

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE ON WEDNESDAY 2ND NOVEMBER 2022, AT 7.00PM

Committee Members present:

S Buck – Chairman, L Anderson, T Bhasin, A Cooper, M Cooper, S Hayes, J Hyde, D Matthews, G Russell, B Saunders, J Smith, J Talbot, H Wightwick

Also present:

One member of the public, Central Bedfordshire Council Ward Member S Dixon, Jeanette Everitt – Administration Assistant

201/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Collier and S Dhaliwal. Councillor G Russell was absent without apologies.

202/22 DISCLOSURES OF MEMBERS INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

Councillor Talbot declared an interest in agenda item 8 as he has made the request being considered. There were no requests for dispensations. Members were reminded that if at any time during the meeting they feel they have an interest in an item being discussed, they should declare it at that point.

203/22 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS & CIVIC ATTENDANCE

Civic Attendances

2nd October – ABF The Soldiers Charity Lunch – Declined

7th October – Houghton Regis Civic Reception – Attended

9th October – Mayor of Flitwick Civic Service – Attended

15th October – Mayor of Leighton Buzzard Charity fund raising event – Attended

17th October – Mayor of Houghton Regis Charity fund raising event – Deputy Mayor attended

18th October – Mayor of Flitwick Charity fund raising event – Declined

21st October – Princes Trust Community Project Pix Brook Academy – Attended

29th October – Hair By Phillip 50th Anniversary – Attended

31st October – Respite at Home Volunteers AGM - Attended

13th November – Stotfold Service of Remembrance

17th November Mayor of Flitwick Charity Event – Accepted

20th November – High Sheriff of Bedfordshire Road Victims Trust Remembrance Service – Accepted

23rd November settle annual stakeholder event – Accepted

204/22 PUBLIC SECTION

No requests to speak.

205/22 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Members were reminded that councillor photographs will be taken on the 16th November. Members were also asked for help on the 25th November and the 26th November for the Christmas Lights switch on event.

206/22 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the council meeting held on 5th October 2022 and the extra meeting held on the 18th October 2022 be taken as read and confirmed and signed as a correct record.

207/22 UPDATE ON WARM SPACES

Councillor H Wightwick provided an update on the Warm Spaces initiative in Stotfold:

- Meeting held in the Kings Baptist Church and is now termed as an Action Group for Warm Spaces. The meeting included all Ministers, Councillor Buck, The Need Project and the Good Neighbour Group.
- The vision is that those who own or operate buildings which can be warm spaces and can link up with those who will need to use the spaces. Gordon Hamilton from The Need Project is going to put leaflets in with his food parcels to make the recipients aware of what is going to be offered.
- Each church is expanding its monthly time slot to weekly from December onwards. The library will also participate, as Libraries in Central Bedfordshire are taking part. The Need Project has offered free food for anybody who is operating a Warm Space.
- There were concerns regarding funding. The Churches will use their own volunteers and have picked times when their buildings will be heated anyway. The Town Council have been asked if we are prepared to make our buildings/rooms available free of charge if someone wanted to operate a warm space. A request will need to be put to the Buildings Management Committee. An advert will be placed in the Stotfold News during December. They would like some more warm spaces and members are asked that if they are aware of any other buildings or organisations, such as the Football Club or Conservative Club, who might be prepared to offer help, to contact Councillor Wightwick.

A member asked for an update as to the council's involvement, in terms of running a warm space, following previous discussions about the potential for safeguarding issues, and was advised that at this stage the initiative is being led by the churches and the town council will monitor the situation. At present, there isn't a massive demand, but this might change as the weather changes.

208/22 MEMORIAL HALL – MAIN & REAR HALL – FREE HIRE

The Stotfold Good Neighbour Group has requested a free hire of the Memorial Hall Main Hall for their Social Hub, and Rear Hall for their Chair Based Exercises held on a Friday from December 2022 through to April 2023 to enable them to participate in providing a Warm Space in Stotfold. This is being discussed today due to time constraints of waiting for the next Buildings Committee meeting. The Good Neighbour Group are asking for a free let because the other groups in the community have their own buildings. Councillor Talbot stated the Good Neighbour Group could not afford £340.00 per month to hire the hall with attendance by other people who are not the usual Good Neighbour attendees and they can't charge to off-set the hire charges. The Chair Based Exercises pay for themselves, and the Good Neighbour Group is currently subsidising the Social Hub due to low numbers.

To clarify, the idea of Warm Spaces is that they are free to attend.

RESOLVED that a free let is agreed for the use of the Memorial Hall Main Hall and Rear Hall, by the Stotfold Good Neighbour Group on a Friday between December 2022 and April 2023.

209/22 APPROVAL OF INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRAMME

Members reviewed the internal Audit Programme to be used by the Internal Auditor for auditing accounts. A request was made for the next agenda to include an item to remind all Councillors what their responsibilities are with regard to the Internal Audit.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Programme is approved for auditing accounts 2022/2023.

210/22 REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS INTERNAL AUDIT 2022/2023

Members reviewed the draft review of effectiveness of Internal Audit 2022/2023.

RESOLVED that the draft Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit 2022/2023 is approved.

211/22 FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT 2022/2023

Members considered the draft Financial Risk Assessment for 2022/2023.

RESOLVED that the draft Financial Risk Assessment for 2022/2023 is approved.

212/22 ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE – REVIEW COMMITTEE REMIT - STAFFING

Members considered bringing all staffing matters within the remit of the Establishment Committee, and to update committee Terms of Reference accordingly.

RESOLVED that all staffing matters will now fall within the remit of the Establishment Committee.

213/22 YOUTH WORK EARMARKED RESERVES

Members considered increasing the Earmarked Reserves Youth Work for the remainder of this financial year. With the excellent work being carried out by the youth team for young people in Stotfold this year, this has seen an increase in costs which are covered by the town council.

Members confirmed their appreciation of the work they do. There was uncertainty from members as to whether the youth team were looking for more money this financial year or for next financial year. The Youth Team report states that as they have increased their work, they need more people in their team. The Chairman stated that funding for this financial year is currently £4,080 and they would like it to be increased to £4,800.00 next year.

For the records - the decision made on this item is unclear and so is unrecordable.

214/22 REPORTS

Central Bedfordshire Council

Ward Member S Dixon gave the following report:

- Thanked the town council for their support of Member briefings. The format works well.
- 'Tiny Forests' has gathered momentum and requires the area the size of a tennis court. It would be adding back to the community in terms of biodiversity. Funding is

in place to do this – matched funding can also include provision of the land or ongoing maintenance, in place of actual funding.

- Councillor Dixon and Councillor Buck will be visiting the new Head at the Academy of Central Bedfordshire. The playing field is part of the lease to the school it is not Central Beds retained when the school was set up. This may be a form of protection on the land. Councillor Dixon is keen to get something established on that land, and importantly it would be best if it was the school's plan, but of course with the support of the town council. Looking potentially at a Tiny Forest or community orchard, as an extension to the curriculum.
- Councillor Dixon and Councillor Buck had a meeting with the Head Teacher of Pix Brook Academy regarding the anti-social behaviour happening in the turning circle at the end of the road, which remains Central Bedfordshire Council land. It is proposed that a camera is placed at the end of the road to deter people from antisocial behaviour in that area.
- Councillor Saunders had indicated a wish for the town council to host an event to give away free trees and suggested the Steam Fair. The Steam Fair does not accord with the seasons. Officers would be happy to take a pre-order if anyone wants them and can arrange to deliver them on a certain day during the right part of the season for people to take away. A form to participate in the scheme will be provided. This will form part of the extended Queens Green Canopy in her memory.
- The Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan – there are a number of upcoming events, details available online. Stotfold is the second area the first Ampthill/Flitwick and the Henlow. Had a good response rate to the Plan and are intending to use Pix Brook Academy to showcase. The next one Biggleswade/ Sandy/ Pottton they are expecting an increasing number of responses.
- Councillor Dixon will be having a meeting with the developers regarding the adoption of Greenacres roads, etc to finally get it handed over to Central Bedfordshire Council.

Ward Member B Saunders gave the following report:

- Response to Councillor Cooper's question at the last meeting, at the moment Central Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Councils are providing a small amount of support for the 97 service, as Aviva saw the viability as becoming marginal. The 97 route has now been identified as a core route on our bus service and an improvement plan is looking to enhance the service with either earlier, later or more frequent journeys when planned funding is confirmed by DFC. Hertfordshire also see this as an important route in their area.
- Coming up to the winter break in garden waste collections, with the last collections in Stotfold the week commencing 28th November, restarting week commencing 24th February 2023
- Today further data has been released for the 2021 census which included demography and migration. More information will be released every week or two weeks. With next information on the 10th November regarding UK armed forces veterans, completing on the 19th January with Health, Disability and non-paid care
- Some sad news, Ken Matthews has passed away. He was Chairman of the Planning Committee at Central Bedfordshire and was considered to be an excellent councillor. The town council's condolences will be passed on to his family.

215/22 ACCOUNTS

- a) Members considered the Expenditure Report for approval for November 2022 payment run, and the income received during October 2022 in the Income Report.

RESOLVED that all payments on the Expenditure Report are approved and are to be paid, and the Income Report be noted.

- b) Members considered the monthly committee budget report, budget variances report and bank balances as at end October 2022.

RESOLVED that the monthly committee budget reports, budget variances report and bank balances for month end October 2022 are noted.

216/22 COMMITTEE MINUTES

Members noted the minutes of the following committee meetings:

- Planning Committee – 12th October 2022
- Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee – 12th October 2022
- Buildings Management Committee – 18th October 2022

217/22 QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS ON ITEMS ARISING FROM THE MEETING

Not at this time.

218/22 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

The Christmas Tree Festival takes place on the 11th and 12th December in St Mary's Church. Councillor M Cooper is happy to decorate tree on behalf of the town council.

The Community Christmas Fayre is taking place in the Memorial Hall on November 19th. Their purpose is to raise money for local youth groups, this is supported by local businesses. A request was made for items to be donated for the tombola.

Councillor Talbot has been asked by a resident if we know what the plaque is on the inside wall at Shawmer Farm by the bridle path. She had recently moved in and wanted to know what it was for. A suggestion was made that the Councillor Talbot talks to a particular resident who might know.

It was noted that Google Maps shows Shawmer Drive as Shawner Drive, and a request will be made to Central Bedfordshire Council to correct the error.

The vandalism at Manor Farm was noted, and it was confirmed that Central Bedfordshire Council is still in the process of selling the yard but the Herras security fencing is being pulled into the road which is extremely dangerous for road users. The trees along from the farm are covered in ivy which is causing them to fall down in bad weather – photos have been taken of this and sent to Central Bedfordshire Council. Councillor Dixon stated that if there was a threat to safety then he should be contacted immediately, and he would arrange for it to be rectified.

Councillor Smith reminded members that the 'satisfaction survey' was ongoing and to date we have received 150 responses. Members were asked to speak to residents about the survey and to give them the QR code or ask them to come into council offices to collect a paper copy.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 7.59pm.

MINUTES APPROVED (date):

SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN: