

MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6TH JANUARY 2021, AT 7.00PM

Committee Members present:

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

Also present:

Mrs K Elliott-Turner – Town Clerk, Ms Caroline Jenkins – Assistant Clerk and one member of the public

1/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Temporary clerk cover was provided by the Assistant Clerk, until the Town Clerk was able to join the meeting. Councillor Steve Dixon sent his apologies for not being able to attend.

2/21 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.

The Chairman took this opportunity in the meeting to advise that, sadly, following her very recent retirement from the Town Council, Mrs Sheila Bundock passed away on Tuesday 5th January. A minute silence was observed in respect to Mrs Sheila Bundock.

3/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

Not at this point.

4/21 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Nothing to report.

5/21 COUNCIL MINUTES

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

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

The Clerk joined the meeting at this point, and the Assistant Clerk left the meeting during the next item.

6/21 LONDON LUTON AIRPORT/NATS CONSULTATION – ARRIVALS AIRSPACE CHANGE PROPOSAL

Members considered the current consultation on proposed changes to arrivals serving London Luton Airport. A copy of the Executive Summary was provided to members and is available on the London Luton Airport website. Consultation

closes 5th February 2021.

RESOLVED that a group of 3 to 5 members consider the detailed proposals and put together a recommended council response to the February Council meeting. Interested members are to notify the Clerk. Members were encouraged to also respond to the consultation as an individual.

7/21 **THE COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE – PUBLIC CONSULTATION: STANDARDS MATTER 2**

The Committee on Standards in Public Life has recently launched a consultation as part of its review into the institution, processes and structures in place to support high standards of conduct. The terms of reference of the review are to:

- Review the evidence as to how well ethical standards are upheld in public life in the UK
- Review the evidence on the strength of the UK's arrangements for regulating and promoting ethical standards
- Review the adequacy and continuing relevance of the Seven Principles of Public Life
- Identify examples of best practice in the promotion of cultures that celebrate and encourage high ethical standards

Deadline for responses to this Government consultation is 29th January 2021. A copy of the consultation questions was provided for members and is available on the Government's website. Deadline for comments to NALC to help inform their response to the consultation, is 15th January 2021.

Members felt that in Stotfold, these Seven Principles are followed very well, however there were concerns that this is not always followed nationally.

RESOLVED that this Council endorses the existing Seven Principles of Public Life and endeavour to follow those principles as part of our adopted Code of Conduct. Members were also encouraged to respond to the consultation as individuals.

The Clerk advised that the Local Government Association has recently produced an updated Code of Conduct, which is now being considered by NALC. This will be put to council in due course to consider adopting.

8/21 **REPORTS**

a) Central Beds Council Ward Member Report Councillor B Saunders

Meetings are underway regarding the budget and comments are invited from residents on the proposals.

With regard to Coronavirus in our area, the Stotfold and Langford Ward is currently second highest in Central Bedfordshire for cases, with numbers in the high 30s over the last week. Everyone was urged to continue following legislation and guidance.

Last month a question was raised regarding the streetlights in the area of the new Pix Brook Academy. The three lights closest to Stotfold still haven't been repaired, and none of the seven new lights are working, one light towards Arlesey is still flashing, but another one now seems to have a new head on it. These lights have not been working for around 2 months. Councillor Saunders will continue to chase.

This has been chased by Councillors Saunders on several occasions. There is to be a new reporting system called 'Fix My Street' which will replace the current system. A briefing is being held next week on the system, to go live in the near future.

Concerns were expressed that we are still unable to receive Covid-19 figures for Stotfold alone, rather than the Stotfold and Langford Ward. Councillor Saunders confirmed that this information is not possible to be shown at a postcode level.

b) Member and Nominated Representatives on Outside Bodies

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

- By the end of last term, St Mary's felt secure in the fact that they didn't have to close any class bubbles for a positive Covid-19 result.
- Monday 4th January was a planned inset day for the school and everything was set up for a face-to-face return on Tuesday 5th January. Parents had been notified of all procedures during the previous week. After the Prime Minister's announcement at 8pm on the evening of inset day, St Mary's staff were meeting on zoom and sharing very different planning and delivery of lessons. By 10pm, a Parentmail outlined details for the opening of the school on Tuesday morning. Around 50 pupils are attending each day this week, with numbers likely to rise. Remote learning is also up and running.
- Two governors' meetings are planned before the end of January.

Members expressed concerns about difficulty accessing the remote learning materials, particularly in households which have one laptop and multiple school age children. There are also issues with WiFi signal, which is causing difficulty with remote learning. Ward Member, Councillor Brian Saunders advised that Central Beds Council has laptops available for families to use to help with remote learning.

c) Town Plan Implementation Group – Councillor Mrs Anne Clarey

- There has been no formal meeting of the group, however, with Green Wheel, we are hoping to confirm the date of our next meeting in the coming week, and Etonbury Park will be on the agenda.
- Good Neighbour Group – in the quarter ending December 2020, 390 activities have been carried out. Of these 127 were health transports, and 133 collections and delivery of prescriptions. Since lockdown in

March, the Stotfold Good Neighbour Group have been responsible for dealing with around 600 prescriptions, which is mainly down to 5 volunteers. You will be pleased to hear that we have now taken 10 clients to the Shefford Surgery, or to Robertson House in Stevenage for vaccination against Covid-19. No-one has been refused their second dose. Shefford and Stevenage are not very accessible unless you have a car or use support by groups such as the Stotfold Good Neighbour Group for clients who are having to access those buildings for vaccinations, as they are not on convenient public transport routes. A centre in Stotfold could be useful.

9/21 ACCOUNTS

- a) Members considered the Expenditure Report for January 2021 and the income received during December 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.

- b) Members considered the monthly committee budget report and bank balances as at end December 2020.

RESOLVED that the monthly committee budget reports and bank balances for month end December 2020 are noted.

10/21 RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE – 9TH DECEMBER 2020

Members of the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 9th December 2020 are a correct record.

The minutes were noted with the following amendment: addition of Councillor B Saunders as being in attendance at the meeting, and the recommendations were **RESOLVED** by council:

Minute 108/20

- That the Town Council adopts the public open spaces and equipped play areas offered for transfer by Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon Homes
- That the Clerk negotiates with the developers on obtaining the best achievable sum.

11/21 ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE – 16TH DECEMBER 2020

Members of the Establishment Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 16th December 2020 are a correct record.

The minutes were noted, and the recommendations were **RESOLVED** by council:

Minute 29/20

- That £1,000 is awarded to The Need Project for the purposes specified
- That the application for grant to the Conservative Club is not awarded, as it is felt that this is a business-related operation and grant purpose
- That £150 is awarded to the Poppy Appeal for the purposes specified

Minute 33/20

- That the Stotfold Town Council precept figure of £534,537 for 2021/2022 be submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council. This figure has taken into account the proposed actions to reduce the figure, which was approved for recommendation.

12/21 PLANNING COMMITTEE – 9TH DECEMBER 2020

Members of the Planning Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 9th December 2020 are a correct record, with the following amendment: Councillor Matthews' first name initial to be corrected to D. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

13/21 PLANNING COMMITTEE – 27TH DECEMBER 2020

Members of the Planning Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 17th December 2020 are a correct record, with the following amendment: Councillor Matthews' first name initial to be corrected to D, and Councillor Dhaliwal is to be removed from the list of those in attendance as he had sent his apologies – which were recorded. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

14/21 QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS ON ITEMS ARISING FROM THE MEETING

A member of the public had no comments or questions relating to meeting items but introduced himself as being interested in his Stotfold family history.

15/21 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

Councillor Pickering forwarded the thanks of Baldock and Stotfold Rotary Club to those who helped with the Santa's Sleigh route through Stotfold. The total of donations received through Just Giving will be announced shortly.

Councillor Mrs Hyde advised that the Roecroft Centre has passed from the Roecroft Centre Management Committee to the Vicar and Church Wardens who have established the ownership. This means that the building can now be properly registered. As the Roecroft Centre site and adjacent house is now amalgamated as a charity, income from the house can be used for the old school building known as the Roecroft Centre. This will benefit the community and ensure the long-term viability of the building. It was stressed that it is not part of the church, and will be registered to the public guardian, not the diocese. The name of this new charity is H.O. Roe Charity. A question was raised as to whether there is any scope for a representative of the Town Council or public to be part of the new management committee. They are in the processing of setting this up.

The Clerk referred to some items of correspondence (previously circulated) which she was unable to present at the start of the meeting:

- Bedfordshire Bugle January 2021 edition
- Grand Union Housing Youth Report – Lockdown Programme

The Clerk advised that as we are back in another full lockdown, the staff are not visiting or working from the offices during this period, and therefore we will be returning to electronic distribution of papers rather than hand delivery of papers for this period.

The Annual Town Meeting is normally held the first Thursday in March, and as lockdown may still be in place, or at least some form of social distancing restrictions, this will need to be in a different format, and the date is likely to move. This meeting has to be held between 1st March and 1st June, and confirmation as to when the Annual Town Meeting will be held, and likely to be virtual, will be brought back to council once the situation has been determined.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.05pm

MINUTES APPROVED (date):

SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN: