second in September, many organisations had temporarily shut down. Clubs and organisations are now starting to re-open, and therefore members considered extending the application period, and to consider any applications received at a suitable meeting in December. £8,900 for the remainder of the 2020/2021 financial year.

RESOLVED that the September round of grant consideration is open until December for consideration at a suitable meeting that month.

116/20 FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT 2020/2021

Members considered the draft Financial Risk Assessment for 2020/2021. The Clerk highlighted several amendments to this year's document.

RESOLVED that the draft Financial Risk Assessment for 2020/2021 is approved.

117/20 REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT 2020/2021

Members considered the draft Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit 2020/2021.

RESOLVED that the draft Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit 2020/2021 is approved.

118/20 REPORTS

- a) Central Beds Council Ward Member Report
Councillor B Saunders -

Marcel Coffait - has been appointed as the new CEO, he is the current Director of Place and Communities and has the experience of being at the Council since 2013, he will be taking on the role later this year.

Muriel Scott the current Director of Health is leaving following the deferment of her retirement.

Ward councillor grants update

So far the following organisations in Stotfold have benefitted from the 2020 ward member and Covid grants schemes, The Need Project, St Marys Church and The Roecroft Centre. There are 2 other applications out for approval.

Community Champions

A Community Champions scheme has been launched. Community Champions are people who can help protect their communities in the fight against Coronavirus by sharing information and advice through their contacts and connections. The Council will provide the information and they share it. We also want to hear from them about the advice and support that would be helpful to their contacts. Introductory sessions are held and this is an opportunity to explain the Community Champion role and how the scheme will work and for us to listen to the Champions' feedback and suggestions about how we can help ensure advice and messages are as accessible possible and targeted to their community. Councillors Saunders or Dixon can give you the name of the CBC officer to contact.

Latest Covid information for Central Bedfordshire

The number of people testing positive for Coronavirus in the last week (week ending 27 September) has increased by five cases compared to the same point

last week. Sadly there has been one death in Central Bedfordshire which hasn't been the case for some time. In line with the rest of the country infections are on the rise and we will be strongly urging the public to continue their efforts to keep the virus under control and avoid a lockdown.

Individuals tested in the last 7 days: 2,585 (down 121)

COVID-19 cases in the last 7 days: 56 (up 5)

Positive tests in the last 7 days: 2.2% (up 0.3%)

Wards with more than 2 cases in the last 7 days:

Dunstable-Northfields: 8, Houghton Hall: 4, Ampthill: 3, Cranfield and Marston Moretaine: 3

Dunstable-Manshead: 3, Leighton Buzzard North: 3, Tithe Farm: 3, Toddington: 3.

New cases are not diminishing in Central Beds and rising in other parts of Bedfordshire. Keep reminding residents about the 3 main behaviours. A big thank you to all the schools for efforts over the summer. Nearly all children in Central Beds are back at school now.

Don't forget to keep reminding residents to download the NHS App if possible.

The Sustainability Plan has been approved at Full Council, early engagement will be with the tree/hedge planting scheme.

Highways

There is a new App due out end of this month, details will be forwarded as soon as available.

A letter will be sent to Marcel Coffait to congratulate him on his appointment as CEO to Central Beds Council.

Councillor Dixon explained that the idea of the Community Champion scheme is to get messages, currently regarding the Coronavirus pandemic, out to residents at a local level. Stotfold currently has 7 people signed up to the scheme, with around 150 across Central Bedfordshire. Central Beds Council will put out the messaging, to be spread by the Community Champions through their personal social media.

b) Member and Nominated Representatives on Outside Bodies

St Mary's Church of England Academy – Community Governor, Councillor Mrs A Clarey

- With the 'new normal in mind St Mary's have coped with planned entry and exit from school and procedures to follow in the classroom and corridors. Parents have been active in their support.
- The attendance has been excellent -99.6% (Years 1-4) in Week 1.
- Information is recorded on Class Dojo, Tapestry and the school website.
- The new Reception children had a great start and photographs show them thoroughly enjoying their school lunches!
- Busy learning schedules have been set in place. Tennis and Gymnastics Clubs are underway.
- Harvest Festival has been celebrated with class performances and The Need Project benefitting from the food items collected.

- The Governors AGM was held virtually on Zoom. The Chair and Vice Chair were elected, Approval of the 2020-2021 Governance Code of Conduct and updated Accessibility Plan, Pupil Premium and Safeguarding Policies were approved amongst other business.
- A 'virtual tour' of the school with question and answer sessions are planned for the prospective parents of children starting in September 2021.

Councillor Phelps explained that he recently stood down as Community Governor for Etonbury Academy. He has been in the role for 5 years and it has changed so that meetings now start at 8am and run until 10am, once a month in order to have everyone present, check classrooms and hold their Governors' meetings. Councillor Phelps was thanked for his work over the last 5 years.

Roecroft Lower School – Community Governor, Councillor Mrs Bundock

- Last night I attended the first Governor meeting of the new academic year at Roecroft School
- The children are now back in school following the new rules and enjoying being as near normal as currently possible
- All the staff are settling into the new routine after what has been a very difficult time for all of them
- Governors received an outline of what Central Beds Council are suggesting for the Schools for the Future project for this area, none of which are currently acceptable

c) Town Plan Implementation Group

- Group not meeting formally but members follow up local issues through their involvement with the community
- Footpath issues have been dealt with - some movement has been made with CBC to correct the website 'error' linked to the Old Brewery footpath. Green Wheel, the schools and Larkfield Surgery are on the watch list
- A brief update on the SGNG can be seen in the Quarter Year Report ending September 2020

No of volunteers: 41

No of clients: 313

267 activities for 92 clients + telephone befriending

140 prescriptions (going down)

66 medical/health transports (going up)

Unfortunately, we were unable to find transport for 5 clients. We currently have a lack of volunteer drivers because of Covid 19.

- On Friday, 02.10.20, we resumed the Chair Based Exercise classes in the Memorial Hall. The two sessions went well – as before, but very different!

119/20 ACCOUNTS

- a) Members considered the Expenditure Report for October 2020 and the income received during September 2020 in the Income Report.

RESOLVED that all payments on the Expenditure Report are approved and are to be paid, and the Income Report be noted.

An amendment has been made to the Expenditure Report to correct committee allocations for rates paid. This amendment was noted.

- b) Members reviewed the monthly committee budget reports and bank balances as at end September 2020.

RESOLVED that the monthly committee budget reports and bank balances as at end September 2020 be noted.

120/20 RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE – 9TH SEPTEMBER 2020

Members of the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 9th September 2020 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

121/20 PLANNING COMMITTEE – COMMENTS MADE UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

Members noted the comments made on planning applications received, under delegated powers as per Standing Orders, by the Clerk and Chairman of the Planning Committee in the absence of a committee meeting, together with Decision Notice reports. Reports previously circulated to members.

The Clerk advised that as meetings are successfully being held via virtual means, there is no longer a need for the Clerk and Chairman of the Planning Committee to return comments under delegated powers, and therefore suggested that Planning Committee meetings resume. Agreed by members.

The member of public left at this point.

122/20 QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS ON ITEMS ARISING FROM THE MEETING

None present.

123/20 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

The Clerk advised members of recent problems with young people and antisocial behaviour around the Greenacre Centre and alleged smoking of cannabis within the building and immediately outside. This was reported to the police and the Grand Union Housing youth team, with one person being arrested for possession of an illegal substance on Monday evening. There has also been damage to the finial at the top of the flagpole, putting it out of use, although it is not clear from CCTV footage exactly how this was caused.

Councillor Pickering advised that the static collection at the entrance to the Co-op for Baldock Rotary Christmas collection (with contribution to Stotfold Christmas Lights) is not happening this year due to the pandemic. The plan is currently for the sleigh to travel the streets, playing Christmas music. Dates will be advised. Suggestions for streets over one or two nights in Stotfold will be welcome. The manager of the Co-op confirms that due to the pandemic, we will also be unable to do our collections at the front door or at the tills, as in previous years, but welcomes an application for funding from the Co-op towards the Christmas Lights.

Councillor Russell and Nicola King arrived at this point.

Nicola advised that during lockdown, March to July, across the area they cover, a lockdown newsletter was produced with contributions from families and young people with pictures of good things they were doing over lockdown. The youth team worked through lockdown as keyworkers. A survey and online café were also held. Mentoring has continued, and started online, with referrals coming in during the period. In April onwards they carried out detached work. Police and the local authority gave clearance for the team to do this work to do their vital work during the lockdown period. As things started to ease, they carried out home and garden visits and check-ins, and created a game for young people – 10x10x2 which was 10 games for 10 minutes, 2 metres apart. July to September was their summer programme, with two sessions of detached work, and additional work referred by the Town Council or other bodies. Mentoring continued. During September to October, work started back in the schools, and from today, they are now working in Etonbury and Samuel Whitbread schools on detached work. Esme is working closely with on exploitation work and putting in lots of intel because of the crossover of young people from different areas congregating in Stotfold, Shefford, Arlesey and surrounding areas. She continues work with the Academy of Central Bedfordshire, providing mentoring support.

Dan Gaze has recently joined the youth team and explained his background - working in a school for 15 years, specialising in working with children and young people with special educational needs. Over the last few weeks, he has been making new relationships with young people in Stotfold and the businesses in the town such the Co-op. Today he started working for a few hours at Etonbury Academy. The young people he speaks to tell him they have nothing to do and they want an area for them to go. He is looking to set up a 'get off your street and use your feet' initiative to play football and to do some mentoring around football in Shefford, and feels it would be good to do this in Stotfold also.

They are interested in using the MUGA at Riverside Playing Field for their half term programme, and have started back at the youth hub at the Greenacre Centre which will develop over time but is more of a referral point for their mentoring work. They may be interested in also using the building as a meeting point for the young people.

A query was raised over whether there has been a change in the balance of issues in the area, such as antisocial behaviour, drug taking, etc. Nicola confirmed that, yes it has changed over time, from antisocial behaviour to now concerns over knife crime and drugs, criminal exploitation and gangs. There is a lot of work going on behind the scenes with the police and other serious crimes units. During lockdown, young people lost their connections with friends and families and their peers in school. The mental health side was fine through lockdown until the last week before school, and this has dropped. This is a longer-term issue they are now dealing with. Young people are struggling to deal the changes caused by lockdown, and now the 'normal' way of living.

A query was raised over unauthorised access to a unit at Fen End during August, and alleged unsavoury activities taking place. This has now ended as the owner has fenced it properly. Nicola advised that they did speak to the young people to explain the dangers of entering an empty building and that they shouldn't be there. Another area that will likely return with antisocial behaviour are the allotments, as these things tend to go in cycles.

The Clerk advised that there is still sufficient budget available for the remainder of this financial year for the youth team's work. Nicola will provide a request for further funding for next financial year, to assist with estimates meetings taking place this month.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 7.47pm

MINUTES APPROVED (date):

SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN: