



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD IN THE GREENACRE CENTRE, VALERIAN WAY, STOTFOLD SG5 4HG ON WEDNESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2025 AT 19:00**

**Present:**

Cllr N Venneear (Vice Chair), Cllr J Bendell, Cllr S Dhaliwal, Cllr L Miller, Cllr J Smith and Cllr B Woods.

**Apologies:**

Cllr J Headington, Cllr S Buck (attended virtually)

**Also Present:**

Cllr Mary Cooper  
E Payne, Town Clerk  
Z Putwain, Business Services Officer

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Headington and Buck (who attended virtually).

**Decision:** It was **RESOLVED** to accept apologies.

**2. DISCLOSURES OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

There were no disclosures of interest.

**3. PUBLIC SECTION**

There was no public present.

**4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous Community Engagement Committee meeting held on 18 September 2025 were presented for approval.

**Decision:** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Community Engagement Committee meeting held on 18 September 2025 were a true record of the meeting.

**5. CLERK'S REPORT**

Members received the Clerk's report. There were no questions.

**Decision:** It was **RESOLVED** to note the Clerk's report.



## **6. REPORTS TO COMMITTEE**

### **6.1. Stotfest 2026**

Members received a report regarding proposals for a review of Stotfest 2026. Discussions highlighted proposals for a more substantial fairground presence to attract a wider demographic. Concerns were raised about the potential size and complexity of the event, and the necessity for adequate volunteer and event staff support. It was proposed that the working group should further explore the options and bring back detailed plans to the committee for final approval.

**Decision:** It was **RESOLVED** to refer the review of Stotfest 2026 to the working group

**Task:** Stotfest 2026 working group to be convened in January 2026.

### **6.2. Community Engagement Budget 2026-27**

The committee reviewed the budget for the upcoming year, following a request from the Governance and Resources Committee. The proposed budget aimed to offset costs through income from events and sponsorship. Members discussed various strategies to ensure financial viability, including the potential for increased event staff, which was cheaper than paying council staff.

**Decision:** It was **RESOLVED** to recommend the amended Community Engagement budget (version 2) to the Governance and Resources Committee.

### **6.3. Community Engagement Budget Q2**

Members received an update on the committee's expenditure to date, highlighting variances and overspending in certain areas, such as event income. Members were informed about the reasons for these variances, including unexpected costs for town anniversary signs which ordered too late for the 2024/25 budget and were paid for in 2025/26.

**Decision:** It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

### **6.4. Proposal for Greenacre Centre Marketing**

A proposal for a marketing strategy for the Greenacre Centre was discussed. Members debated the necessity and cost-effectiveness of hiring external marketing services versus leveraging existing community events to increase footfall. Suggestions included using the augmented reality trail and other events to draw attention to the centre.

**Decision:** It was **RESOLVED** to engage Katie Hounsome to undertake marketing for the Greenacre Centre at a cost of £3,000 from a virement from the Youth Engagement budget to Community Engagement budget.

**Task:** Commission Katie Hounsome to undertake marketing for the Greenacre Centre

**Task:** Town Clerk to write article for The Villager and Town Life magazine



### **6.5. Christmas Lights Updates**

The committee received an update on the festive light display, including a request to install additional columns along the High Street to Hitchin Road junction. Members discussed the benefits of purchasing festoon lighting for use in multiple community events throughout the year. The resolution to obtain quotations for additional lighting and potential sponsorship options was approved.

**Decision:** It was **RESOLVED** to:

- a) **Note the amendments to the Year 2 scheme and the revised baseline annual cost.**
- b) **Obtain quotations to extend column displays along the High Street towards the Hitchin Road junction, with options brought back to Committee for consideration.**
- c) **Obtain quotations for icicle lights on the remaining High Street shops.**
- d) **Obtain quotations for the purchase of festoon lighting suitable for use at the Christmas Lights Switch-On and other community events throughout the year.**

**Task:** **Obtain additional festive light quotations and festoon lights to be considered at the meeting on 18 March 2026**

### **6.7. Youth Engagement at Riverside**

The committee discussed the issue of anti-social behaviour (ASB) at Riverside, referred from the Public Realm Committee. The discussion emphasised the importance of reporting incidents to the police and the misconception that posting on Facebook equates to official reporting. The committee recognised the success of previous outreach work by Amplus and the potential benefits of early intervention. The conversation included the need for engagement within schools and the focus on older youths, aged 17 to 23, who frequent Riverside. The committee debated the budget for commissioning outreach sessions, ultimately agreeing to allocate £3,000 from the earmarked reserves for youth work.

**Decision:** **It was resolved to approve the commissioning of outreach sessions at Riverside to address anti-social behaviour, with an initial budget allocation of £3,000 from earmarked reserves.**

**Task:** **Town Clerk to liaise with Amplus youth workers and engage their services.**

### **6.7. Residents Survey 2025-26**

Members considered a report on the residents' survey. An amendment to the timeline was proposed, suggesting it run from January to March to allow for equivalency weeks and provide a month for analysis before the Annual Town Meeting, where the results will be presented. Previous resident survey results had not been received from this committee before the Annual Town Meeting. The discussion covered the format of the survey, the inclusion of a prize draw to incentivise participation, and the importance of GDPR compliance for data capture. The survey format was discussed, with a consensus to maintain baseline questions while incorporating new ones to address current concerns. The committee agreed to schedule the survey for the new year, with Cllr Smith



and the Town Clerk finalising the questions. The committee approved the expenditure for printing and distribution.

**Decision:** It was **RESOLVED** to:

- a) Agree the amended schedule for the release of the 2025/26 Residents Survey finishing at the end of March 2026;
- b) Delegate to Cllr Smith and the Town Clerk with adding any additional questions to the draft survey;
- c) Confirm the inclusion of a prize draw with a voucher of £50 of the winner's choice to encourage participation.
- d) To undertake collation and analysis in house
- e) Approve expenditure for printing, distribution and banners.

**Task:** Town Clerk to launch 2025-26 residents' survey in line with the resolution.

#### **6.8. Making IT work**

The committee discussed the BRCC initiative aimed at improving IT literacy among residents. The conversation highlighted the need for volunteers to support the programme and the potential involvement of the Stotfold Good Neighbour Group. The initiative aims to assist residents, particularly the elderly and those with disabilities, with online tasks such as setting up email accounts and using smartphones. The committee debated the logistics of hosting sessions at the library or other local venues with Wi-Fi access. The discussion acknowledged the success of similar programmes in other areas and the potential for collaboration with local organisations. The committee agreed to support the initiative, working with the library and BRCC to host regular sessions.

**Decision:** It was **RESOLVED** to support the BRCC initiative to improve IT literacy among residents, working with the library and BRCC to host regular sessions.

**Task:** Coordinate with the library and BRCC to host regular IT literacy sessions for residents.

**Task:** Support BRCC to recruit volunteers for the IT literacy programme.

#### **6.9. BRCC Community Champion**

The committee evaluated the BRCC Community Champion scheme, which involves visiting residents in their homes to provide support. The scheme was recognised as beneficial, particularly for elderly and disabled residents. However, the committee expressed concerns about the high cost of £19,000 for 14 hours of service per week. The discussion considered the existing support provided by local groups, such as the Stotfold Good Neighbour Group, and the need for prioritisation within the budget. The committee decided to hold off on the scheme for the time being, opting to coordinate existing local groups and revisit the need in 12 months.

**Decision:** It was **RESOLVED** to defer the BRCC Community Champion scheme, opting to coordinate existing local groups and revisit the need in 12 months.



**Task:** Add BRCC Community Champion to work programme for October 2026

**6.10. Terms and Conditions for Traders at Town Council Events**

The committee reviewed the proposal for terms and conditions for traders at town council events. The importance of having clear terms and conditions was emphasised, and the committee expressed support for the proposal. The terms and conditions aim to ensure fairness and transparency for traders participating in council events.

**Decision:** It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the terms and conditions for traders at Town Council events.

**Task:** Implement traders Terms and Conditions from 1 January 2026.

**6.11. Policy Review**

The committee discussed the recommendation to adopt the Communication Policy and Volunteer Policy and agreed to recommend the adoption of these policies to the Full Council.

**Decision:** It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that the following policies are adopted:

- a) Communication Policy
- b) Volunteer Policy

**Task:** Add these policies to the Full Council agenda

**7. WORK PROGRAMME**

The committee received and reviewed the work programme, noting the scheduled activities and priorities for the upcoming period.

**Decision:** It was **RESOLVED** to note the work programme

**8. DELEGATED DECISIONS**

The committee noted the Town Clerk's delegated decisions report was incorrect and it be reviewed at the next meeting.

**Task** Update delegated decisions report to next meeting.

**9. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY**

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday, 14 January 2026.

The meeting closed at 20:15.



**SIGNED BY CHAIR:** .....

**MINUTES APPROVED (date):** .....