

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE ON
WEDNESDAY 1ST JUNE 2022, AT 7.00PM**

Committee Members present:

S Buck – Chairman, Mrs L Anderson, Mrs T Bhasin, B Collier, A Cooper, Mrs M Cooper, S Dhaliwal, S Hayes, Mrs J Hyde, D Matthews, G Russell, B Saunders (& CBC Cllr), J Smith, J Talbot, Mrs H Wightwick

Also present:

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

100/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies from Town Council members. Central Bedfordshire Council Ward Member Dixon forwarded his apologies for being unable to attend.

101/22 DISCLOSURES OF MEMBERS INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations of interests in respect of items on the agenda, and 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.

102/22 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS & CIVIC ATTENDANCE

7 th May	Mayor of Houghton Regis Tea on the Bowls Green	Declined
8 th May	Councillor Brian Saunders Civic Service for HM the Queen Platinum Jubilee	Mayor & Deputy Mayor attended
10 th May	Stotfold & District Guide Association AGM	Councillors A Cooper and Mrs Cooper attended
15 th May	Mayor of Leighton-Linslade Civic Service	Mayor & Deputy Mayor attended
19 th May	Etonbury Academy's Wellbeing Garden formal opening	Mayor attended
22 nd May	Lord-Lieutenant's Annual Service of Thanksgiving	Mayor & Deputy Mayor attended
25 th May	Stotfold Good Neighbour Group AGM	Mayor attended
26 th May	Leighton-Linslade Town Council Meet the Mayors Zoom meeting	Mayor & Deputy Mayor attended
27 th May	Etonbury Academy – Meet the Headteacher for update on recent changes made to the Academy	Mayor & Town Clerk attended
28 th May	Dunstable Town Mayor Jubilee Coffee Morning	Deputy Mayor attended
28 th May	Town Mayor of Flitwick's 'Murder in the Chamber' Charity Event	Mayor attended

2 nd June	Thanksgiving Service for Queen's Jubilee	Mayor & Deputy Mayor to attend
----------------------	--	--------------------------------

103/22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

None.

104/22 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Clerk's Report

After obtaining quotes, the Clerk has started a new 3 year long-term agreement for council's insurance cover with Zurich, which commences today.

Matters Arising for Information

Minute 71/22 – a review of council's Standing Orders will be carried out at a future suitable Establishment Committee meeting.

105/22 COUNCIL MINUTES

Members were asked to note and sign as a correct record, the minutes of the council meeting held on Wednesday 4th May 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the council meeting held on 4th May 2022 be taken as read and confirmed and signed as a correct record, with the following amendments:

Minute 66/22 – the resolution should read 'that for this meeting, ballot papers will be used for voting in regard to election of council chairman and vice-chairman and committee chairmen.

Minute 90/22 – reference to Covid19 and the Maple Room being too small to hire is to be removed, as this is not correct.

A query was raised about whether a decision had been made to divide the Maple Room, and the Clerk referred members to the Buildings Committee agenda item, supporting agenda report and minutes which confirmed that a decision had been made as a resolved item (15th September 2021, minute 20/21).

For information, a member referred to minute 89/22 Library relocation proposal – update on consultation and following a request to Central Bedfordshire Council's consultation team to correct information referring to the Stotfold Good Neighbour Group's 'pick up and take' service provided, this has now been corrected on their website.

106/22 ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Members considered appointing one or more new Establishment Committee members to bring the membership number up to 7 or 9 for 2022/2023, as per Committee Terms of Reference.

RESOLVED that Establishment Committee membership for 2022/2023 is increased to 9 members, and that Councillors Mrs M Cooper, Mrs J Hyde and J Smith join the Establishment Committee as members.

107/22 RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Members considered increasing the membership number for the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee for 2022/2023 to 11 members, to allow Councillor Smith, as our Highways Representative, to be a committee member and present highways reports.

RESOLVED that the membership number for the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee is increased to 11 for 2022/2023, and that Councillor J Smith is a committee member.

108/22 GRANT APPLICATION

Members considered a grant application which was omitted from the April Establishment Committee consideration of applications.

Councillor Mrs Hyde declared an interest in this item as a Trustee of the Roecroft Centre charity and left the room whilst discussion and voting on this item took place.

RESOLVED that the sum of £1,000 is granted to Just Out (youth club) to provide continued improvements at the Roecroft Centre venue to adapt to the demands of youth provision in Stotfold. Also, to provide activities that continue to engage the teenagers.

109/22 FLAG FLYING POLICY

RESOLVED that the draft Flag Flying Policy is adopted.

The Clerk will investigate purchase of flags currently not held but which are included in the Flag Flying Policy.

110/22 2021/2022 ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT

A copy of the Internal Auditor's report on the internal audit carried out on year-end figures 2021/2022, together with the Annual Internal Audit Report of the 2021/2022 Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) Part 3 was previously circulated to members.

RESOLVED that the Internal Auditor's report and the Annual Internal Audit Report of the 2021/2022 Annual Governance & Accountability Return Part 3 are noted.

111/22 2021/2022 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (SECTION 1)

Members were asked to confirm and approve the statements on the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) of the 2021/2022 Annual Governance & Accountability Return Part 3. The Clerk, being Responsible Financial Officer, and Chairman are to sign once approved by Council.

RESOLVED that the statements on the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) of the 2021/2022 Annual Governance & Accountability Return Part 3 are approved.

112/22 2021/2022 ACCOUNTING STATEMENT (SECTION 2)

Members were asked to confirm and approve the Accounting Statement (Section 2) of the 2021/2022 Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) Part 3. The Clerk, being Responsible Financial Officer, has signed to certify that the Accounting Statement has been prepared following guidance in Governance & Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioner’s Guide to Proper Practices and presents fairly the financial position of this authority. The Chairman of the Council is to sign once approved by Council.

RESOLVED that the Accounting Statement (Section 2) of the 2021/2022 Annual Governance & Accountability Return Part 3 are approved.

113/22 2021/2022 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) – EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS

Following approval of Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR, the Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, confirmed the commencement date for the exercise of public rights. The Annual Return will be published on the council’s website on Monday 6th June 2022, and the period for public rights will commence on Tuesday 7th June for a period of 30 working days.

114/22 STOTFOLD & ASTWICK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Members noted the meeting notes of the Stotfold & Astwick Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group’s meeting held on 10th May 2022.

A query was raised over which youth organisations were asked to participate in the informal discussions (notes of which were previously circulated) – the scouts, guides and schools were approached for initial discussions, although unfortunately the meeting clashed with the guides’ AGM. A suggestion was made to invite the Just Out group to future discussions.

115/22 REPORTS

a) Central Beds Council Ward Member Report

Councillor B Saunders

- No meetings have been held since the Central Bedfordshire Council AGM
- A historical email referencing changing the Brook Street/Hitchin Road roundabout back to a T-junction has been forwarded to the Head of Highways, but no response has been received to date.

b) Member and Nominated Representatives on Outside Bodies

No report to present.

c) Town Plan Implementation Group (IG)

No report to present.

d) Other Member Representative reportsStotfold Good Neighbour Group AGM

Councillor Talbot gave the following report:

- I attended the Stotfold Good Neighbour Group AGM held at the Memorial Hall on Wednesday 25th May 2022
- Wendy Craig, the Chair of the group, welcomed everybody who attended and passed on thanks to all the volunteers that provided help to the communities of Stotfold, Fairfield and Astwick
- Various volunteers gave their updates on the following activities – number of clients and volunteers currently on the SGNG books, library outreach service currently 8 members use this service, SGNG facebook page has approximately 500 followers, SGNG website upgrade, database update now includes reasons why trip is cancelled, chair based exercise classes
- The number of client activities undertaken in 2020-2021 numbered 1348, compared with 1404 for the year 2021-2022. Although basically the same number of activities undertaken, the report (available on file) does highlight that the types of activities undertaken have completely changed
- Treasurer's report showed that SGNG had an 'income' of £2,534.11 versus an 'expenditure' of £2,643.87, although it shows a small loss of finance, the group is still in the black
- A proposal was given on having some form of Social Hub for the community held on a Friday afternoon in the Main Hall of the Memorial Hall, with a start date of 1st July
- The current Trustees all confirmed that they were willing to continue for another year
- The Mayor, having 'hot footed' it from a town council meeting, thanked the SGNG as a whole for the work undertaken for the community and wished them well for the future

Full report, including individual volunteer updates, available on file.

Members were advised that the Stotfold Good Neighbour Group was put forward for a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, but sadly was not successful.

116/22 ACCOUNTS

- a) Members considered the Expenditure Report for approval for June 2022 and the income received during May 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 and bank balances as at end May 2022.

RESOLVED that the monthly committee budget reports and bank balances for month end May 2022 are noted.

117/22 RECOMMENDATION FROM CEMETERY COMMITTEE – 18TH MAY 2022

Members considered the recommendation from Cemetery Committee minute 33/22: That the previous decision contained within minute 20/22 is rescinded, with a new resolution to charge those requesting a memorial bench the sum of £150 installation fee (plus purchase of bench), which covers a £50 charge for each contractor, plus £50 materials.

RESOLVED that the above recommendation contained within minute 33/22 is approved.

118/22 RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE – 11TH MAY 2022

Members of the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 11th May 2022 are a correct record, with the following amendment:

Minute 67/22 correct 'trail' to read 'trial'.

There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes, as amended, were noted by council.

119/22 PLANNING COMMITTEE – 25TH MAY 2022

Members of the Planning Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 25th May 2022 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

120/22 CEMETERY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 18TH MAY 2022

Members of the Cemetery Management Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 18th May 2022 are a correct record, with the following amendment:

Minute 36/22 – to read more clearly, reword works for the Landscape Contractor as follows: Lower Garden of Rest – box hedge needs trimming back as the pathway has now become too narrow, and there are caterpillars causing damage to the hedge which need spraying urgently.

There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes, as amended, were noted by council.

121/22 BUILDINGS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 18TH MAY 2022

Members of the Buildings Management Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 18th May 2022 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

122/22 ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE – 25TH MAY 2022

Members of the Establishment Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 25th May 2022 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

123/22 TOWN STRATEGY COMMITTEE – 25TH MAY 2022

Members of the Town Strategy Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 25th May 2022 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

124/22 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

A member referred to overgrown hedge row on the sharp bend in Mill Lane, which needs cutting back as it is causing a danger to pedestrians and drivers. Also, the sign referring to pedestrians in the road, usually sited in this area, has been knocked down.

A member referred to being in possession of ‘Stotfold Review 1929 – 1938’, which they will make available so that extracts may be included on the town council’s website.

A member referred to a recent issue with a tree/shrub covered in ivy which had fallen into the footpath entrance from Coppice Mead into Hitchin Road Recreation Ground. The Clerk has taken executive action, as a health and safety issue, to ask Steve Dear Trees, who were already on site carrying out previously agreed tree works, to remove the tree and ivy to open up the footpath.

125/22 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

126/22 CONTRACTOR – BREACH OF CONTRACT

Members considered advice from the council’s solicitors regarding a breach of contract by one of our Contractors.

RESOLVED that having considered the advice from council’s solicitors, although the contract has been breached, no further action will be taken against the Contractor. A letter of thanks will be sent for their work carried out over the last 8 years.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 7.48pm.

MINUTES APPROVED (date):

SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN: