

# MINUTES OF A MEETING OF STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE, ON WEDNESDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021, AT 7.00PM

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## Committee Members present:

A Cooper (Chairman), Mrs T Bhasin, S Buck, Mrs A Clarey, B Collier, Mrs M Cooper, S Dhaliwal, S Hayes, Mrs J Hyde, D Matthews, C Phelps, G Russell, B Saunders (& CBC Cllr) and J Talbot

## Also present:

Mrs K Elliott-Turner – Town Clerk, two members of the public, Central Bedfordshire Council Ward Member S Dixon

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### **129/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Central Bedfordshire Council Ward Member N Harris. Councillor Saunders advised that he would be late to the meeting.

### **130/21 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

Councillor Mrs Hyde declared an interest and advised that she would leave the meeting in regard to agenda item 7(i) – filling a Trustee vacancy on the Eleemosynary Charity of William Field, as it concerns her outgoing role on the Charity as Churchwarden and a request to become the Council's appointed Trustee to fill their current vacancy. Councillor Hayes also declared an interest in the same item, as one of the Council's current appointed Trustees on the Charity. There were no requests for dispensations. 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.

### **131/21 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS & CIVIC ATTENDANCE**

This year's Remembrance Sunday ceremony will be held on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November.

Councillor Mrs Hyde will be undertaking her annual Churches Bike Ride on 11<sup>th</sup> September, to raise funds for the Church buildings. It will involve a 25 mile ride, visiting 16 churches. Members were invited to sponsor Councillor Mrs Hyde.

### **132/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES**

No questions at this point.

### **133/21 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION**

The Clerk reminded Members that this year's Mill Weekend takes place on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> October, and any members willing to volunteer to man the council's stand at the event are to advise the Assistant Clerk.

### **134/21 COUNCIL MINUTES**

Members were asked to note and sign as a correct record, the minutes of the Council meeting held on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the council meeting held on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021 be taken as read and confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## 135/21 MEMBER AND NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

(i) Eleemosynary Charity of William Field – Trustee

The Charity currently has a Town Council appointed Trustee vacancy, following the resignation of Humphrey Pickering – the Town Council has two appointed Trustee positions, with Councillor Hayes filling the second. Councillor Mrs Hyde is currently a Charity Trustee through her role as Church Warden, however she is looking to step down from that role and therefore her position as Trustee would no longer stand. Councillor Mrs Hyde wishes to retain her link between the Charity and the Town Council and has expressed an interest in taking the current vacant Town Council appointed Trustee position. There were no further nominations:

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Mrs Hyde is a Town Council appointed Trustee for the Eleemosynary Charity of William Field.

(ii) Roecroft Lower School – Community Governor

Councillor Mrs Bhasin has met with the Chairman of Governors for Roecroft Lower School in regard to their current Community Governor vacancy. They have accepted her in the role, which starts September 2021. Her first Governor training session takes place on 8<sup>th</sup> October.

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Bhasin is the Town Council nominated Community Governor for Roecroft Lower School.

## 136/21 OFFICE OF POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER – TOWN & PARISH COUNCIL CLUSTER MEETING

The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) is holding a Town & Parish Council Cluster Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 6.30pm to 7.30pm (virtual format). The meeting will include introductions to the different parishes, the PCC's ambitions for the parishes, questions from the parishes and the PCC's responses.

- (i) The following Councillors will attend to represent the Town Council: Mrs Clarey, Cooper, Dhaliwal and Talbot. The Town Clerk and Assistant Clerk will also attend.
- (ii) Suggested questions to be put to the PCC: Please can we have clarity on figures for crimes committed in Stotfold; How closely does the PCC and officers intend to liaise with youth workers in our area

## 137/21 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

In 2018, a Community Governance Review (CGR) was held where, as part of the review, Town and Parish Councils were invited to consider the number of councillors we have to represent the Parish. Central Bedfordshire Council would not have expected to carry out a further CGR for at least 5 years (i.e. 2023), however they have now received a request from one of the Town Councils seeking to reduce their councillor numbers and as a consequence, other Town and Parish Councils are being asked if they also wished for their numbers to be reviewed. Normally, a Town and Parish Council would have a minimum of 7 members, and they would not be starting the process of carrying out a review until 2022 with any resultant changes being made in time for the 2023 elections. Members considered whether Stotfold Town Council wishes to review its councillor numbers.

**RESOLVED** that Stotfold Town Council wishes to retain its membership number of 15.

### 138/21 EV CHARGEPOINTS

At the May Council meeting, members considered potential locations for on-street electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints, as part of a residents survey conducted by Central Bedfordshire Council.

Minute 101/21 resolved “that the Town Council would be willing to look at potential EV Charging Points in our car parks, perhaps The Greenacre Centre car park and Brook Street car park; payment methods via cards or telephone. These suggestions are to be put to Central Bedfordshire Council”.

Central Bedfordshire Council advises that they will shortly be seeking to procure commercial chargepoint providers with respect to their own car parks and buildings and on-street residential parking and are keen to work with Town & Parish Councils to, where possible, include our car parks and buildings within the scope of these contracts.

A Town & Parish Council specific survey has been circulated by Central Bedfordshire Council, and under a delegated decision, the Clerk has completed the survey on behalf of the Town Council, as per our previous discussions, with some additional potential locations included, as they have also now asked for car parks in parks and recreation areas.

We are not bound by these suggested locations, and indeed some may be entirely unsuitable. Central Bedfordshire Council also asked for suggestions of other non-Town Council owned locations, which might also be suitable for EV chargepoints, acknowledging that they would have to contact the landowners direct.

A copy of the EV Chargepoints FAQs was previously circulated to members for information, together with the EOI form submitted by the Clerk.

**RESOLVED** that the delegated decision taken by the Clerk in returning the Expression of Interest (EOI) form on behalf of the Council is noted and agreed, and a suggested inclusion would be for car parks of our local schools.

### 139/21 WELCOME BACK FUND – UPDATE

Central Bedfordshire Council has been allocated funding from the Government’s Welcome Back Fund (WBF), for the purpose of encouraging shoppers and employees to return in a safe way, but also to ensure that economic activity returns as quickly as possible.

The WBF funding is part of a legacy European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) scheme, for which Central Bedfordshire Council is the accountable body. The funding is intended for specific activities towards the safe opening of high streets and town centres, as approved by the Government.

At the May 2021 Town Council meeting, members were asked for suggestions on how to use the £6,000 allocated for Stotfold. Suggestions were received and assessed against the fund criteria. Three options were identified, which were agreed by Central Bedfordshire Council’s Place Programme Manager as fitting the fund criteria and could be submitted as spend options.

The Delivery Plan application was subsequently approved by the Welcome Back Fund team within the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

No.	Area of Scope	Using bullet points briefly set out the specific activities you will undertake	Briefly set out how the activity does not duplicate existing activity (additionality)	Total Indicative Budget £ per item Gross
2	Communications and public information activity to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stotfold News to produce and circulate to every household in Stotfold, a leaflet promoting local businesses and shops in the town</li> <li>• Each shop/business to highlight safety measures they have in place to ensure safe return</li> </ul>	Although the Stotfold News magazine does carry paid for advertisements for businesses/shops in the town, this does not include all. We intend to encourage every business/shop to take part in this, with no charge to them.	£1,700 plus vat
4	Temporary public realm changes to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install temporary planters (pre-planted) on a hire basis, in identified locations around the town centre, to help beautify the area, and encourage a feel-good factor to returning to the High Street.</li> </ul>	There are currently four, small Town Council provided square planters in two locations. These have a perennial plant in each, with occasional annuals for colour.	
5	Support and promote a safe public environment for a local area's visitor economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise an outdoor cinema – seated type, bring your own picnic rug/camping chair.</li> <li>• Layout of each family bubble pre-marked, to ensure safe social interaction.</li> <li>• Ticketed event (FOC?) to ensure max numbers not exceeded.</li> <li>• Location to be used is in Greenacre Park, situated to the rear of the High Street.</li> <li>• Attendees would be encouraged to visit local takeaway food venues prior to attending, to enjoy whilst watching the film.</li> <li>• Local food outlets could also be invited to attend on site, with mobile takeaways for cinema attendees.</li> </ul>	Stotfold has not held such an event before, and this would help to bring the community back together, in a safe way. (additional funds could be added to this proposal – S106 or Town Council funds)	<p>£131 film licence</p> <p>£21 Temporary Event Notice</p> <p>£3,200 for three nights screening (or £1,700 for one night, £2,400 for two nights)</p> <p>£unknown for roping/barriers for controlled access</p>

## Progress of WBF projects

### Stotfold Town Council Business Directory 2021

The Stotfold News Magazine and the Town Council's staff have been working together to approach every business in Stotfold, whether in a shop premises, a business unit, or a business operating from home, to invite them to be part of the 2021 Business Directory for Stotfold. Stotfold businesses are invited to place an advert or a few lines explaining their business, free of charge. A leaflet is being produced through Stotfold News and their printing contractors, which will be inserted into the October Stotfold News for delivery to every household in Stotfold.

### Floral High Street planters

An order has been placed for x2 large planters and 4 wall planters from Amberol (<https://amberol.co.uk/planters>). They have developed a 'self-watering' system called Aquafeed. This is a series of high-capacity action wicks which 'suck' up water from a sub-soil water reservoir onto a dispersal mat, which in turn distributes the water evenly to the compost overlaying it. As a result, evaporation is kept to a minimum, which keeps the plants healthy and strong for longer, and the planters need only be topped up once or twice a week, rather than daily.

The two large planters will be sited on the grassed area by the bench on High Street, backing onto The Avenue, and on the grassed area to the front of Busy Bees Nursery. The four wall planters will be fixed to the wall surrounding Brook Street/High Street car park.

It is intended that the planters will be planted up for a spring/summer display next year, and initially local garden centres/nurseries will be approached to see if they would like to sponsor the plants and compost. If not successful, there will be some additional funds from the WBF, supplemented by Town Council funds, to do this.

A further part of this project is purchase of a watering system. The SCH Indoor Water Unit IDU will be purchased <https://www.worldofmowers.co.uk/garden-care-equipment/sch-watering-units>, which is a light-weight push along unit (preferable over a backpack sprayer due to health & safety considerations and weight of water). Water to fill the watering system can be obtained from the water supply at Brook Street toilets, or from the Greenacre Centre outdoor water supply, and storage of the unit is to be confirmed (likely to be the Greenacre Centre lockable bin store due to insufficient space at rear of Brook Street toilet unit).

In terms of watering, the Landscape & Grass Cutting Contractor's contract states that he is to 'replant the existing planters twice a year with seasonal plants (when not planted up by third party sponsors), and flower tubs are to be monitored and watered as necessary'. It is therefore proposed to add these six planters to his watering rota.

### Outdoor Cinema

It was intended that this project would take place on Greenacre Park, early plans were in place, and advice had been sought from Central Bedfordshire Council's Safety Advisory Group. However, the land is currently still in the ownership of Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon Homes, and both required the land to have been transferred to the Town Council before the event could take place (Taylor Wimpey did offer a

financial contribution though). There is currently a dispute about a particular aspect of the public open space to be adopted, and therefore it is extremely unlikely that the land will be transferred in time for the event, proposed for 18<sup>th</sup> September 2021. As we would need time to book the event company, refreshments, have approval from the Safety Advisory Group and advertise the event, this particular project will not go ahead in September as planned.

As the funds are to be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, there is a chance that we could arrange the Outdoor Cinema for another time, but weather implications will need to be considered. Advice is being sought from the Programme Manager on the situation, to establish if any changes can be made to our application in order not to lose this part of the funding.

#### **140/21 QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE, JUNE 2022**

Members considered a report on suggested celebration activities as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. It was agreed that celebrations/activities for Stotfold should aim to include the following:

- Taking part in the National Beacon Lighting ceremony, using our existing Beacon at Stotfold Cemetery, on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June.
- Taking part in the Queen's Green Canopy planting scheme – applying for free trees through the Woodland Trust. Location/s to be determined. October meeting of the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee to discuss a possible location for tree planting within the Taylors Road development, once the Town Plan Implementation Group has considered a report on this matter from Cliff Andrews (BRCC) and Caroline Wardle (CBC).
- Encourage residents to organise Big Jubilee Lunch events on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June.
- Organise an Outdoor Cinema on Greenacre Park (£106 funds available, which are suitable to use for this type of community event). Appropriate film/s to be determined. Could also include a Big Jubilee Lunch with the cinema event.
- Use appropriate coloured floral planting in existing and new town planters.
- Erect union flag bunting around the Brook Street/High Street car park.
- Invite members of the public and organisations to advise us of their events, so that we can put together a Jubilee Celebrations Events Programme for circulation/electronic publication.
- Consider options for children's mementos, such as spoons, mugs, etc.
- Liaise with the Vicar of St Mary's Church to organise a Service of Thanksgiving.

The Clerk will start work on the above and will update council as activities progress.

#### **141/21 REPORTS**

##### **a) Central Beds Council Ward Member Report**

###### **Councillor S Dixon**

- EV Charge Points – this will be going out to tender this week. There will be no cost to Central Bedfordshire Council or Town and Parish Councils in providing charge points, as they will be provided by the commercial sector.
- Queen's Jubilee – Claire Wardle, Senior Countryside Officer, has funds to help with tree planting and is looking at opposite Stotfold Mill. The required matched funding as part her of funding proposal can be through maintenance of the trees rather than financial contribution.

- E-scooters – a trial of rental e-scooters is currently underway which allows people to ride them on roads and cycleways in certain areas. The Government will then consider whether to legalise such use.
- Planning matters - the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan has now been made; planning applications are up 25%; the Government is currently reviewing its forecast for housing numbers.
- Covid-19 – over the last few weeks, Stotfold and Langford have had the highest numbers of Covid-19 cases, however it is believed that this may reflect the high take-up of people getting tested.
- Health Centres - there have been a number of complaints about Larksfield and Shefford health centres – a meeting is being held with both centres to obtain real time information and establish where they are with doctor numbers against number of patients.
- Pix Brook Flood Alleviation – a comprehensive flood plan should be produced soon. Brook Street is the starting point in the timeline for a flood alleviation project, as this is the most acute pinch point.
- A Temporary Stop Notice has been placed at the Fox & Duck public house, in regard to soil dumped at the rear of the site.
- Stop Notices have also been placed on Tudor Oaks. The Environment Agency has taken the lead due to contamination that may have been brought in with dumped materials on site.
- Central Bedfordshire Council is continuing to hold hybrid meetings (virtual & face to face), however where there is the potential for a challenge, they are holding those meetings face to face.
- Priory House is very quiet, with much of their staff and councillors continuing to work from home and in the community.
- In response to a query from a member about the Old Brewery Footpath and the former Roecroft Lower School playing field site, he confirmed that this site is not included in the Local Plan for development, but still needs regular maintenance of the grassed area – he will chase this.
- A member advised that delivery of green food waste bags has been very poor – a resident has reported that they requested bags in May, but they were not received until July. This will be checked with the Service Manager for Waste Operations.
- A member pointed out that the bus timetables, presumably issued by Central Bedfordshire Council as the bus stops now have their logo on them, are incorrect – they show incorrect times for bus routes which have now been reduced in frequency.
- A member advised that most of the previously faulty street lights in Arlesey Road have now been fixed, however number 18 is still flickering – this has been faulty for over a year.
- Work on the toucan crossing on Arlesey Road, as part of the Linden Homes development, has still not started. This was to have been completed before occupation of the first house in this development, there are now approximately 15 houses occupied.
- A member advised that in recent investigations into the council's utility supplies, it has been discovered that the Town Council has been paying for 17 street lights in Arlesey Road on an unmetered supply for the last approx. 7 years. The utility supplier requires Central Bedfordshire Council to confirm to UMSO that they are Central Bedfordshire Council's lights.

## b) Member and Nominated Representatives on Outside Bodies

There were no reports.

## c) Town Plan Implementation Group – Councillor Mrs A Clarey

- The Town Plan Implementation Group is planning to meet on 28<sup>th</sup> September.

### Good Neighbour Group

- Held their AGM on 7<sup>th</sup> July. The Mayor, Councillor Cooper, awarded certificates to volunteers who had worked alongside clients over lockdown, giving lifts to medical appointments, delivery prescriptions.
- They will be running a Macmillan Coffee Morning in St Mary's Church Hall on 29<sup>th</sup> September. This is organised along with the Academy of Central Bedfordshire. Whilst the event is only for clients, we anticipate a visit from the Mayor.
- Chair Based Exercises are going well.
- At least 8 volunteers have signed up to the defibrillator training, being run courtesy of the Town Council.
- The Group has carried out 101 activities in 30 days but need to find new volunteers. There are currently only 33 volunteers.

### Green Wheel Stakeholders Group

- Claire Wardle (CBC) sent a report to the June meeting which outlined work carried out during lockdown at Etonbury Wood. It might be interesting for members of the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee to read this.
- Cliff Andrews (BRCC) is currently trying to secure a link in the Masterplan – Silverbirch Avenue to Taylors Road and is meeting with developers/landowner.
- Section 106 monies to be spent in Stotfold range from the improvement of the 'wet area' at the Riverside Playing Field, to hedge laying, tree planting at Pix Brook Academy/Arlesey Road which will be progressed this autumn.

### Bedfordshire Walking Festival/3 Wheel Challenge

- Information on the Stotfold part of the 3 Wheel Challenge is provided for members. This takes place on 12<sup>th</sup> September and will be led by Nick Markham from The Ramblers. There is a 20 page booklet covering all the walks being organised over Central Bedfordshire from 11<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> September. The Clerk is advertising this event on the Town Council website and Facebook page, and the library also has booklets.

## 142/21 DELEGATED DECISIONS REPORTS

Members were previously provided with Delegated Decision Reports, as per temporary delegation scheme – decisions taken by the Clerk in consultation with Chairman and Vice-Chairman of council and Chairman and Vice-Chairman of appropriate committee:

- Delegated Decision Report 22<sup>nd</sup> June to 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2021
- Delegated Decision Report 4<sup>th</sup> August to 24<sup>th</sup> August 2021

**RESOLVED** that decisions taken under temporary delegated powers, in the above Delegated Decisions Reports are noted. The Reports will be retained on file.

## 143/21 ACCOUNTS

- a) Members considered the Expenditure Report for approval for September 2021 and the income received during August 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 August 2021.

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

## 144/21 QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS ON ITEMS ARISING FROM THE MEETING

A member of the public stated that he wished to see a policeman designated to Stotfold and living in the town, as they used to in past years.

## 145/21 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

The Clerk reminded members that we will be hosting training on use of defibrillators on 11<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> October. Those wishing to attend must book their space, as numbers are limited.

Formal thanks were given to the staff for their work during the last 18 months and periods of lockdown and working from home, ensuring that there was no loss in service provided by staff members.

The Clerk advised that the Town Council's reception will be re-opening to the public on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September, with the previously advised reduced opening hours of 10am to 1pm Monday to Friday, closed on Wednesdays.

Councillor Saunders joined the meeting at this point.

## 146/21 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Under Section 3d of Standing Orders, the Chairman proposed that the press and public are temporarily excluded whilst matters are discussed which include contractual and financial information and that they be instructed to withdraw from the meeting for the following agenda item only. **PASSED** by members.

## 147/21 STOTFOLD LIBRARY – CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

- i) Members considered a letter of intent from Central Bedfordshire Council in regard to the Stotfold Library project. A confidential project report and supporting documents were previously provided to members.

**RESOLVED** that Stotfold Town Council agrees that the Stotfold Library project can proceed as per project report and will issue a similar letter of intent to Central Bedfordshire Council.

Councillor Cooper requested that his name be recorded as voting against this decision.

- ii) Members considered authorising Councillors Hayes (Buildings Committee Chairman), Matthews (Buildings Committee Vice-Chairman) and the Clerk in negotiating appropriate lease conditions and rates.

**RESOLVED** that Councillors Hayes and Matthews and the Town Clerk are authorised to negotiate appropriate lease conditions and rates.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.45pm.

**MINUTES APPROVED (date):**

**SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN:**