

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SERVICES AND MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE
HELD ON 14TH MAY 2008**

PRESENT

Mr. Coward presided over Mesdames Harrison and Reddick. Messrs. Dear and Coward.

1. APOLOGIES

Mr. Mackin.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

At this point Mr. Coward welcomed Mr. Robert Kemp and Mr. Stuart Varney from EDF Energy who arrived to answer questions regarding the spate of power cuts that occurred in the town at the end of 2007 and beginning of 2008.

The representatives explained that there were two main reasons for the power failure, namely a fault in one of the connecting cables which coincided with damage to cabling caused by excavations that were being carried out by contractors. This was further compounded by the fact that many years ago some of the power point installations were mounted on posts in a 'back to back' fashion thus meaning that one had to be switched off in order to access another. This is now deemed as old technology and new installations are no longer erected in this fashion. The committee was further informed that the cables used by EDF have a lifetime of at least 80 years. Concerns were raised as to how EDF would deal with the proposed increase in housing in the area. The representatives explained how they work out future demand and stated that they did not anticipate any problems.

Both Mr Kemp and Mr Varney were thanked for their time after which they left. The committee agreed that the meeting had been both worthwhile and informative.

3. HIGHWAYS REPORTS

The April Highways Reports have been received from the County Council's Highways Department. All items on the report were noted accordingly.

4. PLAY AREA REPORTS

The April Play Area Reports have been received from the contractor and all items requiring attention were noted.

5. TREES – WATERSIDE

All the work required to the Willow trees at Waterside has now been completed. However, there are four Poplar trees that the Insurer's of 1 Bedford Road feel have contributed to subsidence of the property. The committee decided that it may well be that as the trees were in situ long before the house was erected then more attention should have been paid to the foundations of the house particularly bearing in mind the likely porosity of the soil and its closeness to the river. In fact this was suggested in the Insurer's own report. The Insurer's are to be informed of the committee's comments.

6. ROAD CLOSURE – B658 STANFORD ROAD

The committee has received information from Beds Highways regarding the proposed temporary road closure for surface dressing of the B658 Stanford Road. The restrictions will be in operation only when the necessary signs are erected on site. It is expected that up to two road closures will take place during the period from Monday 2nd June to Friday 26th September 2008 between the hours of 0900hrs and 1530hrs – specific dates will be advertised locally closer to the time. The committee felt that the suggested diversion route was not ideal and that Beds Highways should re-consider their choice.

7. REFURBISHMENT – TOWN MEETING ROOM

It was agreed that Mrs. Harrison and the clerk would meet to discuss what needs to be done in order to update and refurbish the Town Meeting Room.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A formal reply has been received from EDF Energy regarding the power cuts that occurred at the end of 2007 and beginning of 2008.

In February 2008, the National Air Traffic Services (NATS) commenced a consultation on proposed changes to air space over parts of London, southern and eastern England. This airspace is known as 'Terminal Control North' (TCN) and is amongst the most complex airspace in the world. The consultation was due to end on 22nd May 2008 but has now been extended to 19th June 2008. Detailed information can be found on www.nats.co.uk/TCNconsultation.

A resident has contacted the committee to enquire if they had any knowledge as to why there had been an increase in both light and commercial aircraft flying over Shefford and had the Town Council been consulted. The resident is to be informed that the Council had not been consulted on this matter nor did they expect to be. The members had similarly noticed the increase in air traffic but did not know the reason for it. The resident is to be advised that if she has access to the Internet then perhaps she could have a look at the NATS website.

Campton Parish Council had been previously contacted to enquire if they would consider the cemetery chapel being used as a potential museum for the artifacts secured from the forge and other additional items. Regrettably, however, Campton P C replied that the chapel had been consecrated in 1902/23 and the view expressed was that it should be available to 'other faiths'. Apparently there were further discussions as to the problems that could arise should it be used as a museum and further suggested that somewhere in Shefford would be more suitable such as the Council Chamber.

It was reported that yet another sewerage problem had occurred in Stanford Road and one resident stated that she had seen rats on her property.

Anglian Water is to be requested to attend the September meeting of this committee.

Numerous incidents of inappropriate vehicle parking have been reported in various areas of the town, namely in Lucas Way, Stanford Road and Ampthill Road. Beds police are to be requested to have a look at the areas to see what can be done.

Concerns were also raised about the amount of chairs that were being placed outside the White Hart P H thus decreasing the width of the pavement for pedestrians either passing the area or waiting to use the crossing.

The meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.
