



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE GREENACRE CENTRE, VALERIAN WAYS, STOTFOLD SG5 4HG ON WEDNESDAY 3 DECEMBER 2025 AT 19:00

Present:

Cllr Smith (Deputy Mayor), Cllr Anderson, Cllr Bendell, Cllr Cooper, Cllr Dhaliwal, Cllr Hayes, Cllr Headington, Cllr Hyde, Cllr Matthews, Cllr Miller, Cllr Saunders, Cllr Talbot, Cllr Woods, Cllr Venneear

Apologies:

Cllr Buck

Also Present:

Cllr Mason, CBC Ward Councillor
Cllr Woodfine, CBC Ward Councillor
E Payne, Town Clerk

476/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Buck.

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

477/25 DISCLOSURES OF MEMBERS INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations of interest.

478/25 PUBLIC SECTION

There were no members of the public present.

479/25 MEMBERS ON OTHER AUTHORITIES

CBC Ward Councillors provided a report on the current budget expectations and funding formula changes. It was highlighted that Central Bedfordshire Council is expected to receive £24 million less than under the previous funding formula, which will impact services significantly. The government expects Council tax to be raised by the full 5% to compensate for some of the shortfall. Updates were also given on local infrastructure projects, including cycleway improvements and planning permissions for new developments.

480/25 COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 5 November 2025 were received.

Decision: It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 5 November 2025 were a true record of the meeting.



481/25 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CIVIC ATTENDANCE

Members received the civic attendance report.

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

482/25 CLERK'S REPORT

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

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

483/25 REPORTS

483.1/25 Community Governance Review

Councillors considered the findings of the first round of consultations on the Community Governance Review. The proposal to reduce the number of councillors from 15 to 11 was met with opposition. Members highlighted the need for a larger council to ensure diversity and adequate representation, especially given the town's growth. Financial implications were discussed, but the primary concern was maintaining a complete cross-section of councillors. The Clerk was instructed to include these points in the Town Council's response and to consult with the Chair and Vice-Chair before submission.

Decision: It was **RESOLVED** to:

- a) **Note the recommendations from the first stage of the Community Governance Review to reduce the number of councillors from 15 to 11.**
- b) **Note the omissions in CBC's draft proposals relating to Astwick and parish boundary realignment**
- c) **Delegate to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk to incorporate the comments from the meeting into the Town Council's response to the Community Governance Review.**

Task: **Include the points raised in the Town Council's response and consult with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor before submission.**

483.2/25 Cemetery Toilet Consultation

The results of the Cemetery Toilet Consultation were reviewed, revealing a 50/50 split between two options. Councillors debated whether to refurbish the existing building or demolish and rebuild using new materials. The refurbishment option was considered cost-effective and environmentally friendly, but concerns were raised about the structural integrity and long-term viability.

Members considered that the new build option was seen as more reliable and future-proof, despite higher costs. This option would be costed to include two unisex toilets to accommodate the visitors during funerals. Additionally, the integration of solar lights was positively received, highlighting the council's commitment to sustainable solutions.

Decision: It was **RESOLVED**:



- a) To note the outcome of the public consultation.
- b) That Option 2, should be costed to include options for one or two unisex toilets in the design and solar lighting.
- c) Consider next stage feasibility with a delivery plan, budget implications and proposed timescales at the Town Council meeting on 3 March 2026.

Action: Town Clerk to instruct Project Officer to implement decisions and report back to Full Council.

483.3/25 Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel - Consultation on Proper Practices

Members discussed the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel consultation, focusing on the proper practices that need to be adhered to. The council unanimously agreed to delegate the authority to the Chair of Governance and Resources and the Town Clerk to submit the response on behalf of the council.

Decision: It was RESOLVED to:

- a) Note the SAPP/CIPFA consultation on proper practices and the proposed revisions to the Practitioners' Guide.
- b) Delegate authority to the Town Clerk/RFO, in consultation with the Chair of Governance & Resources, to prepare and submit a formal response by the deadline of 5pm on 2 January 2026

Task: Prepare response to SAPP/CIPTA consultation and submit by 22 December 2025.

484/25 COMMITTEE MINUTES

484.1/25 Public Realm Committee - 12 November 2025

The minutes of the Public Realm Committee meeting held on 12 November 2025 were reviewed. The primary focus of the meeting was the proposal by Central Bedfordshire Council to recognise certain local green spaces as part of the preparations for the new Local Plan.

Decision: It was RESOLVED to note the minutes.

484.2/25 Community Engagement - 19 November 2025

The Community Engagement Committee minutes from the meeting on 19 November 2025 were reviewed. Several key decisions were made, including the formation of a working group to review the upcoming Stotfest 2026 event, with the group scheduled to meet in January.

The amended budget for 2026-2027 was recommended to the Governance and Resources Committee, focusing on income and sponsorship. The Committee approved a £3000 marketing commission to promote the Greenacre Centre. Quotes for extending the town's Christmas lights displays were to be obtained by March 26. A £3000 fund from earmarked reserves was approved to antisocial behaviour at Riverside. The resident survey for 2025-2026 will run from January to March, with a £50 prize draw to encourage participation. The Committee



supported the proposal to work with community groups and the library to offer IT literacy sessions through the Bedfordshire Rural Community Charity (BRCC). The decision on the BRCC community champions was deferred to October 2026. The event trader terms and conditions were reviewed and approved, set to go live on 1 January 2026. The communication policy and volunteer policy were recommended for adoption by the full council.

Decision: It was **RESOLVED** to:

- a) **Note the minutes**
- b) **Adopt the Communications Policy**
- c) **Adopt the Volunteer Policy**

485/25 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

485.1/25 Town Council Investments and Proposed Investment Strategy

The council reviewed the Town Council Investments and Proposed Investment Strategy for 2026-2027. The decision by the Governance and Resources Committee to engage an advisor to provide professional investment advice for a 12-month period at a cost of £9000 was confirmed. The attached investment strategy was discussed in detail, focusing on asset allocation and movement of funds based on professional advice.

Decision: It was **RESOLVED**:

- a) **To note the decision of the Governance & Resources Committee to engage Arlingclose Ltd to provide professional investment advice to the Town Council for a period of 12 months, at a cost of £9,000.**
- b) **To approve the attached Investment Strategy 2026/27**
- c) **That any proposed changes to the Council's Investment Policy, asset allocation, or movement of funds arising from professional advice will be brought to the Governance & Resources Committee for review and then recommended for adoption by Full Council.**

485.2/25 Expenditure

The council reviewed and approved the expenditure for October 2025.

Decision: It was **RESOLVED** to accept the expenditure report for October 2025.

485.3/25 Income Received

The income received for October 2025 was noted by the council. There were no significant discussions or concerns regarding the income details.

Decision: It was **RESOLVED** to note the income report for October 2025.

485.4/25 Income and Expenditure and Earmarked Reserves Reports

The council reviewed the year-to-date income and expenditure report along with the Earmarked Reserves.

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



- a) Income and expenditure report
- b) Earmarked reserves report.

486/25 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- 486/25.1 Councillor Smith reported on the BATPC AGM held on 16 October 2025, highlighting the discussions on water infrastructure and flood management.
- 486/25.2 Councillor N Venneear and Councillor Talbot reported on the Scout AGM held on 10 November 2025. They noted that all scout groups are currently covered with leaders, although there are no Beavers groups.

487/25 MEMBER'S ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

- 487/25.1 Cllr Talbot in his capacity as Chairman of Stotfold Good Neighbour Group reported on the group being awarded the Kings Award for Voluntary Service. The Town Council congratulated the group for this prestigious award, the only recipient in Bedfordshire in 2025.
- 487/25.2 Cllr Anderson reported on her attendance at CBC Town and Parish Council Forum on the environment. Carbon Literacy training is available to all councillors.
- 487/25.3 Cllr Cooper thanked the Buildings Management Committee for awarding a free hire to the Community Christmas Fayre, which raised over £1450 for Pippins Nursery.
- 487/25.4 Cllr Smith thanked all councillors and staff for making the Christmas lights switch on event such a success.

Commented [CS1]: Should we note that the Council gave their congratulations on GNGs achievement. As it is quote an achievement. The only group in Beds to receive it this year.

488/25 WORK PROGRAMME
The council received the work programme for Full Council.

Decision: It was **RESOLVED** to note the work programme for Full Council.

489/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING
The next meeting of the Town Council is scheduled for Wednesday, 28 January 2025.

490/25 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

Decision: It was **RESOLVED** that in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

491/25 Simpson Centre
The Council received a confidential report on the sale of the Simpson Centre site.

Decision: It was **RESOLVED** to:



- a) Note the analysis of Options 1–3 for disposal of the Simpson Centre site.
- b) Obtain quotations for the appointment of a Planning Consultant
- c) Seek Pre Application Advice from Central Bedfordshire once a planning consultant has been appointed.
- d) Request a further report once the Pre-App outcome and formal valuation advice have been received.

Task: Obtain quotes for Planning Consultant

SIGNED BY CHAIR:

MINUTES APPROVED (date):