

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE, ON WEDNESDAY 6TH APRIL 2022, AT 7.00PM

Members present:

Councillors Mrs L Anderson, T, Bhasin, S Buck, B Collier, A Cooper (Chairman), Mrs M Cooper, S Hayes, Mrs J Hyde, D Matthews, B Saunders (& CBC Cllr) and J Talbot

Also present:

Mrs K Elliott-Turner – Town Clerk, and 2 members of public

44/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors S Dhaliwal, G Russell and J Talbot. Central Bedfordshire Councillor Ward Member Nicola Harris also sent her apologies.

45/22 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

Councillor Collier declared an interest in the income list, as he had made a donation for a Jubilee bench. 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.

46/22 CASUAL VACANCY – CO-OPTION OF NEW MEMBER

Applications for filling the two member vacancies by co-option were previously circulated to Members. The two candidates were invited to introduce themselves to members and outline why they have applied for the vacancy and what they can bring to the council and the community of Stotfold, with one member available and present for this meeting.

The Clerk reminded members that where the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of vacancies, the candidates shall be appointed to the council if they meet the s.79 eligibility criteria, and they are not disqualified under s.80 of the Local Government Act 1972¹.

RESOLVED that Helen Wightwick and Jonathan Smith are co-opted as Town Councillors for Stotfold Town Council.

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office for these roles will be signed after this meeting, together with in-house new councillor inductions.

47/22 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS & CIVIC ATTENDANCE

The Mayor advised that he had recently attended Mayor's Civic Services for Sandy and Biggleswade Town Councils.

48/22 PUBLIC SECTION

No requests to speak on matters of concern, ask questions or make statements.

¹ NALC Legal Topic Note 8 – Elections & Co-options

49/22 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS COUNCIL MINUTES, FOR INFORMATION

Nothing to report.

50/22 COUNCIL MINUTES

Members were asked to note and sign as a correct record, the minutes of the Council meeting held on Wednesday 2nd March 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the council meeting held on Wednesday 2nd March 2022 be taken as read and confirmed and signed as a correct record, with the following amendment:

Minute 38/22 – remove reference to the two vacancies being filled by new councillors 'if they have an experienced background' as this was not said.

Members were asked to note and sign as a correct record, the minutes of the Extra Council meeting held on Thursday 17th March 2022. These had not been circulated to members, and so will be deferred to the next meeting.

With regard to this meeting, which involved a presentation from Central Bedfordshire Council's Head of School Organisation & Capital Planning, a request was made for a letter to be written to our local schools to ask what provision they are planning to provide for 6th form students.

51/22 ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Members considered whether to appoint a new Establishment Committee member up to the May Statutory Council meeting - minimum number for membership of the Establishment Committee is 7. Following the death of Councillor Mrs Clarey who was a committee member by virtue of her role as Chairman of the Town Strategy Committee, this left 6 members on the Establishment Committee.

RESOLVED that Councillor Buck is elected to the Establishment Committee.

52/22 QUEENS PLATINUM JUBILEE

To clarify missing information and decisions made at last month's meeting, the following was:

RESOLVED

- i) The three jubilee benches are to be sited near the new jubilee tree in Prince Charles Avenue (left hand side), grassed area to front of Greenacre Centre, Millennium Green.
- ii) Jubilee bunting is to be erected around Brook Street car park, the Memorial Hall and Greenacre Centre. Any lengths left could be erected along the library frontage at the Simpson Centre. To be erected as soon as possible and remain in place until before Christmas.
- iii) Jubilee lamp post signs x50 to be attached to lamp posts running from the Greenacre Centre along Grange Drive to the High Street, then right towards the junction with Queen's Street, and left to the traffic lights/crossroads. Any spare signs are to be shared equally along Regent Street, Hitchin Road and Arlesey Road. Highways have given permission for their erection. To be erected as soon as possible and remain in place until before Christmas.

- iv) Ward Member Dixon has offered to use some of his Ward Member funds to pay for 50% of one of the three jubilee benches – the remaining 50% is to be met by Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting funds. A second bench has kindly been paid for by a councillor. An application for additional Ward Member funds for the third bench is to be submitted, to be matched by Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee funds, however if no further Ward Member funds available, then the Committee will pay for the bench.
- v) Councillor Cooper will meet the purchase costs of x40 packets of Queen's Platinum Jubilee Wildflower seeds (total £78) to be donated to the following schools: Roecroft Lower School, St Mary's Academy, Pix Brook Academy, Etonbury Academy and the Academy of Central Bedfordshire to plant on their premises.

It was noted that the last month's minutes had no reference to a display being held on Saturday 4th June, 12pm to 5pm at the Mill for Jubilee items. Residents are being asked for any memorabilia royal/coronation/jubilee related.

The Clerk showed members the jubilee bunting purchased, which was in very short lengths. Members advised that this is not the bunting they agreed to purchase at the last meeting and requested that it be replaced with red/white/blue or union flag bunting so it can be reused for a future coronation.

53/22 STOTFOLD & ASTWICK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Members noted meeting notes of the Steering Group's meeting held on 8th March 2022.

Members were advised that the group is currently seeking quotes for design of a logo, using funds agreed by council. The consultation on the designation area has ended, and the Stotfold and Astwick Neighbourhood Plan designation area has now been approved.

54/22 REPORTS

a) Central Beds Council Ward Member Report

Councillor B Saunders

- Rats – there have been lots of complaints about rats at the barn at Astwick Road. Assets have looked into the matter, and as the former tenant didn't remove the grain from the barn, and in the creation of the new road the access to the farm buildings was blocked. As a result, this has left rats within the barn. Situation can only be resolved once their food supply has gone, and the rear of the barn is being removed and removal of the trees around the barn to allow access. The former tenant, along with the current tenant will remove the grain, within the next couple of weeks.

At this point, Councillor Mrs Hyde declared an interest and left the room during discussions, as the tenant is Manor Farm Co-operative – she is also a Co-operative tenant.

Pest control visited this week and have taken initial measures to reduce the numbers and have added clear signage of the works being undertaken to remove the rat infestation. They will take more action once the barn is empty.

- Support for Ukrainian refugees – Central Bedfordshire Council is now receiving data on sponsors in this area to match with Ukrainian refugees. Today we have 63 sponsors who are expecting a total of 157 Ukrainian guests, 66 of which are under 18 years of age. They are contacting the sponsors to make the necessary accommodation, DBS and welfare checks. The situation is still very fluid and guidance is emerging from the government all the time.
- New Arlesey by-pass – the contractor is beginning work soon on the relief road from Arlesey High Street to the A507. We know from feedback from local planning consultations for the need to provide sufficient infrastructure, which includes the cycleway/footway/equestrian bridge over the A507.

It was noted that when the Pix Brook Academy service road was being put in, it was a condition that a new entrance to the barn was to be created, this hasn't happened. With the back of the barn missing, the grain is falling out of the back of the building.

It was noted that recent works to surface the High Street were carried out very efficiently and a good job was done. The resurfacing will continue up to Norton Road next month.

b) Reports from member representatives on outside bodies

Nothing to report.

c) Town Plan Implementation Group

Nothing to report.

d) Other member reports – Police & Crime Commissioner Cluster Meeting

Councillor Mrs L Anderson gave the following report:

- PCC Crime & Ward Meeting with Festus Akinbusoye 16/3/22
- 11 people were in the meeting including 9 ward Cllrs from the East Beds area.
- £200,000 of police funding has been granted to Town and Parish Councils with the majority going to those in central Bedfordshire.
- Speeding was identified as the main issue affecting our area.
- Many of the police vacancies in our area are now mostly filled and Chief Constables have been asked to deploy those officers to being visible, Community Officers.
- Looking at focusing on reducing re-offending
- Investment in the Rural Crime team with 4 more new officers bringing total to 9 in Bedfordshire
- The force control room deals with huge demand of 10,000 calls/month, this is unprecedented with lots of mental health calls

- They are looking to mainstream mental health nurses into the force control room to triage calls on a permanent basis to provide support
- All burglars bar one have been identified by face through video footage
- Domestic abuse numbers didn't spike during Covid, but the severity of cases increased. Zoe-Jade Fraser is working on a DA campaign
- Setting up a common framework on what to do when a child is absent from school. A schools do a different approach: call – text – visit. If Beds Police can achieve a protocol this can prevent the risk of grooming for absentee kids
- Dog watch has 900 volunteers on it in watch schemes across Bedfordshire. town & parish councils joining gets Beds Police Hi-Viz vests!
- Some town and parish councils are also clubbing together to buy speed cameras for road safety campaigns
- Festus was keen to increase visibility in schools in central beds to talk about drugs and gangs, etc. Sharing his life story of children he's mentored and issues he's seen
- Is there an opportunity for Stotfold Town Council to work with him on opportunities for schools to be involved with rural crime such as hare coursing or off-road motorbikes?

It was noted that the Rural Crime unit is based in Dunstable, and so to provide good service to our area of the county, a better distribution of officers is needed.

55/22 ACCOUNTS

- a) Members considered the Expenditure Report for approval for April 2022 and the income received during March 2022 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, as at end March 2022.

- c) **RESOLVED** that the monthly committee budget report, as at end March 2022 are noted.

56/22 RECOMMENDATION FROM ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE – 30TH MARCH 2022

Members considered the recommendation from Establishment Committee confidential minute 23/22, and it was:

RESOLVED that that the Clerk is authorised to use her discretion for each occasion, to pay overtime to office staff for hours worked over and above their contracted hours and their contracted job description, at their usual NJC hourly rate. This would be in place of Time Off In Lieu (TOIL), and such occasions are to be reported to the committee. This arrangement is temporary and will be reviewed at each Establishment Committee meeting.

57/22 RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE – 9th MARCH 2022

Members of the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 9th March 2022 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

58/22 PLANNING COMMITTEE – 9TH MARCH 2022

Members of the Planning Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 9th March 2022 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

59/22 PLANNING COMMITTEE – 30TH MARCH 2022

Members of the Planning Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 30th March 2022 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

60/22 CEMETERY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 16TH MARCH 2022

Members of the Cemetery Management Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 16th March 2022 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

61/22 BUILDINGS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 16TH MARCH 2022

Members of the Buildings Management Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 16th March 2022 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

62/22 ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE – 14TH MARCH 2022

Members of the Establishment Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 14th March 2022 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

63/22 ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE – 30TH MARCH 2022

Members of the Establishment Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 30th March 2022 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

64/22 TOWN STRATEGY COMMITTEE – 30TH MARCH 2022

Members of the Town Strategy Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 30th March 2022 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

65/22 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

Nothing to report.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.11pm

MINUTES APPROVED (date):

SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN: