

MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER 2019 AT 7.00PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE, STOTFOLD

Committee Members present: A Cooper (Chairman)

S Buck	Mrs S Bundock
Mrs A Clarey	B Collier
S Dhaliwal	S Hayes
H Pickering	G Russell
B Saunders	J Talbot

Also present: Alys Bishop – Principal Drainage Engineer (Central Beds Council), Dr Mat Roberts – Managing Director and Senior Principal Scientist (BMT Environment UK), Ryan Thomas – Flood Risk Engineer (Hertfordshire County Council) and the Town Clerk – Mrs K Elliott-Turner

196/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs M Cooper, Mrs J Hyde, D Matthews, C Phelps.

197/19 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS ON MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE AGENDA

There were none. 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.

198/19 PIX BROOK FLOOD PREVENTION REPORT

Alys Bishop introduced Dr Mat Roberts and Ryan Thomas. She explained that they were using Local Levy Funding in a bid to understand the water catchment area. The purpose of their investigations is to provide an evidence base to go forward and work with partners to provide future mitigation measures.

Mat Roberts went through a detailed presentation (available on file), with key points:

- The difference between watercourse responsibilities: an ordinary river - Environment Agency, a watercourse – local authority (i.e. HCC and CBC).
- Flood risk is higher in Letchworth, reducing as Pix Brook water flow moves towards Arlesey.
- Different flood maps show different flood risk. Insurers use their own produced flood map and use their own risk analysis. The work the flood teams are doing now, will lead to an Environment Agency update.
- Standalone Farm was designed for larger flood events. It was redesigned in 2011 to accommodate smaller, more frequent events.
- Where Pix Brook enters Stotfold, and goes under Valerian Way, it becomes a ‘bifurcated’ channel, i.e. split. The old channel is lower and is more vegetated, the new channel is the main flow, and has two stages designed in to accommodate more water.
- With regard to the Local Levy Funding, this is managed by Regional Flood and Coastal Committees, who put in a percentage for each area, and this unlocks money for

different projects. This funding is good for investigations but not for construction work. It is used to top up schemes as an enabler to get to capital schemes. However, there is a lot of competition for this funding.

- In terms of topography, there is a 100m drop from the top of the catchment (Letchworth) to the bottom (Arlesey).

Questions/comments from the floor included:

- Not convinced that the automatic gate system to raise in flooding events works properly.
- Where are the autoflow mechanisms that raise the gates to the height needed?
- The maps shown in the presentation do not include Baldock, and foul water from Baldock is pumped to Letchworth so would have an impact on water catchment.
- Are you future proofing? 1,000 houses are due to be built in north Letchworth, and this may contribute to increase flow through sewerage works.
- Land to the east of Stotfold is chalk hills. It is very dry at the moment and water levels are low because of extraction. Therefore, the River Ivel levels are lower than usual. Why not consider pumping overflow from Pix Brook into the River Ivel?
- Will this work be used when future planning applications are considered?
- If you took away elements of debris collecting at bridge culverts, would we still have these flooding events?
- Is there any data on when the flood gates have been active?
- Is there a timescale before funding and work can be done?

The Internal Drainage Board (IDB) will be asked to answer these questions. John Oldfield from the IDB had given his apologies for this meeting. The IDB are partners in this work and assisted with funding and provided relevant data. The IDB's consultants worked on the 2014 review of the Standalone reservoir.

With regard to future planning applications, this work will produce a legacy tool to understand the catchment and any changes to the catchment, i.e. development.

With regard to funding and future work, the team have tried to identify feasible measures and assessed land options.

Alys, Mat and Ryan were thanked for their informative presentation. The questions raised will be forwarded to them for responses.

199/19 QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS ON ITEMS ARISING FROM THE MEETING

There were none, as the Chairman had permitted questions after the presentation.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.58pm

CHAIRMAN

DATED