

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER 2019 AT 7.00PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE, STOTFOLD

Members present: A Cooper (Chairman)

Mrs S Bundock	Mrs A Clarey
M Cooper	S Dhaliwal
S Hayes	Mrs J Hyde
C Phelps	H Pickering
G Russell	J Talbot
S Buck	

Also present: 2 members of the public, Central Beds Councillor N Harris and the Town Clerk – Mrs K Elliott-Turner

168/19 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS & CIVIC ATTENDANCE

Mayors Civic Attendances July to September 2019

12th July – Keech Hospice Quiz Stotfold Conservative Club -Attended

12th July – Mayor of Sandy's Quiz Night – Declined

9th August – Respite at Home Volunteers Jordan's Mill – Attended

18th August – Councillor Bowater's charity Event – Declined

13th September – Houghton Regis Town Council Charity Curry Night – Deputy Mayor to attend

15th September – Potton Civic Service – Mayor to attend

22nd September – Annual Justice Service Bedford – Mayor to attend

26th September – Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service Annual Awards Service – Mayor to attend

Members were advised that Councillor Mrs Hyde is taking part in her charity bike ride again this year. She will cycle to 15 churches to raise money for St Mary's Church building – a sponsor form will be available at the end of this meeting.

169/19 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS ON MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE AGENDA

Councillor Mrs Clarey declared an interest in agenda item 15 – letter from Stotfold Mill Preservation Trust, as her husband is the author of the letter. 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.

170/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Collier, D Matthews and B Saunders. Central Beds Councillor S Dixon also sent his apologies.

171/19 ORAL QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS

Not at this point.

172/19 TO NOTE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD – MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3RD JULY 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on Wednesday 3rd July 2019 be taken as read and confirmed and signed as a correct record.

173/19 CLERK’S REPORT AND MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Matters Arising

Minute 155/19 – awaiting notification of the outcome of the Friends of Roecroft Lower School AGM (PTA) and their decision on whether they will take on the organising of the Festival Week Fete for future years.

Minute 158/19 – Alys Bishop, Principal Drainage Engineer and Flood Risk Team Leader, Central Beds Council, together with her technical colleagues, will be attending an Extraordinary Council Meeting on Tuesday 10th September 2019 in order that their Pix Brook Flood Prevention Report can be presented.

174/19 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FOR INFORMATION

A copy of the Bedfordshire Bugle September edition and BATPC autumn training programme was previously circulated to Members.

175/19 COUNCILLOR AND STAFF PHOTOS

Members considered approving P Trulock photographer to take new Councillor and new staff photographs, and update any existing required, at £125. Photographs will be displayed in the Greenacre Centre foyer and on the Council website.

RESOLVED that photographs for new Councillors and staff, plus any requiring updating, are to be taken, at £125, and displayed accordingly.

176/19 BATPC – AGM & COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

Bedfordshire Association of Town & Parish Council AGM will take place on Thursday 17th October, 7pm for 7.30pm at Cople Village Hall. Guest speakers will be Will Gallagher, Strategic Director East West Rail and Martin Tugwell, Programme Director, England’s Economic Heartland, who will be providing an update on the latest position with regards to road and rail links affecting our area.

Councillors Talbot and Pickering will attend on behalf of the Council and will have an opportunity to vote at the AGM.

177/19 CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN – FORWARD PLAN

Members considered the proposed timescales and priority level for items on the forward plan, which do not relate specifically to any committee – to be forwarded to the Town Strategy Committee.

RESOLVED that the following timescales and priority levels are given to the five forward plan items:

Investment	Make use of investment opportunities for funds held, such as section 106	January 2020 to January 2021	Medium/High
Emergency Plan	Produce emergency plan for Stotfold	September 2019 to March 2021	Medium
Promotion of town	Re-introduce updated residents handbook	September 2019 to March 2020	Medium/High
Community safety	Host community safety event and encourage Streetwatch, Speedwatch and other community safety schemes	September 2019 to March 2023	Medium
Christmas Lights	Continue to increase lights display and seek to improve switch on event annually	September 2019 to March 2023	Medium

178/19 CENTRAL BEDS COUNCIL (CBC) STREET LIGHTING REVIEW – POTENTIAL DISPOSAL OF TOWN COUNCIL ASSETS

Central Beds Council is currently carrying out a comprehensive survey of the street lighting assets (copy of correspondence attached for Members). Together with CBC lights, there are also 3rd party lights, i.e. Town Council owned. They are looking to determine the number of 3rd party owned streetlights on highways land, and to establish whether those parties wish to continue to maintain the ownership and associated management of those lights. We have been asked for the following information:

- Confirm if we own and maintain any street lighting and provide a list of these assets – the Clerk will provide this information supplied by our Street Lighting Contractor
- If we own and maintain street lighting assets, would we consider putting these up for adoption by CBC?
- Do we, or would we like to put any embellishments on CBC highway assets? This includes festive lighting, banner and hanging baskets – the Clerk will respond to advise that the Christmas Lights Committee wishes to erect some solar powered festive lighting on four CBC streetlights this year. This number may increase in the future and could include event banners or other embellishments.

Council’s Street Lighting Contract runs for a further 3 ½ years at £1,760 plus vat per annum (6 year contract). Additional costs for each repair/replacement of lanterns and columns. Current annual budget for contract and works £13,000.

As we are being asked to consider disposal of Town Council assets, Members considered if we wish to put up any of our street lighting assets for adoption by Central Beds Council.

Discussions took place regarding the speed at which we have our street lights repaired under the Town Council contract, and belief that we provide a better service than Central Beds Council. Concerns regarding a risk that there would be no guarantee of all-night lighting.

RESOLVED that in principle, we are interested in putting our streetlighting assets up for adoption by Central Beds Council, subject to

confirmation on their policy for all-night lighting, i.e. we require dusk to dawn, and confirmation as to how they will be covering their costs against the precept. Query the policy of when the Town Council may request additional lighting in poorly lit areas. Advise that we currently maintain our streetlights under a Street Lighting Contract.

179/19 VE DAY 75

Further to previous consideration of our participation in national VE Day 75 celebrations in May 2020, discussions have been held with Reverend Bill Britt of St Mary's Church and the Royal British Legion. The following has been proposed: service on Friday 8th May 2020 at around 6pm, followed by participation in the national bell ringing at 7pm. VE Day could also be incorporated into the Sunday Service of Holy Communion on Sunday 10th May, but would be at the normal service time of 10am, rather than the national participation at 10.30am.

For wider community participation, it is suggested that an exhibition/display/film footage of WW2/VE Day celebrations (preferred with a Stotfold link) together with light buffet is held in the Greenacre Centre on the Saturday. Free of charge entry. Buffet and other associated costs to be met by Civic Allowance.

Members agreed with participation in the suggested church services, together with the exhibition in the Greenacre Centre, and further discussed other ways of showing our participation in the historic celebrations by putting up 'Stotfold Commemorates VE Day' banners around Brook Street Car Park, which could also be used to direct people to the exhibition.

RESOLVED that the suggested church services are organised through the Church and the Royal British Legion, and the Town Council will organise the suggested exhibition at the Greenacre Centre. Any costs to be met through the Civic Allowance.

180/19 POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER'S REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR PCSO

Further to consideration at previous Council meetings, responses have been received to Council's queries regarding the PCSO funding:

Questions raised by the Town Council:

- How Stotfold will be serviced by the recruitment of up to 400 new officers following a £2 per month Council tax rise. Will this see a greater police presence anyway in the town?
- If the Town Council agrees to provide funding towards the £31,200 per year for a PCSO for the local area, how will this change policing in Stotfold, ie what changes will the town see for the monetary input? Would there be any greater police presence in the Stotfold Town or would we be funding a PCSO to be working elsewhere? If we were to fund the full amount, would this officer be solely working for the town of Stotfold?
- What is the definition of 'Stotfold Area'? Is this just Stotfold town, or to include Fairfield, Arlesey, etc?

- Concerns that funding a PCSO for Stotfold could see them being called away from the area as soon as extra staffing was needed in places such as Luton, Dunstable and Shefford.
- Clarification is needed on exact hours that the PCSO would work per week.
- Members also discussed whether adjacent Parish Councils such as Fairfield, Arlesey and Henlow would consider sharing the costs.

Response from office of Police and Crime Commissioner:

- The increase of £2 a month in council tax is covered in the following link: <https://www.bedfordshire.pcc.police.uk/2019-02-pcc-to-pay-for-up-to-400-new-police-officers-and-double-those-in-community-policing-with-2-pound-per-month-council-tax-rise>
- Allocation of offices within a specific area is a Bedfordshire Police decision, as the Police and Crime Commissioner cannot influence operational policing
- If Stotfold decide to fund a dedicated PCSO, they will be fixed to your area to police
- The PCSO would only be called away for emergencies but that would be part of the overall breakdown of abstraction and contained within the contract – including the duty hours (within the designated PCSO shift pattern) the Parish Council would want them to be in the town

Response from local Inspector, Bedfordshire Police

- He has 140 villages north of Stotfold with 7 PCSOs covering them
- He has not yet received any offers for funding from Town or Parish Councils
- We would be classed in the same area as Sandy, Biggleswade and Shefford
- He doesn't have an idea of the logistics of this, all aspects will have to be worked out
- Position will be deployable elsewhere in an emergency
- The PCSO would have to cover sickness and absence in other areas
- It would be possible to share a PCSO with a neighbouring town to spread the cost
- The PCSO would start out as a trainee, accompanied by another PCSO. Once trained 90% of these people then go on to be a police officer. Progress would have to start again with a trainee

A copy of the draft contract was previously circulated to Members. A copy of the cost breakdown was also provided, detailing a total employable cost for one PCSO at £33,629. With additional resources on top, such as uniform, training, call handling, insurance, etc, the total resource cost for one PCSO is £43,062.

After due discussion and consideration, it was:

RESOLVED that Council is not satisfied that funding from this Council for a PCSO would not be commensurate with the potential benefit for our community based on the responses received above. Therefore, this Council will not fund a PCSO, as per request from the Police and Crime Commissioner.

181/19 PIX BROOK ACADEMY PLANNING APPLICATION – REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR COLLIER

Councillor Collier recently attended a Central Beds Council Development Management meeting to represent Council’s objections to the planning application for the new Pix Brook Academy – primarily highway concerns. For clarification, and further to a recent article in the press, a report from Councillor Collier on his representation at that meeting was circulated to Members. Thanks were given to Councillor Collier for his hard work on the detail of this application, and for making Central Beds Council aware of aspects they weren’t aware of, i.e. matters regarding the nearby bridleway.

182/19 STOTFOLD MILL PRESERVATION TRUST – CONTINUED USE OF FIELDS FOR MILL EVENTS

A letter has been received from Stotfold Mill Preservation Trust regarding retaining use of the fields for their Mill events. The Trust understands that the current tenant of the fields will be giving notice to their landlord, Central Beds Council, terminating his tenancy in September 2020. As the continued use of the fields for the events in May and October annually is critical to the major fund raising and future of Stotfold Mill, the Management Group has started to consider possible strategies to enable access to be maintained. They would like to see the land become available for the benefit and use of the local community as publicly accessible grassland/woodland, including possible further development of the Etonbury Green Wheel, whilst enabling the Trust to continue to use it for future events, including growing heritage crops.

RESOLVED that this Council supports the principle of Stotfold Mill Preservation Trust’s proposals to retain use of the fields for their Mill events. We ask that Liz Anderson – Central Beds Council’s Ecologist, and Cliff Andrews – Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity are both made aware of such proposals.

183/19 REPORT FROM CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCILLOR ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO STOTFOLD

Ward Member Nicola Harris gave the following report:

- With regard to a previous agenda item on street lighting, she confirmed that Central Beds Council is gradually changing their street light lantern heads to LED, which is more cost efficient
- At the July Town & Parish Council Conference, attendees were made aware of the Community Councillor Grants, which enables Ward Members to use £2,000 each towards local events/groups, as long as the purpose is match funded
- She is pleased to hear the proposal by the Mill Preservation Trust to seek to retain use of the fields by the Mill, as it will be good for tourism and the wider community
- There have been recent incidents of antisocial behaviour in Drovers Lane, leading into Riverside Playing Field. She and Councillor Saunders visited the site, and found children on motorised scooters using the footpath from Drovers Lane into the public open space. They are working to find a solution to this problem
- The Police and Crime Commissioner’s Annual Parish Conference is being held on 1st October at the Rufus Centre, Flitwick

184/19 REPORT FROM MEMBER AND NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

As Community Governor for Etonbury Academy, Councillor Phelps gave the following report:

- The new term started today
- At the beginning of the summer holidays, BEST was successful in achieving Governor Mark. BEST is the first multi-academy trust in the country to gain that award. Congratulations were given to Etonbury Academy and other schools in the trust.
- The end of the summer holidays saw excellent GCSE results overall.

As Community Governor for St Mary's Academy, Councillor Mrs Clarey gave the following report:

- The staff at St Mary's have taken part in two inset days. Monday was spent on First Aid training, ensuring all staff are aware of current procedures. As a Governor, I joined them yesterday which started with a breakfast meeting where the Head dealt with issues and updates on current practice which included safeguarding, prevent, GDPR and confidentiality
- Today pupils will have been welcomed into school with newly painted corridors and lots of exciting displays
- The school is fully staffed. As of yesterday, 56 youngsters (60 max intake) will start in Reception (Early Years) with a few spaces in each of classes 1 – 4. There are currently 269 on roll and this is the largest number that the school has ever had. I predict that we will be fully by the start of 2020.

Ward Member Harris left the meeting at this point (8.02pm)

185/19 REPORT, COPIES OF MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TOWN PLAN IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

As Chairman of the Town Plan Implementation Group, Councillor Mrs Clarey gave the following report:

- The last meeting of the group was on the 4th June, and minutes of that meeting were presented in July
- You will have noted the updated Terms of Reference in your Council pack and the Monitoring Sheets which have also been updated, and are available on the Council's website for all to read
- Our next meeting is on Tuesday 10th September here at The Greenacre Centre starting at 2pm.

186/19 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2018/2019

A copy of the External Auditor's Certificate (Mazars) and completed Annual Return for year end 31st March 2018 was previously circulated to Members. There were no significant matters arising from the audit and have certified the Annual Governance & Accountability Return. The Certificate and completed Annual Return has been published as required on the Council's website and notice board.

The External Auditors have made one comment on 'minor scope for improvement' and one 'other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority':

Minor scope for improvement for 2019/20:

- The bank reconciliation was difficult to follow because it did not include cash book figures. In future the Council should use the standard proforma provided in our guidance or in the Practitioner's Guide when preparing the bank reconciliation.

Clerk's comments: we currently submit the reports produced by our accounting software. If an alternative, more suitable report can be produced by the software we will submit it for future years, if not, a manually produced format will be prepared.

- The internal control objective (K), 'if the Authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2017/2018, it met the exception criteria and correctly declared itself exempt', was ticked 'yes' by the internal auditor when the Council was not exempt in 2017/18. The box should have been ticked 'not covered'. In future, the Council should ensure the annual return is accurate and complete.

Clerk's comments: this will be submitted correctly in future years

Section 3 of the External Auditor's Report 'Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority':

We were required to return the Annual Governance and Accountability Return to enable the Council to correct the following:

- Fixed assets at Box 9 were valued on a different basis in 2018/19 to 2017/18. The 2017/18 figures should have been restated to ensure valuations were on a consistent basis.

Clerk's comments: the 2018/19 figure was marked as restated, but the 2017/18 was not. It was corrected and re-submitted to the Auditor's satisfaction.

- The Council did not provide proper opportunity for the exercise of public rights as the notice regarding the exercise of public rights has not been accessible on a free to access website in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015) for the whole inspection period. In 2019/20 the Council should ensure that assertion 4 of the 2019/20 annual governance statement is answered no.

Clerk's comments: the required notice was published on our website from 20th June 2019 (required notice start date), however unfortunately when the new Council website went live on 26th July, the version copied over by the website company was not up to date and therefore did not include the audit notice, and was not picked up. This means that there were 6 days when the notice was not available on our website (up to 31st July – end of notice period). The Clerk was able to prove that the notice was on the old

website from 20th June to 25th July, by accessing that version and sending evidence. The required answer will be given to assertion 4 in the 2019/20 annual governance statement.

RESOLVED that the External Auditor's Certificate and Report for year-end 31st March 2019 is received and noted.

187/19 MONTHLY ACCOUNTS

- i) Members considered the Expenditure Report giving details of payments to be authorised at this September 2019 meeting and the income received during July and August 2019 in the Income Report.

RESOLVED that all payments on the Expenditure Report be paid, and the Income Report be noted.

- ii) Members reviewed the Committee Budget Report and bank balances as at month end August 2019.

RESOLVED that the Committee Budget Report and bank balances as at end August 2019 be noted.

188/19 ARLESEY ROAD PROJECT & RELOCATION OF FOOTBALL CLUB

Minutes of the Arlesey Road project Delivery Committee meetings held on 16th July and 21st August were previously circulated to Members.

Council considered the recommendation from minute 21/19:

That in light of receipt of costs to provide the previously preferred Armco barrier option and sliding access gate, and that they are not clear, and not appropriate to our requirements, the previous resolution on this matter is rescinded and the provision of security barriers around the car park is put on hold as something that the council may wish to undertake after project completion.

The recommendation was **RESOLVED** and the minutes were noted.

A query was raised about the small amount of covered area being provided at the football facility. The reduced size of the stands was at the request of the Football Club, but the club grounds still meet Beds FA ground grading requirements. Concerns were expressed about the relatively low level fencing around the stadium and the likelihood of balls going outside the site. Any netting required to prevent balls from leaving the stadium will be down to the Football Club to provide after build completion.

189/19 PLANNING COMMITTEE

10th July 2019

Councillor Cooper asked Members of the Planning Committee to receive the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10th July 2019 and confirm as a correct record. The minutes were confirmed as a correct record.

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

24th July 2019

Councillor Cooper asked Members of the Planning Committee to receive the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24th July 2019 and confirm as a correct record. The minutes were confirmed as a correct record.

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

7th August 2019

Councillor Cooper asked Members of the Planning Committee to receive the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 7th August 2019 and confirm as a correct record. The minutes were confirmed as a correct record.

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

190/19 RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE

Councillor Mrs Cooper asked Members of the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee to receive the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10th July 2019 and confirm as a correct record. The minutes were confirmed as a correct record.

Council considered the recommendation from minute 77/19:

That council pursues submitting applications to register Riverside Playing Field, Millennium Green, Centenary Wood and Norton Road Allotments with Fields In Trust protection. Applications are also to be submitted to Land Registry to update title documents for our assets showing our new office address.

The recommendation was **RESOLVED** and the minutes were noted.

191/19 ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE

Councillor Cooper asked Members of the Establishment Committee to receive the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24th July 2019 and confirm as a correct record. The minutes were confirmed as a correct record.

Council considered the recommendation from minute 28/19:

That the revised Terms of Reference for the following committees are adopted: Establishment, Planning, Buildings Management, Cemetery Management, Town Strategy, Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting and Town Plan Implementation Group.

The recommendation was **RESOLVED** and the minutes were noted.

192/19 CEMETERY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Councillor Cooper asked Members of the Cemetery Management Committee to receive the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17th July 2019 and confirm as a correct record. The minutes were confirmed as a correct record.

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

193/19 BUILDINGS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Councillor Hayes asked Members of the Buildings Management Committee to receive the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17th July 2019 and confirm as a correct record. The minutes were confirmed as a correct record.

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

194/19 QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS ON ITEMS ARISING FROM THE MEETING

A member of the public advised that many years ago when he was a Town Council member, the council was able to 'double charge' on some items, such as street lights.

195/19 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

The Clerk advised that the new Town Council website was up and running and briefly showed Members the new site and pages within.

Congratulations were given to Stotfold Mill Nature Reserve on being awarded the Green Flag for another year.

Members were reminded of two forthcoming events – the Big Tidy Up on Saturday 14th September at 10.30am starting from the Greenacre Centre, and the Christmas Lights Support Quiz on Saturday 14th September at 7.30pm at the Greenacre Centre – teams of 6 £18 per team.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.28pm

CHAIRMAN

DATED