

MINUTES OF THE STOTFOLD ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD IN THE OAK HALL, GREENACRE CENTRE, STOTFOLD ON THURSDAY 8th MARCH 2018 COMMENCING AT 7.30PM

Councillors present: Meeting Chaired by Councillor A Cooper (Mayor)

Mrs S Bundock	Mrs A Clarey
Mrs M Cooper	Mr S Dhaliwal
Mr S Hayes	Mrs J Hyde
S Jackson	D Matthews
H Pickering	C Phelps
B Saunders (& CBC)	J Talbot

In attendance: Mrs K Elliott-Turner (Town Clerk) Ms Caroline Jenkins (Assistant Clerk)

42 electors who recorded their names

Councillor Cooper welcomed everyone to the 2018 meeting, and introduced the Town Councillors present, and Central Bedfordshire Councillor B Saunders. He then asked electors to clearly state their name and their road name before speaking.

726. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Collier.

727. TO ADOPT MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 9th MARCH 2017

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Thursday 9th March 2017 were circulated to electors prior to the commencement of the meeting.

Mr Burt, Marigold Way asked for it to be minuted that the mural (public art) outside the Greenacre Centre was provided at a cost of £80,000. The Chairman corrected this statement as the artwork was provided by the developer at no cost to the Council.

The minutes were taken as read prior to them being confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

728. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING – FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

Nothing to report.

729. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT ON THE COUNCIL'S ACTIVITIES DURING 2017/2018

Councillor Cooper read out his Annual Report:

Once again, my thanks go to all our Councillors, staff and contractors for the work they have done for the town over the last year. Those thanks are also extended to the many voluntary groups and individuals who work with and are supported by the Council in their efforts to maintain and enhance our surroundings.

I have once again represented Stotfold in attending several events locally and in some other surrounding towns where I have evidenced how much joint community involvement can actively support local residents of all ages and abilities. When I have been unable to attend then Councillor Brian Collier, the Deputy Mayor, or other Councillors have deputised.

There have been some changes of Council staff since my last report in that Suzanne Cowie, our afternoon Administration Assistant and with us for over 7 years, left at the end of November to take

up a post with the council at Barton-le-Clay. More recently, Roger Parkes, joint Memorial Hall caretaker alongside Margaret Clark decided it was time to hang up the keys and enjoy his spare time so carried out his last letting on 11th February. Our best wishes go with them.

On Monday of this week we welcomed on board our new Administration Assistant Annette Dabner who lives in Stotfold and we hope that she settles in quickly and happily to enjoy helping to sort out your enquiries along with the rest of our great team.

A further reminder to those who take an interest in Town Council activities or know somebody who would be willing to take an active part is that we are currently one councillor short and anybody interested should contact the office for information and an application form.

This building, The Greenacre Centre, was due to be handed over to Stotfold Town Council in July 2016 but, due to delays by the developers in producing the required paperwork, last year's Annual Town Meeting was held here only under temporary licence. I reported there that legal documents had been received on 8th March but the final full transfer to Stotfold Town Council was still delayed until May 2017 from when we were at last able to put some of the final fittings and fixtures in place to make it a properly functioning facility, albeit with some snagging problems to iron out.

Also last year, coupled with news of the Greenacre Centre transfer, was the subject of play and park land provision within the new 'South of Stotfold' development encompassing the Greenacres and Trinity Manor areas. The play area near Pix Brook by Valerian Way had been completed for some time and the Town Council agreed to its adoption but, as with the building, the required paperwork was delayed. This was finally handed over at the same time as the new building and is now the responsibility of the Town Council.

A further similar play area plus parkland to the rear of the Greenacre Centre is due to us and, as reported last year, we had been advised that the developers 'hoped' to begin work on these during the summer of 2017. This obviously did not happen and towards the end of the year a Community Pressure Group of disgruntled residents approached the Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council (the Planning Authority) to pursue the developers for a commitment on finalising their obligations on this along with all roads, paths and other unfinished items on the estate.

After lengthy discussions between CBC and the developers progress is underway on much of the unfinished infrastructure of the site. The developers have indicated that the contract for construction of the recreation areas should be awarded during March 2018 with build of the play area beginning soon after, the parkland development to follow after, no projected completion dates have been advised at present.

The third year of Christmas Illuminations for the town based around the High Street, Grange Drive and the Greenacre Centre was well supported and appreciated by Stotfold businesses and residents alike being extended by activities within the building including carol singing by some of our local children, the tree at the entrance and Santa in his Grotto. The Town Council, aided by Baldock Rotary Club are pleased to organise this and any additional support would be appreciated. Our sincere thanks go to all who supported the effort or donated to its cost and we hope they will continue to do so.

Regarding lighting in general we hope that it has been noticed that the Town Council continues its policy of replacing street lamp heads with the new higher efficiency/lower running cost 'LED' style as and when they require replacement due to age or damage and finance being available?

New play apparatus was installed at The Green to increase and update the variety available across a wider age range of children. Two larger pieces inside the Green opposite the Crown pub are now available plus a replacement small 'sprung seat' was fitted inside the fenced area. At a cost of around £30,000 these were partly funded by income from local developments and seem to have been heavily

used and enjoyed by our youngsters – seating benches nearby are to follow for the use of mothers of other visitors to the area.

The newly revised 'Local Plan' is in preparation by CBC for submission to Central Government by the end of March which, if accepted, will form their strategy over the next few years up to 2035 for our area. Out town has been put together with Arlesey, Fairfield and Astwick as one of 15 areas of smaller local councils for consultation and planning purposes relating to - Environment & Homes, Growth & Infrastructure, Local Character, Jobs & Business.

Pressure on our town from further planning applications for residential developments will continue throughout 2018 and beyond fuelled by both Local and Central Government pressures on housing targets. Our residents are encouraged to be vigilant and make their views on applications known to Central Bedfordshire Council whether directly consulted or not – copy your responses to the Town Council so they can consider local feelings in their responses also.

The long-awaited relocation of Stotfold Football Club from Roker Park to the new club and community building at the Arlesey Road site now seems to be within 'touching distance' as we approach the final proof reading stages of the mountain of legal documentation and plans to be agreed. It may seem we have reported being close a number of times but we now have all this paperwork (some thirteen heavy documents in total) completed to 'final draft' stage so the countdown to having all required signatures should become weeks rather than months or years!

730. REPORT ON TOWN COUNCIL PRECEPT FOR 2018/2019

The Town Clerk explained the Precept calculation for 2018/2019.

A copy of the report appended to these minutes (appendix A) was provided to those present. There were no questions from those present.

731. REPORT ON THE ELEEMOSYNARY CHARITY OF WILLIAM FIELD

A copy of the Eleemosynary Charity of William Field Financial Report for the year ending December 2017 was available to those present.

The report was given by Mrs J Hyde, Chairman of the Charity Trustees

In the past, Stotfold had more charities than other places in Bedfordshire. Henricus Octavious Roe set up 16 charities, and 4 others were set up with money and land bequeathed by other people. Over the centuries this has given the community quite substantial amounts of money, schools and land to be used in different ways and we are all benefiting today.

Moving into this century, many of the charities had little money left in them or were for things it was no longer relevant to deliver, such as buying bread and coal for the Vicar to give out to the poor who went to St Mary's Church. Over the last 30 years a great deal of work has been done in amalgamating them, getting land properly registered and looking at how they can deliver more for the people of Stotfold. For this we should pay tribute to Richard Baines who died last summer and for many years acted as unpaid Clerk to the different charities, dealing with the Charity Commissioners and solicitors. We are indebted to the work he has done. This is still an ongoing process. We are fortunate that Mrs Jean Bilson has taken his place.

The Eleemosynary Charity is now the biggest amalgamated charity, owning the Common Road Allotments and the 5 acres next to them. Money from the sale of the Brook Street Allotments was invested (£390k) with an investment firm CCLA who specialise in investing for Churches, Charities and Local Authorities.

The Eleemosynary Charity comprises the Vicar, Church Warden and two Town Councillors.

Together with fixed assets they own, they also make grants to young people to help with their college expenses, to fund overseas charitable trips, the Need Project, toddler groups, money to help with the upkeep of the Roecroft Centre, mending the roof of St Mary's Church Hall and social events organised by the library. Grants are considered twice yearly, in January and July.

The Charity is also spending quite a bit of money this year in doing more clearance work at Common Road, with the community orchard being extended. More hedging is being planted at the adjacent 5 acre site, which will be good for wildlife.

Questions from the floor

- Val Balderstone, Marschefield - Is the 5 acre site safe from development? Yes, if the charity doesn't let it go. In the past the charity sold Brook Street Allotments as they had no money to do anything with. The sale delivered value to Stotfold, with ½ going towards the upkeep of the church and ½ to the Eleemosynary Charity. It would depend on the wish of the community, and it is wise to never say never as it could bring additional benefits to the community
- Andrew Bourne, Baldock Road - Was pleased that the community has such a charity, and felt that land could be better used for an old people's home.

Mrs Hyde explained that at the end of the last century, Mr Mossman left his estate to the Town Council, resulting in the construction of the Guide Centre in Littlebury Close. If you leave money in your will to a charity, this will reduce your inheritance tax implications, and will benefit your community.

732. ANNUAL POLICE REPORT FROM BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO STOTFOLD

Due to operational restrictions, Bedfordshire Police were unable to send an Officer to this meeting, but have provided some useful information relating to Stotfold and Bedfordshire policing in general, which included:

- Crime statistics for Stotfold for the period January 2017 to January 2018, in monthly groupings
- Bedfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner's Report for March 2018
- Example of the leaflet used by Bedfordshire Police during their Operation Beneke visits – this operation addresses community concerns, crime prevention and highlights community volunteer groups. No date is currently available for the next Operation Beneke for Stotfold
- PowerPoint presentation given by Bedfordshire Police at a recent Bedfordshire Police Priority Setting Meeting. This particular meeting discussed local concerns, such as speeding within Stotfold, and other community policing matters in Bedfordshire in general. Councillor John Talbot attends these police meetings on behalf of the Town Council.

Questions from the floor

Derek Burt, Marigold Way – the last two years he has made two reports to 101, but they do not appear on the report. Earlier today he tried to get through to 101 but couldn't reach anyone – please feed this back to the police.

733. REPORT FROM A CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCILLOR ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO STOTFOLD

Central Beds Councillor Brian Saunders gave the following report on behalf of Councillor Steve Dixon:

Reflecting on our 2017 report and looking to the last 12 months, the issue of development continues to prevail. However, while the 2017 report was an account of continued unplanned growth, the last 12 months does feel as if some better control is finally emerging through our local plan.

As many residents may remember, Central Bedfordshire Council decided to accelerate the submission of our plan for examination to the end of March 2018, to protect our right to plan for a lower level of housing, rather than waiting for a potentially higher figure being forced upon us. That difference would probably have seen the annual rate of house completions raise from 1800 to over 2500.

While the spectre of development is a difficult one for many residents to come to terms with, the very pressing need for more housing and jobs from population growth alone, are better managed through an approved plan, than by an appeal. This way, the impact of such development can be assessed and an appropriate level of infrastructure sought. Indeed the two key themes of our local plan are those of Infrastructure and Coalescence. Without the first, development simply won't take place and the prevention of coalescence is deemed vital too. Regards this point, it is credit to the residents of Fairfield that they have sought to tackle the potential impact on their community from proposed development in Arlesey, by working through the Parish Council, with a specialist consultant to prevent coalescence. It is also pleasing to see the introduction of protective countryside gaps in the plan, as with the two areas to the north and south of Stotfold.

The public open forums last month gave strategic planners valuable feedback on residents views on the plan, which will be considered as the plan evolves.

The plan will be submitted this month and we hope, be "made" in around 12 months time. During this time, we cannot stop applications being made, but it's likely that the emerging plan will be considered more material in considering any applications. This is by no means clear cut, but it is a move in the right direction. While the overall quantum of proposed sites in the ward is relatively low, we mustn't underestimate the burden of unplanned growth we have endured in the last 8 years.

Across Central Beds, significant efforts are being made to look at the future shape of the authority. Significant work is going into helping key partners develop new models of delivery in areas such as Health, Adult Social Care, Education and Skills. Managing demand is a continuing challenge CBC faces as we look to improve frontline services against the backdrop of a rapidly declining level of central government funding.

While our own adjustments such as moving the Customer Service Desk from Chicksands to Shefford Town Library, improve the accessibility, our current consultation on Domestic Waste Collection, offer the opportunity to continue our journey towards reducing the overall volume of waste collected and an increase in the amount of recycling undertaken across the authority.

It has been pleasing to see Speedwatch being so enthusiastically embraced across the ward. The menace of speeding is becoming more widespread and leading to a number of potential accident hotspots. The evidence gathered through Speedwatch is valuable to the Police and sets a strong cultural tone about speeding in the ward. Thanks to those who have volunteered to date. There is always room for more help.

Following the completion of the last units on Greenacres some time ago and through the publicity residents managed to orchestrate with BBC 3CR, it now appears that the two developers are on track to complete the outstanding highways works on the development. The roads should be offered to CBC for adoption during the next 6-8 months and some form of normality can prevail. The outstanding works to the leisure/activity area to the rear of the Greenacres Centre, is also scheduled to be by the end of the year. The area opposite the centre, currently being used as a compound for the road works, is zoned for a retail use and the developers have indicated that they are in talks with an end user. Regular updates on the works programme will continue to be sent to affected residents.

The impact of the odour emanating from the Letchworth Sewage Treatment Works, may have only affected a small percentage of Stotfold residents, but it was lasting. It took a considerable effort by CBC officers and Alistair Burt MP in particular, to ensure the necessary works were undertaken to abate the odour. This done, we sincerely hope that the measures now in place will prevent another similar occurrence. Thanks also to Anglian Water for their co-operation in finding a solution to the problem, explaining their plans and still continuing to monitor for any unpleasantness.

With everything possible crossed, we look finally set to complete the lease of the sport, leisure and recreation land on Arlesey Road to the Town Council, at the end of this month. Behind this area, is

the site of the for the new secondary free school, that Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST) have been awarded by the Department for Education (DFE). Awarded last year, BEST will be partnering with CBC in the delivery of the new facility, subject to planning.

It was no pleasure recently to hear of another illegal encampment on the old Baldock Road. Thankfully our officers acted quickly to move the vehicles on and an earth bund has been put in place to deter any such future incursion. It is evident that some tampering of the access gates had taken place before the incident, but hopefully this measure will deter any future problems.

As ever, we will continue to work for Stotfold residents, as ward councillors and through the roles of Vice Chairman of the Council, Executive Member for Families, Education & Children and Lead Member for Children's Services.

734. GUEST SPEAKER: GORDON HAMILTON – THE NEED PROJECT

Nine years ago, the Kings Baptist Church had a small food cupboard and agreed to give up one day a week to distribute food parcels. They didn't realise how busy they would become. The Need Project is the biggest food provider in Central Beds and their purpose is to help feed hungry people. Food parcels are distributed by referral from other agencies such as social workers, doctors, refuges, schools, etc. They do not discriminate and you do not have to be a Christian to benefit. They have recently seen a massive increase in need, with 480 hampers distributed at Christmas and spending £8,500 on food a month, £1,700 of which is spent on families in Stotfold and Arlesey.

The Need Project has recently taken over Anthony's furniture shop as a base to make up parcels. This is not a drop-off or collection point. They have the shop for 1 year, but ideally would like to buy it.

735. PRESENTATION OF THE CITIZENS AWARDS BY THE MAYOR

Each year we ask for nominations for Citizens Awards, presented to individuals who have been nominated by others for their contribution to the community of Stotfold.

The Mayor presented each successful recipient in turn with their Citizen Award, congratulating them on behalf of the Town Council and their community.

Mrs Jean Hill

The first award goes to a person who joined the Guiding Guild over 13 years ago and has taken on roles such as Secretary & Chair. She has demonstrated great enthusiasm for Guiding and has been willing to help out wherever needed such as when the Rainbows wanted a patchwork mat depicting their branch. She, with support from Barbara Farman, produced a very detailed mat which now forms a focal point at all Rainbow enrolments.

She joined the Teasel group around 10 years ago and has since been a regular supporter to the work parties that look after our nature reserves and other open areas around the town without which Stotfold would not look as attractive as it does.

She became a volunteer helper in the Watermill Tea Rooms where her bright personality and ability to talk to people has been an asset to the team.

She has been instrumental in introducing the people of Stotfold to the ethos of Fairtrade goods which allow growers and producers in areas of the world having more difficult social and environmental climates than we enjoy to receive proper payment for their efforts. The premium from this improved income is used to finance projects within their own communities so that all benefit. She has given presentations at schools about this and attended local coffee mornings where she sells their products.

The Garden House Hospice raises funds by selling around 11,000 knitted baby chicks every year, these are all knitted by hand with eyes and beaks to be added. She has supported and taken part in this work for many years.

She has been a helper for the Messy Church meetings for families and helped out at both the Methodist Church and Salvation Army in Stotfold.

She has long been a supporter for Christian Aid and helped in the organisation, particularly for Christian Aid Week.

She has supported several local social groups such as the Gardening and Scrabble Clubs and, as a little added bonus between all these other activities, can be found picking up litter from our streets to dispose of it properly and keep Stotfold more tidy.

Always wearing her infectious smile, she has taken part willingly to help others and to play an active role in our community. The breadth of her activities indicates what an outstanding asset she has been to Stotfold and she will be missed by many when she shortly leaves us for pastures new!

Mrs Sheila Bundock

The second of our ladies we wish to show our gratitude to has lived in Stotfold for around 50 years and during that time, alongside her own interests and family life, she has been a dedicated volunteer to numerous organisations.

Before our local schools had their own associations, she was a driving force behind the formation and running of the Stotfold Parents Association (SPA) which acted on behalf of our children against the many challenges and threats imposed by the Bedfordshire Education Authority.

The SPA organised holiday activities for children, coach trips, craft events and swimming in the pool at Etonbury school.

In 1972 the town was reintroduced to the pleasures of the annual Stotfold Carnival which was to continue for the next 30 years. A full-blown affair spread over a week with a lengthy procession of floats around the town on the last day culminating at the Hitchin Road Rec. where much entertainment was had.

She sat on the Carnival Committee as the SPA representative and assumed various roles until the demise of the Carnival.

The SPA always entered a colourful float in the carnival procession and she was always instrumental in organising that.

She chaired the Women's Fellowship group for many years providing a meeting point for talks and activities by residents. This group OF COURSE would also have a float in the carnival parade, but she tended to prefer to be a 'walker' wearing some notable costume or other she had made herself – The 'Stotfold Reflections' book has in it a photograph of her disguised as a white rabbit!

She initially helped organise the annual Arts & Crafts Exhibition where residents of all ages were encouraged to demonstrate their creative skill. As time passed this was entirely organised by her until its final appearance in 2016, after 47 years!

With so much time on her hands she also managed to set the Carnival (later Festival) Quiz which has now been running for over 30 years – She is renowned as the quizmaster that nobody dares challenge and we hope she will carry on with this notably scary occupation for many more years.

In November 1983 the old 'Stotfold Boys School' in Church Road became the Roecroft Centre and she became a prominent member of the management committee, her enthusiasm was key to its foundation. For many years she acted as booking secretary and caretaker and she continues to be

associated with this historic building as a Trustee and Secretary to the Limited Company registered charity. Insisting she is about to retire since 2007 she still retains the caretaker and keyholder roles. She assisted Norma Saunders in running a playgroup for pre-school children here and the Centre continues to provide a meeting venue for the benefit of local residents.

She has made and continues to make, apart from her other long term roles as both a Town Councillor and School Governor, a great impact to the benefit of our community.

736. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR

Rob Honeyman, Brook Street

Is concerned about the constant abuse of the one-way system in Brook Street. He also pointed out a problem with the middle section of Brook Street, which allows cyclists to go up the road the wrong way. There are 28 signs on that road in total, which is far too many for people to read all of them. The roundabout at the junction with Hitchin Road is also not used properly and he suggests 3-way traffic lights.

The Chairman advised that the Council has asked for advice as to how to better control this area. We have met with a Highways officer who saw for himself how almost everyone ignored the roundabout and long vehicles couldn't actually use it. Central Beds Council are now considering this matter further.

With regard to the one-way system, this takes policing to enforce it. We do have the ability to produce evidence which can be passed on. The Police can then decide whether to send out a letter or to fine the person.

With regard to the Brook Street roundabout, Ward Member Councillor Brian Saunders confirmed that Central Beds Highways are looking to come up with a plan and have taken on board comments regarding its current layout.

Betty Sowinska, Alder Green

Roads are very narrow in her area of the town and will be made worse with the 26 dwellings recently approved for a site opposite Astwick Road and Taylors Road. Builders are occupying the roads completely and lorries delivering building supplies aren't able to access the site and so are parking in the road to unload. Behind Silver Birch Avenue there is to be another large development with 100 houses. She questioned how traffic was going to be controlled with this new development. The roads are also in a terrible state. She asked who policed planning permissions to make sure they are adhered to, and how we can stop people from parking on narrow roads.

The Chairman advised that the Town Council was consulted on every planning application in the town and continues to make the same points every time about the narrow roads, on-road parking, etc. Building Control polices any restrictions attached to planning permissions. Ward Member Councillor Brian Saunders offered for any resident with a query about planning enforcement to email him direct.

With regard to parking on roads, particularly outside schools, Central Beds Council has a task force in place to look at this issue across Central Bedfordshire. They are currently working on ideas, to be assessed by their Scrutiny Committee.

Andrew Bourne, Baldock Road

With regard to the recent arrival of gypsies and travellers at the end of Baldock Road, he asked how this can be prevented from happening again. He pointed out that they were easily able to lift the gate off its hinges and set up camp behind the gated area. Ward Member Councillor Brian Saunders advised that Highways are looking at an improved gate and possibly bringing it further forward into Brook Street, whilst allowing a turning space for large vehicles. He would like to see restrictions at

the end of this road and to improve security in the area. He thanked Ian Cotterell, officer responsible for gypsies and travellers, for arranging swift eviction of these travellers.

Mr Bourne then referred to the high volume of traffic already in this area, which will be exacerbated by new developments. Ward Member Councillor Brian Saunders explained that the A507 has major issues with traffic volume, and will be subject to further development between Stotfold and the Clophill roundabout. Before any major development is approved, Highways are being asked to look at what can be done to improve the situation – some sort of traffic control/calming may be required.

The Chairman advised that this Council had recently questioned the validity of traffic assessments attached to large developments along the A507 corridor and the North Hertfordshire (Letchworth and Baldock) proposals which will also affect the A1M roundabout – which is also in Stotfold.

Mr Bourne referred to the 20mph speed limit in Stotfold, and that people are not sticking to it. Traffic calming is needed, and education of drivers.

Andy Bainbridge, Common Road (and of Stotfold Junior Football Club)

Questioned why the Council had turned down their offer to upgrade the Hitchin Road Recreation Ground changing rooms.

The Chairman thanked the Junior Football Club for their generous offer. However the Council had previously spent a large amount of money upgrading the building, but it is a single skin basic building construction and the building has suffered from cold, damp and frost over the years with a metal roof, tiles falling off the walls, etc. The Council had considered its own upgrade, replacing the showers and tiled area, putting in an insulated second skin, but decided to undertake a complete upgrade to provide a long-lasting facility and are looking at providing a specifically designed portacabin type building, using grant funding.

Mr Bainbridge felt that a portacabin would be just as bad, and requested permission to look into a refurbishment specification which the Junior Football Club would fund. The Chairman agreed that they could provide the Council with a full specification of what they propose and it will be considered.

Mr Bainbridge went on to explain that they were short of playing field space and in the past they had used the former Roecroft Lower School playing field. They are in talks with Central Beds Council about using the space again. The Chairman asked him to put their wish to use the space in writing so he can also discuss with Central Beds Council. The Chairman is pushing for the playing field to be reinstated as such. The Academy of Central Bedfordshire have expressed an interest in the space and it is still currently listed as being for educational use. Ward Member Councillor Brian Saunders explained that If it were to be made available for general public use, a request would need to go to the Secretary of State to change from educational to recreational use. This is why there are no immediate plans for the field.

Derek Burt, Marigold Way

Pointed out that currently, the 20mph speed limit in Stotfold is legally unenforceable, as anyone stopped in the High Street can explain that they have entered that area via the unadopted roads on Land South of Stotfold and could not be penalised.

Referred to the A507 and the public right of way which crosses it, and felt that an island is needed at the crossing point for pedestrian safety. Councillor Mrs Hyde explained that in previous years the Council had requested such a crossing, but the County Council at that time wouldn't fund it. This is something we can ask the Public Rights of Way Officer to put pressure on Highways to do, particularly with the increase in volume of traffic likely from future developments in the area.

David Osborne, Trinity Road

Questioned how Stotfold Town Council and Central Beds Council reconciles its position regarding the disability laws and disabled people – referring to barriers and obstacles on footways around the town.

The Chairman advised that these are Central Beds Council matters, however 5 weeks ago, he took photographs of the barriers which have caused Mr Osborne concern, and is arranging a walkabout of these areas and other footpath problems with appropriate officers at Central Beds Council.

Mr Osborne then referred to the 50 metres of grass verge in Vaughan Road which people continually park on. This is causing damage to the verge. The Chairman advised that the Council places articles in the Stotfold News from time to time to remind residents not to park on grass verges. He also referred to news some time ago that Town and Parish Councils can enforce such parking issues. However, to do this, a specific Order needs to be put in place by Central Beds Council, and then enforcement personnel need to be provided by the Town Council or Central Beds Council at their cost. Evidence is required to support the need for the parking Order, it must show the danger to pedestrians and damage being caused and must show that it is continuous. The public has been asked for its help in providing this evidence.

Bill Cutler, Hyde Avenue

Praised the Town Council – he had previously raised a point regarding the new Garden of Rest at the Cemetery which provided only single depth plots. He had requested that they be double depth, this was considered by the Council and now the Garden of Rest has double depth plots. He thanked the Council for listening and acting. He felt that Annual Town Meetings were not a waste of time, and this proves them very useful.

Val Balderstone, Marschefield

Expressed her disgust at the state of the A507/A1M roundabout, which is covered in litter. She was advised that Highways do carry out scheduled litter picks, and grass cuts on the Central Beds Council side of the roundabout.

Tim Bown, Norton Road

Was astounded that the Police had not turned up again to this meeting. The Clerk reiterated the information provided in the Police Report earlier in the meeting and their non-presence due to operational restrictions. In past years, the Council has been lucky to have the presence of a PCSO at its full Council meetings to give monthly reports on activities. We have also had senior officers present at past Annual Town Meetings.

John Talbot (Councillor), Brook Street

Advised that he had met with Paul Salmon of Highways on 10th April 2017 to discuss the Brook Street roundabout. They also discussed an application to put in double yellow lines on Hitchin Road.

The Chairman clarified that this was following the former contractor for Highways, Amey, who undertook the town improvement works. There is still a snagging list following completion of the work, and the double yellow lines are on that list. However, the new highways contractors, Ringway, appear not to have inherited that snagging list.

There being no further questions the Mayor thanked all present for attending the meeting and closed the meeting at 9.52pm

CHAIRMAN

DATED