

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS AND LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2008 AT 8.00PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SIMPSON CENTRE, STOTFOLD

Committee Members present: Mrs M Cooper (Chairman)
Mrs A Clarey B Collier
S Hayes L Stoter

Also present: 1 member of the public and the Clerk

5751. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs Bundock, Cooper, Mrs Hyde, Mrs Lewin and Saunders.

5752. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of Members interests.

5753. MATTERS RELATING TO THE MULTI USE GAMES AREA

Members were advised that the floodlight grills will be installed once the ground is dry or there is a hard frost so that the cherry picker can be driven over the grass.

MATTERS ARISING

5754. To receive an update on the Confident Communities Fund application (see minute 5733)

The resident at 186 Hitchin Road has now confirmed that she is happy for the Vehicle Actuated Sign to be sited outside her property. Due to the length of time taken to find a suitable site, without objection, we have missed the slot for work to be carried out before Christmas. Highways advise that the work will now be carried out middle to end of January 2009.

With regard to speed concerns on Norton Road, Highways have now advised that they are currently preparing for their annual review of speed limit review programme and will ensure that our request for increased and clearer signage is considered as part of that process. The forthcoming local government changes mean that final decisions will be taken next spring by the Unitary Authority, based on their emerging priorities and objectives. They anticipate a draft programme will be available in the New Year. Once they have devised a programme, the next step in the process is to gather accurate, up to date speed and traffic flow data, over a period of 7 days for 24 hours a day. Once they have collected and analysed the data they will contact us to discuss their findings.

5755. To consider estimates from Mr Drewett to fit the security door at the Hitchin Road Recreation Ground Tractor Shed (see minute 5735)

Mr Drewett has now completed the work to fit the door. His invoice for the work will be £166.

5756. To consider a quotation to carry out weed spraying around the town twice a year for the next financial year (see minute 5738)

No response has been received from Central Beds Authority Shadow Board regarding ensuring they include funds in their budget to contribute towards the weed spraying work next year being carried out by Mr Summerfield. They will continue to be chased. County Councillor John Street will also be asked to chase on this matter on behalf of the Town Council.

5757. To receive a report from Councillors Cooper and Mrs Cooper on the BRCC Play Area Management Seminar (see minute 5741)

Hockliffe Parish Council advise that the reason for selling the BMX track equipment is that it was not really being used by youths in their small village. Also, in the area where the track was located, it was not laid out to provide a challenging enough course so it was being considered to move the equipment to make it more challenging. However, there was only a limited amount of space available and the site they wished to move it to would have caused conflict of free space between their skate park and combat cableway. ROSPA advised that they should have sufficient space around the equipment to avoid the risk of collision, or would have to install additional fencing. After a discussion regarding where the BMX track equipment could be sited if it were purchased, it was felt that the equipment should not be purchased at this time.

5758. To approve executive action taken by the Clerk in instructing a plumber to install four replacement showers at the Hitchin Road Recreation Ground Changing Rooms (see minute 5743)

For note – the total cost to purchase and fit the shower units was £395 (6 showers at £42.54, plus £140 fitting).

5759. To receive three quotations for a replacement fence at the Riverside Playing Field between the Recreation Area and Manor Farm (see minute 5744)

A.L.S. Fencing have provided details of previous clients where they were satisfied with their work, and therefore they have been asked to carry out the work to replace the fencing as soon as possible. Mouchel have been advised as such, and advised of the suggested extra security measures that should be taken at Manor Farm. Work to install the fencing will take place from the beginning of next week.

5760. General work to be carried out as advised by Members at this meeting (see minute 5749)

Works to be carried out by Mid Beds District Council, County Highways, Mr Summerfield, and the Police have been carried out or advised.

County Highways have responded to the request for brown tourist signs on the A507. It appears that requests for brown signs are normally made by the individual attraction/restaurant, etc. However, in order to apply for a sign there are 7 criteria that must be met, together with specific criteria relating to type of business/attraction. If it is felt that these criteria are met, an application must be submitted together with a non-refundable application fee (amount depends on type of business – from £75 to £110). The County Council will assess the application to see if the criteria are met, the application fee will not be refunded if it doesn't. Once an application is approved they will start work on the design, manufacture and installation of the signs. Those making the application are required to pay for all costs associated with these works. An indicative cost is likely to be in the region of £500 per sign. You would also be required to pay for all ongoing maintenance (inspection and cleaning) costs. Future maintenance costs will be £500 for the first five years. The fee will be reviewed at the end of each five year period. It was felt amongst Members that this matter should be left on the table until after the Central Beds Authority is up and running.

CORRESPONDENCE

5761. Handyman Contractor – Invoice query

We have been requested by Mr Summerfield's secretary to advise the Committee of their note placed at the bottom of his recent invoice. This note referred to four additional hours invoiced to erect fencing around the skate park so that the required repairs could take place. It noted that they felt this was a health and safety at work issue, and that it should have been a two man job. It was felt that the matter

should be raised with the contractors working on the skate park as the fencing was probably in their quote.

For Members' information, this matter has now been dealt with by the office, and the Handyman has been advised of the actual situation, in that it was a requirement by the skate park contractors that this Council provides fencing around the skate park during the works period, and is not the responsibility of the skate park company to provide the fencing. The Handyman was advised at the beginning of October that we would need to hire fencing, and the size and type, so the required number could be ascertained prior to the work taking place. The fences arrived on the 20th November. At no time from the beginning of October until when the fences arrived were we advised that it would be a two man job and that we would subsequently be charged at double the hourly rate.

5762. TO APPROVE EXECUTIVE ACTION TAKEN BY THE CLERK IN HIRING SECURITY FENCING AROUND THE SKATE PARK WHILST REPAIR WORKS WERE TAKING PLACE

This was a requirement of the skate park contractors before they would carry out the work. Cost of hiring the fencing was £110. Councillor Collier declared an interest in this matter as he had to pay for the fencing upfront as the company wouldn't take a business cheque or set up an account. He is being reimbursed for the sum paid.

5763. TO CONSIDER PURCHASING A DOG WASTE BIN FOR THE RIVERSIDE PLAYING FIELD AT A COST OF £150 PLUS VAT AFTER THE PREVIOUS ONE WAS SET ALIGHT

The previous one was installed by the District Council, however it is their policy to not replace this bin as it was destroyed the day after installation. The cost obtained is for a metal dog waste bin and not the usual plastic type which is often set alight. Mr Summerfield can install the bin and the post will be set in post-crete.

Resolved that a metal dog waste bin is purchased for the Riverside Playing Field at a cost of £150 plus vat. Mr Summerfield is to install the bin. The Clerk is to check that the District Council will continue to empty the bin before placing an order, as it is not one they have supplied.

5764. TO CONSIDER THE QUOTATION FROM STEVE DEAR TREES TO REMOVE THE LEANING HAWTHORN (AND STUMP GRIND ROOTS) IN OLIVER'S LANE, AT A COST OF £150 PLUS VAT, AS DEFERRED FROM LAST MEETING

Steve Dear Trees have advised that their quotation previously submitted, which included several items, was to do the works in one go, and if we require some this financial year and some next, they will have to re-quote. Members agreed that the leaning Hawthorn tree is of sufficient concern, and it was:

Resolved that the quotation from Steve Dear Trees to remove the leaning Hawthorn (and stump grind roots) in Oliver's Lane at a cost of £150 plus vat, be accepted, with the works being carried out as soon as he can in the next financial year, ensuring there are no nesting birds.

5765. TO APPROVE A REQUEST FROM A NEW ALLOTMENT PLOT HOLDER TO ERECT A WOODEN SHED ON THEIR PLOT

The size of the shed is 7ft long x 5ft wide x 6ft high, with sloping roof and window to side.

Resolved that the request from a new allotment plot holder to erect a wooden shed, as detailed above, be approved.

5766. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE SITE VISIT WITH THE HIGHWAYS AREA STEWARD TAKING PLACE ON TUESDAY 9TH DECEMBER 2008, TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION REGARDING THE HITCHIN ROAD SHARED CYCLE/FOOTWAY AND THE HITCHIN ROAD UNDERPASS

The Chairman advised that she was unfortunately unable to meet with the Highways Area Steward, but a date is being set for a site meeting in the New Year.

5767. TO APPROVE THE CONDITION THAT MUGA USERS MUST GIVE AT LEAST 24 HOURS NOTICE WHEN CANCELLING THEIR BOOKINGS, OR THEY WILL BE INVOICED AS IF THEY HAD USED THE FACILITY

The request to approve this condition is because several users are not advising the office that they haven't used the facility until after they have been invoiced which can cause more work. It also prevents us hiring the facility out to another user. As there is no Conditions of Hire document for the MUGA, a draft will be drawn up and presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

Resolved that a cancellation policy is put in place for all MUGA users and will take effect from 1st January 2009. All users will be required to give a minimum of 24 hours notice when cancelling their bookings, or they will be charged as if they had used the facility. MUGA users are to be made aware of the office opening hours when cancelling a booking, and anyone wishing to cancel a weekend booking must do so by 5pm on the Friday before.

5768. TO CONSIDER THE CPRE 'STOP THE DROP – LITTER & FLY-TIPPING' PARISH COUNCIL TOOL KIT AND ANY ACTIONS NEEDING TO BE TAKEN

The Campaign to Protect Rural England has produced a tool kit for Parish and Town Councils to help in the fight against litter and fly-tipping. They suggest several ways of tackling this problem: organise or take part in a 'Big Tidy Up', display CPRE posters regarding litter issues, include articles in local press or newsletter to inform people about litter and fly-tipping and what they can do to stop it, go plastic bag free, or use powers under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

Members were provided with a summary of the different 'tools' to deal with the issue of litter in their agenda packs, and the possible costs involved: issuing fixed penalty notices, Big Tidy Up, and making the public aware.

With regard to taking on an employee to patrol the town and issue fixed penalty notices for litter dropping, it was not felt feasible due to the high costs involved. Unless the local PCSO already has the powers to issue fixed penalty notices for litter dropping, if we wished him to do so we would have to contribute towards the cost of the PCSO, and also be responsible for collecting the fines issues.

Many of the Town Plan Questionnaires had complaints about litter around the town. A Member advised that the local Explorer Scouts were looking for something to do for their community service badge, and a Big Tidy Up event could go towards it.

Recommended that the Scouts and other local organisations who might wish to organise a litter pick around the town, be asked to contact the Town Council who can provide them with the appropriate paperwork and support. An article is also to be placed in the Stotfold News encouraging residents to carry out litter picks in their roads. Stotfold Town Council would not be organising the events.

5769. TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO ANY LIGHTING ISSUES AROUND THE TOWN

Resolved that the following be reported to County Highways:

- Lamps no. 33, 34 and 35 and one unmarked one in the A507/Hitchin Road underpass are still not working. They have been out for at least the last six weeks.
- Lamps no. 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 on Norton Road are not working.
- The lamp on the 'Access Only' sign at the High Street end of Brook Street is not working.
- A lamp outside the Old Vicarage on Rook Tree Lane, opposite St Mary's School, is not working.

5770. GENERAL WORK TO BE CARRIED OUT AS ADVISED BY MEMBERS

Resolved that the following works be carried out:

County Highways

- A large piece of tarmac filling the hole in the High Street outside number 56 has come loose and there is lots of grit spread across the road. This is an urgent health and safety issue.
- Query whether the Norton Road shared cycle/footway slipway to the underpass has been passed by Highways Safety team as there is a large step to the underpass route. Would it be possible to install a fence alongside the slipway at that point to prevent mobility scooters or cycles from dropping down the step when turning into the underpass?

Mr Summerfield

- The Norton Road and Arlesey Road Stotfold signs are very low on their posts and need raising and re-fixing. They are also quite beaten with damaged paintwork and should be assessed to see if sign writer needs to touch-up paintwork.
- Remove the bus stop sign on The Green – leading to Rook Tree Lane. This has been a problem for some time and could cause a health and safety hazard as it is often placed in the bus stop lay-by and across the pavement. Advise Arriva and County Highways that we have removed it and have placed it in safe keeping until they wish to reinstate it.
- The bus shelter at the Hitchin Road Recreation Ground has strips of wood missing from it which need replacing.

5771. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

There were no items for information purposes only.

There being no further relevant business the meeting was declared closed at 8.36pm

CHAIRMAN

DATED