

MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3RD MARCH 2021, AT 7.00PM

Committee Members present:

A Cooper - Chairman, S Buck, 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:

Mrs K Elliott-Turner – Town Clerk, Central Beds Council Ward Member S Dixon and one member of the public

35/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Phelps. Councillor Russell was absent without apologies.

36/21 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.

37/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

None present.

38/21 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Correspondence

- Notification from Central Beds Council that their 2021/2022 budget has been agreed
- England's Economic Heartland Publication of Transport Strategy 'Connecting People, Transforming Journeys' – providing the Heartland and Government with an evidence-based, vision-led framework to enable green economic growth in a way that delivers a net zero transport system. Transport Strategy and Summary documents provided for members
- Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner – Newsletter March 2021
- Central Beds Council's Town & Parish Council bulletin – March 2021

An article in the Town & Parish Council bulletin regarding the Central Beds Council and BRCC village halls and community buildings survey was referred to, and the Clerk advised that she had completed this in regard to the council's two facilities.

39/21 COUNCIL MINUTES

Members were asked to note and sign as a correct record, the minutes of the council meeting held on Wednesday 3rd March 2021.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the council meeting held on Wednesday 3rd March 2021 be taken as read and confirmed and signed as a correct record.

40/21 CODE OF CONDUCT – DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

Members considered a report from the Clerk on Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations, which clarifies existing requirements contained in our Standing Orders and Code of Conduct, together with a new Dispensation Request Form to be used when required.

The report and Dispensation Request Form were noted.

41/21 STANDING ORDERS – ‘VIRTUAL’ VOTING ON CO-OPTION

With a current casual vacancy to be filled by co-option (April Council meeting, subject to receipt of applications), whilst in-person meetings are not taking place, members considered suspending Standing Order 10b ‘All co-options in connection with casual vacancies shall take place by secret ballot’.

RESOLVED that Standing Order 10b is suspended whilst in-person meetings are not taking place, in relation to voting on casual vacancies by secret ballot.

42/21 POLICE CRIME STATISTICS

As requested at the last meeting, council already receives crime statistics on crimes reported relating to Stotfold, and members considered asking the Police to provide crime statistics on crimes solved. The Clerk advised that the crime statistics now provided to members are supplied by Neighbourhood Watch, rather than the Police. Whilst in correspondence with PCSO Ann Jeeves on another matter, an opportunity was taken to ask about the possibility of receiving reports on crimes solved. She advises that the way of providing statistics to councils was decided once it was taken out of their remit. One of the reasons the solved crime isn't included is that a crime can take many months if not years to get a final outcome. They found the solved crime had no reflection on crime for that month or necessarily year and wouldn't give any beneficial updates.

RESOLVED that although council appreciated the points raised by the PCSO, it is felt that receiving reports on crimes solved is a measure of how successful policing is, and therefore we request regular updates on solved crimes.

43/21 STOTFOLD COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN

We have been allocated a Safer Communities Involvement Officer (Daniel Till) working within Central Bedfordshire Council's Safer Communities and Partnership Team, as our Single Point of Contact for the team, to enable us to have an individual person who we can contact regarding any community safety queries or issues you may have.

Daniel would like to work with two designated community safety representatives for the town council and the Clerk to identify issues and produce a Community Safety Plan (CSP) for Stotfold. This would be a standalone document, with the aim of working with Central Bedfordshire Council, and their partners, to tackle long-term community safety issues in Stotfold.

The CSP will identify long-term issues of say 3 to 5 years (but could cover any period), and could cover issues such as verge parking, fly-tipping or anti-social behaviour. However, there are no set issues, and the issues identified should be specific to Stotfold.

Members considered working with Central Bedfordshire Council's Safer Communities and Partnership Team to produce a Community Safety Plan for Stotfold, and to appoint two council members as community safety representatives to work with the Safer Communities Involvement Officer in identifying Stotfold-specific community safety issues and producing the Plan.

RESOLVED that Councillors S Buck and J Talbot are the council's nominated community safety representatives to work with the Central Beds Council's Safer Communities and Partnership Team in producing a Community Safety Plan for Stotfold. An item will be added to the next agenda for council to identify key long-term issues to be taken back by the community safety representatives.

44/21 CENTRAL BEDS COUNCIL CONSULTATION – SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND SEND PROVISIONS

The consultation on proposed changes to Central Bedfordshire Council's four special schools and additional spaces for Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) within mainstream schools, known as Additional Resource Provision, is open for comments until 5th May 2021.

This is part of the Schools for Future programme, and the proposals include:
Special Schools

- An increase of around 700 to 950 places across four special schools – The Chiltern School, Ivel Valley School, Oak Bank School and Weatherfield Academy
- Relocation or expansion of the four special schools, between 2023 and 2026

Additional Resource Provision

- To create a further 92 places between 2023 and 2025
- To ensure a greater geographical distribution across Central Bedfordshire, in line with future need in Dunstable and Houghton Regis, Harlington, Sandy, Shefford and Stotfold, Biggleswade and Leighton-Linslade

Mainstream schools

- Include multi-use/nurture spaces, where there is space to do so

The [Schools for the Future website](#) gives more information on the proposals and how to respond (a copy of the proposals document PDF is provided for members).

Members will complete the consultation as individuals.

45/21 SECTION 106 – ALLOCATION FOR ARLESEY ROAD PITCH PROVISION AND CHANGING ROOMS

Members considered the principle of allocating Section 106 funds specified for use at Arlesey Road for pitch provision and changing rooms, to support the Football Club in providing a suitable training pitch surface on their leased land, together with appropriate fencing and gates. Central Beds Council Section 106 Officers confirm that it would be appropriate to use these funds for the identified

purposes above, however it should be noted that these funds have not yet been received from the developers, as trigger points have not yet been reached.

The Chairman noted that these allocations to provide grass football pitches were not something that the town council had requested, as we don't have any more land on which to put football pitches on. Unless a developer requests a variation of the Section 106 agreement, the funds have to be spent on the allocation given. The Chairman gave an example of where the funds could be used, should we approve the principle - the football club practice area at Arlesey Road which is not currently a proper pitch, and can only be used during daylight hours. If we were minded to approve directing the S106 allocation in this direction, the football club, as our tenants, could produce a scheme to provide netting, fencing, pitch work or possibly floodlighting, which would release more playing area on the rest of the recreation land for others to use. It would need to be on a case by case basis and go through the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee to consider.

RESOLVED that the principle of directing S106 funds 'pitch provision and changing rooms at Arlesey Road', to support the Football Club in providing a suitable training pitch surface on their leased land, together with appropriate fencing and gates, is approved.

A member queried how best to influence Central Beds Council to direct S106 to facilities that we want in the community. This can be done through the Neighbourhood Plan, for example. Work on this is to start again shortly, as it was unable to progress during pandemic and lockdown restrictions.

46/21 REPORTS

a) Central Beds Council Ward Member Report

Councillor B Saunders

- As previously advised, the Central Beds Council budget has now been improved
- The Ward Councillor Grant Scheme has now come to an end. Councillor Saunders' last amounts of money went towards provision of CCTV equipment for the new outdoor classroom at the Mossman Centre
- The Business Support Grant Scheme is now open for applications

Councillor S Dixon

- With regard to Covid-19 figures, things continue to look like they are going in the right direction, but there is no room for complacency
- As of Monday, the figure for Stotfold & Langford Ward had dropped to the bottom of the list, with only one case in the preceding 7 days reported.
- The vaccination and testing centres are open and working well. One vaccination centre in Central Bedfordshire has 130 volunteers, with a backlog of people wanting to do their bit.

b) Member and Nominated Representatives on Outside Bodies

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

- St Mary's have continued to work well with ongoing remote learning and communications through Dojo, tapestry, zoom and loom, all new words to most of us
- For the children attending on site, life is almost as before, and working in bubbles. Of course, they miss their friends
- World Book Day will be celebrated tomorrow, 4th March, and plans are well underway to reopening to all pupils next week on Monday 8th March
- As a Governor, in the last month I have attended a virtual full governing board meeting and taken part in a webinar organised by Central Beds Council entitled 'SEND and the law'.

Town Plan Implementation Group – Councillor Mrs Anne Clarey

- We are still waiting for notification from Cliff Andrews, BRCC for a Green Wheel meeting, but understandably, things are quite slow at the moment and it is the winter months.
- Update from Stotfold Good Neighbour Group from 1st February until yesterday – we have completed 108 activities and this has involved 62 pharmacy trips, 33 medical appointments including Covid vaccination clinics, and organising library books, shopping, advocacy and DIY. Volunteers have continued to phone clients on a regular basis, which was started at the first lockdown a year ago. The BRCC has recently supplied the group a quantity of PPE which has been offered to our drivers.

47/21 ACCOUNTS

- a) Members considered the Expenditure Report for March 2021 and the income received during February 2021 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 February 2021.

RESOLVED that the monthly committee budget reports and bank balances for month end January 2021 are noted.

48/21 RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE – 10TH FEBRUARY 2021

Members of the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 10th February 2021 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

49/21 PLANNING COMMITTEE – 10TH FEBRUARY 2021

Members of the Planning Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 10th February 2021 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

50/21 PLANNING COMMITTEE – 24TH FEBRUARY 2021

Members of the Planning Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 24th February 2021 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

51/21 QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS ON ITEMS ARISING FROM THE MEETING

A member of the public stated that it is important that the town council comments on planning applications as they come in which includes the section 106 agreements appended to them, in order to ensure they meet the requirements of the council and the town.

52/21 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

The Chairman advised that there has been a lot of concern recently by residents about hedge and tree work at Shawmer Farm site, where they were cutting down mainly leylandii. He has pointed out to concerned residents that the nesting season is March to August, and guidelines state that if you do have to work during that period then you should make a careful check of any shrubs or trees to ensure that you are not disturbing nesting birds. The workers on site assured the Chairman that they had checked the trees involved before they felled them. The main tree felling was by a demolition company at the road end of the site to give them access to demolish the original building. The Clerk advised that we have also received complaints about the tree felling work via Facebook, and they were advised to contact Pat Longland, Central Beds Council's Tree and Landscape Officer.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 7.49pm

MINUTES APPROVED (date):

SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN: