

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS AND LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2008 AT 7.00PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SIMPSON CENTRE, STOTFOLD**

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Committee Members present: Mrs M Cooper (Chairman)  
Mrs S Bundock Mrs A Clarey  
A Cooper S Hayes  
Mrs J Hyde Mrs L Lewin  
B Saunders

Also present: The Clerk

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**5601. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Collier and Stoter.

**5602. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

Councillor Mrs Hyde declared an interest in agenda items 8 and 9 relating to a letter from the Stotfold Co-operative Smallholdings Ltd regarding permissive and definitive footpaths, and a letter from Mr Chapman regarding the same.

**5603. TO DISCUSS ANY MATTERS RELATING TO THE MULTI USE GAMES AREA**

Terry Seymour has repaired the faulty light on the bark path, lowered the angle of the floodlights at the MUGA and fitted the end caps.

Ian Summerfield has welded the hasp and staple bolts on the current lighting box, and has fitted a second hasp (with the same key) to help strengthen the box, however it has recently been broken into again.

**Resolved** that thanks be given to Mr Summerfield for his efforts in securing the lighting box, and that his hard work is appreciated. Ask if he has any more ideas the Committee are willing to consider them. Suggest that he speaks to Mr Fred Lewin who may be able to assist on this matter.

With regard to the timing for the lighting, Terry Seymour has made adjustments so that the lights are able to be turned on from 7pm and will automatically cut off (if left on) at 10.15pm. The two MUGA caretakers have been advised of the timing setting.

Mr Summerfield has also repaired the fencing to the side of the gate to the MUGA and has welded the fixing brackets to strengthen the fence at that point, without the need to purchase boarding.

With regard to the CCTV system, we are experiencing repeated problems with the video recorder unit, and it has been suggested that the footage taken from the cameras might not be suitable quality for the Police. The Clerk has met with Group 4 who advise that to keep the costs down, to try and make the footage recorded better quality it would be better to upgrade the recording unit, replace one very poor quality camera, and they can then try and refocus the

other cameras, adjusting the angle they point at to get a better picture. A quotation has been received to upgrade the recording unit in the sum of £1,979 plus vat, and a second quotation for works to replace one camera and improve the others is being awaited. This matter will be considered at the next meeting, together with consideration of whether it is worth continuing with CCTV at the facility due to the high costs involved.

## **MATTERS ARISING**

### **5604. Discussion with representative of Teasel on access to Centenary Wood (see minute 5581)**

Teasel have responded to our request that they use the five bar gate in the Council's possession rather than purchase a smaller one for access into Centenary Wood. They advise that to use the full size gate would entail tearing out long established hedging, and would be a very arduous job probably requiring mechanical assistance. Replanting the hedging elsewhere would be impossible as it would not survive being pulled out. There are other considerations such as proximity to the bridge and road/wood levels which have been mentioned in the past.

They have had a closer look at Centenary Wood and believe they have found a viable alternative which would cause less damage to the existing hedge and its surrounds. They propose that once they have accurately established the boundary of Centenary Wood, an on-site meeting is held with Members of the Committee and Teasel for them to explain their proposal.

### **5605. General work to be carried out (see minute 5582)**

The bus shelter on Hitchin Road outside the Fairfield Park development has now been erected. Thanks are to be given to John Phillips at Phillips Planning Ltd for his efforts in getting the shelter put in place.

### **5607. Open Space Bovis Homes – Heron Way/Waters End (see minute 5583)**

Bovis Homes have confirmed that Mr Owens has no legal right of way through the above land, and as such they have now been advised that we wish to continue with the adoption of the land, as per the Committee meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2007. Bovis Homes have been requested to pass the land to us after initial maintenance has been carried out, or an additional charge will be made if we are to carry out this maintenance. A response is being awaited.

### **5608. Bedfordshire County Council – Parish Liaison 2008/09 (see minute 5586)**

A letter has been sent to John Shortland at County Highways explaining that we are not satisfied with the way they claim to prioritise roads for resurfacing. A request has been made to meet with those responsible for the selection of roads for resurfacing. A response is being awaited.

A letter has been sent to Keith Stallen at County Highways confirming that our partnership funding should be spent on Vaughan Road. The reserve list has also been sent. Mr Stallen advises that in principle the Vaughan Road footway fits well into this year's aims, and he understands that the Area Team is already involved in the design process. He will be pushing for Regent Street to be put up the list for next year's programme of works.

David Leverington has responded to our reminder to carry out the works on the footpath in the churchyard. He advises that in April 2007 he did say that the length of path would be added to

his working list of paths to be surfaced. It is still on the list and he is trying to find the funding in this financial year for it and others.

**5609. To discuss matters relating to lighting around the town (see minute 5587)**

The Chairman is to meet with a representative of the Lighting Department of County Highways to establish their plans for updating lamps in the next 2 years, on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May at 12.30pm.

**5610. Lights on The Green – Confident Communities Fund (see minute 5591)**

P.C. Ryan has been asked for information on the problems with youths congregating in the darker areas of The Green, and to make contact with the Engineer at Highways direct to strengthen the need for improved lighting. Dave Rollings at the District Council has been asked to provide information on problems with youths congregating in the area.

Councillor Mrs Hyde was asked to speak to the resident in the vicinity who has experienced problems with youths congregating in the darker areas to see if she could provide some written support. The resident has confirmed that she is very keen for more lighting and will be forwarding a letter to the Clerk shortly.

Once all the information has been received, it will be forwarded to the Engineer at County Highways, together with the plan showing where lighting is required around The Green.

**5611. To consider the matter of high speeds of vehicles travelling past the Mill, and also the amount of traffic using the road (see minute 5595)**

A letter has been sent to the satellite navigation company who provide Councillor Mrs Hyde's system to point out that the route it tries to send you is not suitable, and suggesting a safer route via the A507. The company have thanked us for our report and will investigate the need for making our suggested changes as quickly as possible.

**5612. To receive a quotation from Terry Seymour re MUGA lights (see minute 5596)**

We are awaiting a quotation from Terry Seymour for fixing grills/grating covers to each new floodlight head at the MUGA to prevent them from being smashed.

**5613. To consider quotations from Danfo for a service agreement and repairs on the public conveniences in Brook Street (see minute 5597)**

A three year maintenance programme with four visits per year, including the current required repairs has been set up and is hoped to commence shortly.

David York of the District Council has confirmed that a service was carried out on the public conveniences before they were handed to the Town Council, and that he was present at the time. There were no problems identified in the service, except a timing matter on the door locks, which was rectified.

**5614. General work to be carried out (see minute 5599)**

Bob Morwood at the District Council has confirmed that the tree at 17 Home Close which has been reduced to a stump did not have a Tree Preservation Order on it. The tree with the Order is at number 6 Home Close. There is no further action required.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### 5615. Teasel – update on path and ditch beside Mill View development

Correspondence has been received from Teasel who have provided an update on various matters regarding the Mill View development area.

#### Recent planting of Leylandii trees beside path

With regard to the Leylandii trees at the rear of the Mill View development, Teasel advise that they have spoken with the owner of the property who appears to have planted the trees. They believed that she would stop planting the trees, but a recent walk along the path has shown that more trees have been planted, with the dead trees being dumped by the nearby kissing gate. They ask us to contact the owner of the property to remind her that she had agreed to stop planting the trees, and that such fast growing trees would certainly soon form a considerable obstruction to free passage on the footpath. Teasel have renewed their offer to plant more suitable species there in the autumn should she still wish to have a screen from the development.

Investigations are ongoing into who actually owns the piece of land concerned. If it is still in the ownership of the developments, they will be asked to request that the owner of the property removes the trees. If it is not, then Mr Summerfield will be asked to remove the trees as recommended at the last meeting. We are still trying to obtain the information.

**Resolved** that a letter be sent to Teasel to advise that until we have established who owns the land on which the trees are planted, it is inadvisable to take further action on this matter. Suggest that if the resident wishes to have a screen from the development Teasel could offer to put it on the resident's land.

#### Debris and obstructions

With regard to the maintenance of the Kingfisher Way, it was

**Resolved** that a meeting be set up with Cliff Andrews, Countryside Team Leader of the BRCC's Ivel Valley Linear Country Park regarding the history of the Kingfisher Way and what their long term maintenance plans are for it.

Teasel have pointed out the poor state of the drainage ditch on the edge of the Mill View development as much litter and debris has recently accumulated there. A number of members of the public have commented on the fact that the river has not been dredged for years and ask when it is due to be carried out next.

**Resolved** that the Bedfordshire and River Ivel Drainage Board be asked to advise what their intentions are with regard to the condition of the drainage ditch, as it is in their remit. They are also to be asked about the general maintenance of the length of the River Ivel in regard to dredging.

#### Cyclists

Teasel advise that they have received reports of cyclists using the footpath from the tarmac path from Mill View. They feel that given the popularity of the path with walkers and people with buggies or wheelchairs, they suggest putting in a wheelchair friendly kissing gate across

the tarmac entry point to discourage cyclists. Members felt that it wasn't much of a problem and didn't feel that any action should be taken at this point.

**Resolved** that Teasel be advised that this Committee doesn't intend taking any action on this matter at the present time, but will monitor the situation with regard to cyclists using the footpath. We are pleased that families and children are using the path.

**5616. Playing Field Spring 2008 newsletter**

This item of correspondence can be obtained from the Clerk.

**5617. TO CONSIDER A REPORT BY P. ALDRIDGE SUBMITTED TO THIS COMMITTEE REGARDING THE BRIDLEWAY FROM HITCHIN ROAD TO ARLESEY. THE A507 NOW CUTS THROUGH THE BRIDLEWAY RENDERING IT AN IMPRACTICAL FACILITY FOR HORSE RIDERS**

Members were previously circulated a report from Pat Aldridge regarding inaccuracies on maps being used by Trevor Saunders of the District Council in their recent site allocations consultation. Members gave the report due consideration and agreed that correct maps should be used in these types of exercises.

**Resolved** that a letter be sent to Trevor Saunders of the Local Development Framework Team at the District Council to advise that the maps being used for the site allocations consultation are not up to date and show inaccuracies regarding footpaths and bridleways which have been removed, or re-routed. Respond to Pat Aldridge to advise that we have sent a letter to Trevor Saunders on the matter.

**5618. TO CONSIDER THE CONTENT OF MR CHAPMAN'S LETTER REGARDING MAKING FOOTPATHS AT LAND AT MALTHOUSE LANE, NEAR THE MILLENNIUM GREEN AND PATHS IN THE MILLENNIUM GREEN AREA**

Councillor Mrs Hyde left the room at this point.

Members were previously circulated copies of a letter and an email from Mr Chapman which asked the Committee to consider various points regarding the footpaths. Due consideration was given, with the following comments being made.

- With regard to Mr Chapman's query why Councillor Mrs Hyde didn't declare herself subtenant of the land in question when previously considering making the footpaths concerned permanent, Members felt that there was no requirement for her to explain her specific reason in detail for her declared interest.
- Mr Chapman also queried why the main tenant wasn't informed and it was felt that the correct action was taken in approaching the landowner to consider the request to make the footpaths permanent, and not the tenants. Councillor Mrs Hyde's position as subtenant on the land is totally irrelevant.
- The letter also questioned 'why the Town Council are using a tactical method in preference to approaching the County Council', and queried whether it would be 'the

development issue'. Previous correspondence with Mr Chapman has indicated that he is referring to the District Council's recent Site Allocations consultation and site submission H056 Land South of Malthouse Lane, Stotfold. He has previously been reminded that discussions on the footpaths matter started in December 2006, the District Council's Site Allocations consultation didn't start until February of this year and wasn't considered by the Town Enhancement Committee until February, and again in March. There is therefore no link between the two matters.

Members present agreed that there was no impropriety from Councillor Mrs Hyde whatsoever on this matter.

**Recommended** that a reply be sent to Mr Chapman giving the above bullet point comments, also pointing out that there is no impropriety from Councillor Mrs Hyde on this matter whatsoever.

**5619. TO CONSIDER THE SUGGESTION BY THE STOTFOLD CO-OPERATIVE SMALLHOLDINGS LTD THAT THEY WOULD BE HAPPY TO AGREE TO THE FOOTPATHS AS PER THE ABOVE MINUTE BEING REGISTERED AS PERMISSIVE FOOTPATHS, SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THEIR LANDLORD, THE COUNTY COUNCIL. THEY HAVE ALSO ASKED THIS COUNCIL TO REFRAIN FROM SUBMITTING THE EVIDENCE FORMS TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL FOOTPATHS OFFICER AND FROM PURSUING HAVING THESE FOOTPATHS REGISTERED AS DEFINITIVE FOOTPATHS**

Members gave due consideration to the letter received from Stotfold Co-operative Smallholdings Ltd, as above, and it was:

**Recommended** that a response be sent to acknowledge receipt of their letter, but advise that this Committee feels they have followed the correct procedures in approaching the County Council as landlord, rather than Stotfold Co-operative Smallholdings Ltd as tenants, and that if they wish to make their own representation to the County Council then they are free to do so.

Councillor Mrs Hyde then returned to the meeting.

**5620. TO CONSIDER PURCHASING A REPLACEMENT NOTICE BOARD FOR THE GREEN**

A local firm can provide a maximum of 60" x 40" polycarbonate lockable notice board for £129 plus vat and delivery. Smaller boards range from £55 to £99. Although we would have to provide the wooden posts. It may be more cost effective to construct a board ourselves. Members discussed whether a lockable notice board would be of any use as the current board is used by members of the community to advertise their events, etc and access would be restricted if it were a lockable unit. It was therefore:

**Resolved** that Mr Summerfield be asked to construct a notice board for The Green to the same measurements as the current one, using WVP exterior grade ply. The board is to be mounted on wooden posts and is to be painted black. The words 'Stotfold Town Council' are to be stencilled at the top in white. No more than £120 is to be spent on purchasing and constructing the notice board.

**5621. TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO ANY LIGHTING ISSUES AROUND THE TOWN**

There were no matters relating to lighting issues.

**5622. GENERAL WORK TO BE CARRIED OUT AS ADVISED BY MEMBERS AT THIS MEETING**

**Resolved** that the following works be carried out/be advised:

**Mr Summerfield**

- Spray nettles in the footpath between the churchyard and Rook Tree Lane.
- Strim under the rural seats/benches.

**Mr Golder**

- Ask when Oliver's Lane should be strimmed now that the seed is growing. Will the rocks and stones on the surface be a problem for strimming/cutting?

If Mr Golder advises that the stones need removing, the youth offending team are to be asked if they have anyone who can help remove the stones, for Mr Golder to transport to the allotment centre path.

**County Council Highways**

- There is a small pothole at the most northerly gated entrance to the Pig Testing Station site on Hitchin Road between the A507 and Fairfield Park estate.
- Elm suckers need removing on the stretch of Hitchin Road between the two Fairfield Park roundabouts.
- Bollards on this stretch of road also need washing, as they are very dirty from construction dust.
- There is a missing sign on the first roundabout at Fairfield Park, nearest the bus shelter. It is not known what the sign depicted.
- There is a missing sign near Thorne's Nursery on Hitchin Road, near Fairfield Park, the two posts remain, but it is not known what the sign depicted.
- The hedge on Hitchin Road between Fairfield Park and Stotfold is becoming very overgrown and is adjacent to a narrow shared cycle/footway.
- There is graffiti in the underpass from Hitchin Road to Fairfield Park and needs general maintenance to tidy it up.
- The underpass from Norton Road has a lot of mud and debris from the construction works above.
- There is a large trip hazard from a sunken manhole cover in Queen Street on the footway at the entrance to the Chequers public house.

**Mid Beds District Council**

- The Environmental Health Officer be advised that there are a number of areas in Stotfold where gravel from drives is coming onto the footways and causing a danger to pedestrians. We will advise on specific areas when they are reported to us, for the District Council to take action.
- Balaam Bros at Sandy be asked to provide a quotation for installing a 4ft high bowtop galvanised fence at The Green between Regent Street and opposite the Coach and Horses public house, to be presented to the next meeting of this Committee for consideration.
- A letter is to be sent to the Mill Preservation Trust to thank them for their hard work over the Mill Weekend and congratulate them on a successful event.

**5623. ANY OTHER 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 8.30pm

**CHAIRMAN**

**DATED**