



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PUBLIC REALM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3RD JULY 2024 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE, VALERIAN WAY, STOTFOLD, SG5 4HG AT 19:00

Committee Members present:

Cllr M Cooper (Chair), Cllr L Anderson (Vice-Chair), Cllr J Headington, Cllr J Hyde, Cllr J Talbot, Cllr S Hayes, Cllr B Saunders, Cllr B Woods.

E. Payne – Town Clerk (virtual)
Cllr L Miller – Non-Committee Member
Cllr J Bendell – Non-Committee Member
A. Leadbeater – Public Realm & Facilities Manager
H. Childs – Public Realm Officer
Member of Public – 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Buck and Cllr Smith.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept Cllrs Buck and Smith's' apologies for absence.

2. DISCLOSURES OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Cllrs Headington and Talbot requested dispensation regarding item 6.13 on the Agenda as they are allotment tenants, and Cllrs Hyde and Hayes as they are Trustees for the Eleemosynary Charity which owns the land on which the Common Road Allotment is sited.

3. PUBLIC SECTION

There was no comment from the member of public present.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Subject to an amendment of the Minutes to reflect Cllr Hyde as a Member of the Farming Co-Operative rather than the tenant working for her, it was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Public Realm Committee Meeting held on 5th June 2024 were **ADOPTED** as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

5. CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AND MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES, FOR INFORMATION

5.1 Unnamed Road to Pixbrook Academy: Members were advised that this had been discussed at a Planning Committee Meeting on 26th June 2024 and the Democratic Services Manager was tasked with writing to CBC to request the name change.

5.2 Allotment Compostable Toilets: Cllr Hyde updated the Committee that the Eleemosynary Charity had approved the consultation questionnaire to be sent to allotment holders. The Town Clerk confirmed just over 50% of tenants across both allotment sites had responded with a positive response.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should make an application for the match-funded grant to the UK Prosperity Fund to install two compostable allotment toilets.

6. REPORTS TO COMMITTEE

6.1 Tree Management Policy

Members were asked to review the draft Tree Management Policy.



It was **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the Tree Management Policy.

6.2 **Entrance Gate Signage**

The entrance signs on roads into Stotfold are all of different designs and seasoned. Members were provided with different design options for new entrance signs.

It was **RESOLVED** to install the shape design with the curved top in black and gold, but that the Town Clerk should source landscape images from the designer to bring to the Committee for consideration.

6.3 **Use of outdoor spaces**

The Committee previously requested the implementation of a Hiring Agreement to manage use of the Town Council's green spaces as well as payment of a damage deposit.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- Greenacre Park be removed from the Hiring Agreement as there are a number of other green spaces for use;
- Add the amount to be paid for the hiring deposit which is £250.00;
- Bonfires will not be allowed.

6.4 **Hedges at The Green**

The proposal was for hedges to be planted against the fence on Regent Street. Members discussed safety concerns related to planting.

It was **RESOLVED** that no hedges will be planted against the fence on Regent Street.

6.5 **Environmental Policy Task & Finish Group**

There is a Statutory duty on local government to consider biodiversity issues.

It was **RESOLVED** to **DEFER** the proposal to implement an Environmental Policy Task & Finish Group by 3 months.

6.6 **Love Parks Week**

The Love Parks Week from 26th July to 4 August 2024 was **NOTED**. The Town Clerk advised that a poster will be designed for the Litter Angels scheme and an article has been submitted to Stotfold News Magazine. The scheme will be promoted on social media and posters put up in Notice Boards and locally.

6.7 **Stotfold Juniors – Use of Riverside**

Stotfold Juniors requested to install their goal post at the Riverside Recreation Ground against the fence.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the installation of the goal post secure fittings at the Riverside Recreation Ground.

6.8 **Parking on Verges and Pavements**

Members discussed a proposal to conduct an audit of areas where cars are parking on pavements. The results of an audit could be presented to Central Bedfordshire Council to request changing various verges to parking bays.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllrs Miller, Anderson and Bendell to undertake an audit of parking conditions across Stotfold and to bring the results of the audit to a Public Realm Committee Meeting in three months.



6.9 **Box Hedges**

The Cemetery & Allotment Officer's report proposed replacing hedges that have been damaged irreparably by box caterpillars despite multiple pest treatment applications.

The Public Realm Officer will speak to the contractor to establish costs for removing the hedges and planting any replacement plants.

It was **RESOLVED** to replace the box hedges with Japanese Holly (*Ilex Crenata*), with the gold version around the children's area and the green version around the Lower Garden of Rest at approximately £4,100 from the cemetery maintenance budget.

6.10 **Memorial Safety Policy**

The Town Council has a statutory duty to test the safety of memorial stones in its cemetery, with statutory guidelines recommending a five-year safety inspection cycle.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council will bear the costs of works to make a memorial safe if no relative can be traced to bear the costs.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council will adopt the Memorial Inspection Policy.

6.11 **Friends of the Stotfold Cemetery**

A previous Cemetery Committee proposed a "Friends of the Stotfold Cemetery group" pending recruiting a staff member to have responsibility for managing the group.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council will create a Friends of the Stotfold Cemetery group to be managed by the Cemeteries & Allotments Officer and to join the National Federation of Cemetery Friends.

6.12 **Interment Request**

A member of the public requested waiver of non-resident ashes interment fees for her spouse who died on active government duty overseas.

It was **RESOLVED** to apply resident fees for this request for ashes interment.

6.13 **Allotment Fees**

National allotment management guidelines are that fee increases should be notified a year in advance.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Allotment Rents for the year 2025 – 2026 remain at £70 for a full allotment plot and £35 for a half-plot.

6.14 **CCTV At Riverside**

The Town Clerk reported to Full Council on 26th June 2024 about significant anti-social behaviour and broken bottles left at the play area at the Riverside Recreation area.

Members asked for a full breakdown of installation of CCTV and tannoy equipment, as well as future cost commitments.

It was **RESOLVED** to delegate powers to the Town Clerk to implement a mobile security patrol for a budget up to £1,260.

7. **HIGHWAYS REPORT**

There were no items to report.



8. WORKS PROGRAMME

The report was **NOTED**.

9. PUBLIC REALM WORKS

There were no comments.

10. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY

10.1 At the Stotfest event, Cllr Hayes had been approached by a resident from Heron Way with a complaint about the height of trees at Waters End which prevents sunlight in their garden. Cllr Hayes requested this be investigated by the Public Realm Officer.

10.2 The Cemeteries & Allotments Officer will email tenants at the Common Road Allotment regarding putting the lock on the correct side of the gate to prevent tenants being locked in.

10.3 Cllr Hyde asked if the Town Council will resume its past practice of locking the cemetery gate. The Town Clerk will instruct a local company to look at using the barrel in the current lock and to integrate it into the gate.

10.4 The Town Clerk agreed the toilets at the Cemetery will be opened to the public following the completion of the bat survey.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 11th September 2024.

The meeting closed at 21:02

SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN: _____

MINUTES APPROVED (date): _____