

MINUTES OF THE STOTFOLD ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD IN THE MEMORIAL HALL, HALLWORTH DRIVE, STOTFOLD ON THURSDAY 7 MARCH 2024 COMMENCING AT 7.30PM

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the 2024 Annual Town meeting. It was noted that the usual rules apply for the Annual Town Meeting and the meeting will be recorded for minute taking purposes only.

793. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor H Wightwick.

794. TO ADOPT MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 9 MARCH 2023

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Thursday 9 March 2023 were circulated and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

795. TOWN MAYOR'S WELCOME AND REPORT

Cllr Buck welcomed residents to the Annual Town Meeting.

796. REPORT FROM COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- a) There were reports from the Chair of Recreation, Public Land and Lighting Committee, Cllr Cooper and Town Strategy, Cllr Danny Matthews, who presented on the town council's strategy for the town.
- b) There was a presentation from Cllr Smith on the Resident's Survey which showed an improvement in how residents felt about the town council. He also reported on traffic data from the Town Council's vehicle activated signs which showed a top speed on Rook Tree Lane of 72mph and High Street of 71mph. The average speed is however, nearer the 20mph zone.

797. REPORT ON COUNCIL FINANCES FOR 2022/23 AND BUDGET FOR 2024/25

There was a report from the Town Clerk on the council finances for 2022/23 including an explanation on the increase in the council tax during 2022/23 of 39% and how the additional funds would be ring fenced for future grounds maintenance.

798. REPORT ON THE ELEEMOSYNARY CHARITY OF WILLIAM FIELD

As Chairman of the Trustees of the Eleemosynary Charity of William Field, Councillor Mrs Hyde gave a report on the charity's performance.

799. REPORT FROM STOTFOLD GOOD NEIGHBOUR GROUP

Mr John Talbot updated the meeting on the Good Neighbour Group.

800. REPORT FROM FESTUS AKINBUSOYE, BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Mr Festus Akinbusoye addressed the meeting on matters relating to the police and law enforcement.

801. REPORT FROM CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCILLORS ON MATTERS RELATING TO STOTFOLD

Cllr Kat Woodfine, presented to the meeting including an update on the CBC council tax and the introduction of a charge for green waste. She continues to work with officers at CBC on road adoptions and explained the process behind resident's petitions for yellow lines. The transition from three tier to two tier schools continue to be paused whilst work goes on to ensure the plans are deliverable and affordable.

802. GUEST SPEAKER, NIC KING YOUTH PARTICIPATION CO-ORDINATOR FROM GRAND UNION HOUSING GROUP

Nic King from Grand Union presented to the meeting on the youth and community involvement activities run by the organisation which had reached 248 young people during the year through a variety of group and 1-2-1 activities.

803. SPECIAL PRESENTATION BY THE MAYOR

The Mayor made a special presentation to Jo King, the editor and owner of Stotfold News for all her hard work in making the publication so vibrant and informative.

804. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR

Questions from the floor included:

- a) Regent Street – parking on pavements which affects residents on mobility scooters and when the faded yellow lines are due to be refreshed. Residents have a duty to report issues regarding speeding to the Police, it is not a town council responsibility to monitor speeding, but we are mindful of this affecting residents which is why we have invested in speeding monitoring devices which will be relocated around town. If there are issues with potholes or faded yellow lines they can be reported via Fix My Street.
- b) Buses on Brook Street – a resident complained about the fact that at 4pm every day, three buses go past their house. There is a sign at the top of the road that says prevents car and bikes from using this road except for access. They are school coaches, using Brook Street to evade the traffic lights. Cllr Woodfine will investigate this with the school transport service.
- c) On the subject of speeding traffic, there are lots of roads in Stotfold where it happens. In reality, the average speeds in Stotfold are around 20mph. The vehicle activated signs were installed to reduce speeding and residents would have been pleased with 30mph and this data will help the Police identify areas where speeding happens and when. Bedford Borough now has a 30mph average speed limit and the evidence would help with this. The Town Council have investigated speed watch schemes and residents were not interested in coming forward.

- d) Residents are very proud of Riverside and the open space and the new space, Jubilee Meadow. Is there going to be a connection between the two sites. Cllr Cooper responded that the town council are planning a crossing of the ditch between the two sites. The paperwork is currently going through the IDB for permission and quotes are being sought for the works.
- e) A resident asked for an update on the library relocation to the Greenacre Centre. There is no date at the moment. It is happening, and money has been allocated to the project. Planning permission has been granted for change of use and there is lots going on in the background. It is hoped that by the Autumn that the work will be finished but there's no guarantee on this date.
- f) What will happen to the old library site? No decision has been made. The building is in a poor state of repair and the Town Council will take a decision once the library has been moved.
- g) Is the Memorial Hall safe from development? There can be no guarantee that a building is safe for perpetuity. If the old library site is disposed of, then the capital could be released for works to town council assets including the memorial hall, which is a popular and much-loved venue.

There being no further questions the Mayor thanked all present for attending the meeting and closed the meeting at 21:27.

CHAIR: _____

DATED: _____