

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE, STOTFOLD ON WEDNESDAY 4<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2023 AT 7.00PM**

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Committee Members present:

S Hayes, Vice Chairman, L Anderson, Mrs M Cooper, S Dhaliwal, S Hayes, D Matthews, B Saunders, J Smith, N. Venneear.

Also present:

E Payne, Town Clerk, Mrs K Woodfine, Central Beds Council Ward Member, 2 members of the public.

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**159/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Bhasin, Buck and Holbrook.

**160/23 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

There were no declarations of interest on any item on this agenda.

**161/23 MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CIVIC ATTENDANCE**

These were noted by members.

**Standing Orders were suspended to allow Members of the Public to speak.**

**162/23 PUBLIC SECTION**

A member of the public addressed the meeting about the use of the MUGA for dedicated netball training and matches. It was explained to them that the Council made the decision in 2016, recently ratified by the Recreation, Grounds, Public Lights and Lighting Committee to keep the MUGA as open access. It was suggested that this goes back to the next meeting of this committee for further consideration, ratification and to confirm the decision to keep the MUGA open access. It was explained that the Council does not have the resources to open/close the MUGA and when it has been locked in the past, it has experienced unacceptable levels of vandalism.

Members welcomed that the MUGA was being used for netball training and games and asked if the resident had experienced any issues with other users of the court, that they monitor the situation and report back to the Council if there were any issues. Members were keen to encourage its use and that it should be advertised on the Town Council's website, social media and on notice boards adjacent to the MUGA. The Clerk advised that the notice board at the MUGA was in need of refurbishment and relocating to a better location. Notice of use for netball practice on specific days would be included on the notice board.

**163/23 COUNCIL MINUTES**

Members received the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 6 September 2023. There was a minor amendment, and it was **RESOLVED** to:

*Adopt the amended minutes as a true record of the meeting.*

**164/23 CLERKS REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION**

There were no matters to report that had not already been reported to the relevant Committee meeting.

**166/23 REPORTS**

166/23.1 Central Beds Council Ward Member Report - Councillor Kathryn Woodfine presented their report which was circulated to all Members separately. Cllr Woodfine answered questions from Members.

Cllr Woodfine was advised that CBC Officers were not aware that the library application had been deferred to November's committee.

166.23.2 Cllr Hyde provided an update on the refurbishment of the Roecroft Centre. A grant application decision from CBC is awaited to ensure the project is financially viable.

166.23.3 Cllr Wightwick reported on the Warm Spaces project and asked if the Town Council would be engaged in the process. It was added to the agenda for the next Buildings Committee meeting. Cllr Wightwick asked if a member or Officer could attend a meeting scheduled for 26 October 2023 at 3.30pm.

166.23.4 Cllr Anderson reported on a recent meeting of St Mary's School Governor's.

166.23.5 Cllr Talbot reported that he and Cllr Venneear had attended the Scouts AGM. Cllr Venneear reported that Cllr Talbot had received an award for his service to the Scouting organisation.

166.23.6 Cllr Cooper reported on the end of the bowls season and that the Ladies Team had been particularly successful. The Town Clerk was asked to write to the Bowls Club offering the Town Council's congratulations on their achievements.

**167/23 ACCOUNTS**

167/23.1 Members considered the Expenditure Report for approval for September 2023 payment run, and the income received during September 2023 in the Income Report. The wrong expenditure report had been circulated and would be considered at the next meeting. It was **RESOLVED** to:

*Note the Income Report.*

167/23.2 Members considered the monthly committee budget report, budget variances report as at end September 2023. It was **RESOLVED** to:

*Note the monthly committee budget report for September 2023.*

**167/23.3 External Auditor's Report**

Members were advised that the External Auditor has returned their report with no recommendations. It was **RESOLVED** to:

***Receive and approve the External Auditor's Report.***

Cllr Hayes wanted to thank the Finance Officer for her hard work in preparing her first Annual Governance Statement.

**168/23 COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**168/23.1 RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS AND LIGHTING COMMITTEE – 13 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Members of the recreation Grounds, Public Lands and Lighting Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 13 September 2023 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

**168/23.2 PLANNING COMMITTEE – 13 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Members of the Planning Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 13 September 2023 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

**168/23.3 CEMETERY COMMITTEE,**

Members of the Cemetery Management Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 20 September 2023 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

**168/23.4 BUILDINGS COMMITTEE – 20 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Members of the Buildings Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meetings held on 20 September are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

**168/23.5 ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE – 27 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Members of the Establishment Committee confirmed that the minutes of their meeting held on 27 September 2023 are a correct record. There were no recommendations from the committee. The minutes were noted by council.

**169/23 CEMETERY GATES**

Members received a report with a quotation for the repainting of the cemetery gates. Concerns were raised about the access to the cemetery for burials and interments. The contractors were aware of this and had assured the Town Clerk that provided they had 24 hours' notice, they could clear up for access purposes. It would have been more expensive and take longer if the gates were removed for painting. It was **RESOLVED** to:

***Accept the quotation from Shot and Sandblasting Ltd to strip and paint the cemetery gates in situ at a total cost of £3,450 plus VAT.***

**170/23 SKATE PARK**

Cllr Hayes reported that he has a tender document nearly ready for distribution. Members queried about the thresholds for advertising on Contracts Finder, but the Council's Financial Regulations require tenders to be advertised for any expenditure over £25,000. It was confirmed that the site will require planning permission.

Members considered that the successful contractor would manage the entire project from planning application, through consultation with residents, including any possible grant funding to build the facility. The desired completion date was Autumn 2024. It was **RESOLVED** that:

***The Skate Park Tender will be considered at the Recreation Grounds, Public Land and Lighting Committee meeting in November.***

**171/23 REFURBISHMENT OF PLAY EQUIPMENT AT THE GREEN/RIVERSIDE**

Members were advised that the Council's adopted Strategic Plan highlighted the refurbishment/replacement of these play areas. Members considered that as the installation of new play equipment was expensive, they wanted to identify funding before the works were investigated further.

**172/23 PITCH POWER UPDATE**

Members were advised that when the Pitch Power nominated consultant had inspected the Arlesey Road pitches, the condition of the pitches were poorer than originally thought due to a variety of reasons. It was also likely that then Pitch Power inspected the pitches, they hadn't fully measured the entire plateau. Further town council funding needed to be identified to support the Pitch Power funding. It was **RESOLVED** to:

***Authorise the additional works to Arlesey Road pitches.***

**173/23 VAPING VAN ON A507**

Cllr Hyde has asked for this item to be considered by Council. Members were asked how they felt about the location of this van; the effects of vaping were unknown on the human body; as well as the disposal of temporary vapes. Anecdotally children had been seen at the van. Members were advised that the vaping van had been considered at the relevant Planning Committee meeting where it had been considered on planning grounds. Trading Standards had recently visited Stotfold and there had been one incident of underage sales in the town.

Members considered that the sale side of the van should face the road, and not into the pavement as is currently the situation, which makes it harder to see if it's open and who its customers are. It was **RESOLVED** to:

***Write to CBC with the Town Council's concerns about this situation.***

**174/23 QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS ON ITEMS ARISING FROM THE MEETING**

- 174/23.1 Agenda item for Planning Committee – Request a CBC Enforcement Visit to Shawmer Drive following the poor condition of the road after the development has been completed and other issues including a dip in Hitchin Road.

**175/23 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY**

**175/23.1 Library Update**

The DMC are considering the application at their November meeting. The heads of terms are ready to go. Cllr Hayes had a meeting this week with a contractor about air conditioning at the Greenacre Centre, which could form part of the tender process for the project. Cllr Woodfine suggested that the Town Council should write to all Members of the DMC once it was known which committee meeting it was being considered at so that the benefits of the project could be explained.

- 175/23.2 Cllr Saunders reported on the CBC Community Grants stream is open. The closing date is 3 November 2023.

***Post Meeting Note:** The Clerk has attended a virtual meet on this funding stream, but the timescale is too short for the projects currently being considered. It could be contemplated for future projects when the next round of funding in 2024/25 is open.*

**176.23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

1 November 2023

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 2019.

**MINUTES APPROVED (date):**

**SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN:**