

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS AND LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2008 AT 7.00PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SIMPSON CENTRE, STOTFOLD**

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Committee members present: Mrs M Cooper  
Mrs S Bundock B Collier  
A Cooper S Hayes  
Mrs J Hyde B Saunders  
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Also present: One member of the public and the Clerk

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**5577. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs Clarey and Mrs Lewin.

**5578. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

Councillor Collier declared an interest in the item relating to Stotfold Mill Preservation Trust as he is a Trustee. Councillor Mrs Hyde also declared an interest in this item, and advised that she would refrain from voting on the matter. She also declared an interest in the item relating to Quiet Lanes.

**5579. TO DISCUSS ANY MATTERS RELATING TO THE MUGA**

Terry Seymour has completed the work on the MUGA lights and the facility is now up and running and being used by some of the usual hirers. Although the football season is almost over, the tennis season is due to start. The lights on the bark path have also been repaired. The fencing to the side of the gate into the MUGA has been vandalised to allow unauthorised access. Remedial repairs have been carried out on a few occasions. It has been suggested that some sort of boarding or wall could be put up behind the fencing, as is used along the rest of the fencing surrounding the courts.

Members advised that the light on the bark path numbered S8 is not working, and the rest of the lights are not labelled with numbers.

**Resolved** that Terry Seymour be asked to repair the light numbered S8 on the bark path, and also Mr Summerfield is to label the remaining lights on the path R1, R2, R3, etc (R for Riverside).

Complaints have been received that the heads of the floodlights are angled too high and are shining into neighbouring properties, and also they have been left on overnight on several occasions. Terry Seymour has been asked to look at repositioning the heads and also to investigate the possibility that the lighting timers are not working.

With regard to concerns over unauthorised users switching the lights on and leaving them on overnight it was:

**Resolved** that Mr Summerfield be asked if he would be able to weld the hasp and staple bolts on the current lighting box to prevent them from being undone to gain access. If he is not able to permanently fix the bolts, ask Terry Seymour if it is

possible to put the lighting switches in a new lockable box, with costs available for the next meeting.

With regard to the unauthorised access through the fencing to the side of the gate, it was:

**Resolved** that Mr Summerfield be asked to obtain costs for metal sheeting to be fixed behind the fencing, or if he could suggest any other solutions to make the MUGA secure, ready for the next meeting of this Committee.

## **MATTERS ARISING**

### **5580. To discuss matters relating to lighting issues (see minute 5551)**

The County Council have been asked to consider erecting a new style lamp in Mowbray Crescent, they have responded to advise that they will investigate the request further, and if a need to upgrade the lighting is identified, depending on priority, this will be added to their five year programme. The resident originally requesting the new light has been advised as such.

### **5581. Discussion with representative of Teasel on access to Centenary Wood (see minute 5558)**

Teasel have not yet looked at the gates to see if they are suitable, however they have written to explain that they feel installing the kissing gates would be feasible. Although to put in the five bar gate would be more of a problem as it would require the removal of two established hedge bushes. They have visited Southill Sawmills to find out what size of gates are available and they have found one just wide enough to get the brushcutter through. If they find that our gate is too large, they suggest that as this Council currently holds the money which Bryant Homes provided to replace the two kissing gates which they removed at the Mill View development, it could be used to provide a suitable gate for Centenary Wood from Southill Sawmills.

A discussion ensued regarding future access to the Wood and it was felt that it would be prudent to use a wider gate to prevent any difficulties in the future with different machinery.

**Resolved** that Teasel be advised that they should use the five bar gate in the Council's possession rather than purchase a smaller one, to allow more varied access in the future. Also point out that the hedging will require infilling adjacent to the neighbouring field.

With regard to the work of Teasel, Members were advised that they have carried out the work to clear scrub away from the squeeze style on Millennium Green and have done a good job.

A letter has been sent to the developers of the Mill View development to express our objection to the planting of Leylandii trees. Mr Locke of Taylor Wimpey/Bryant Homes has visited the site and although is unsure of their boundaries on the development at the moment he can advise that they did not plant the trees. He has noted that approximately 90% of the trees are now brown and dying, and thinks they may have been planted by the neighbours opposite the stream to block out the view of the development, but has been unable to get hold of the occupiers of the property to find out for certain.

**Recommended** that Mr Summerfield be asked to remove the Leylandii trees as planted along the stream to the rear of the Mill View development, once it has been established that the land does not belong to the property opposite.

**5582. General work to be carried out (see minute 5559)**

John Phillips has been requested to provide a copy of the order for the shelter for Hitchin Road outside the Fairfield development. He advises that he doesn't have a copy of the order, but has requested one from his clients and will forward it shortly.

Mr Summerfield has laid paving slabs at the second bus stop at the Fairfield development.

**5583. Open Space Bovis Homes – Heron Way/Waters End (see minute 5560)**

The Clerk is waiting for a response from Mr Hammond at Bovis Homes regarding confirmation of the right of way as claimed by Mr Owen, before proceeding with the open space adoption.

**5584. General work to be carried out (see minute 5562)**

Councillor Mrs Hyde declared an interest in this item, and left the room whilst discussions took place.

The Public Rights of Way Evidence Forms have been circulated around the town for residents to complete and return.

**Resolved** that a supply of Evidence Forms are also available for completion at the forthcoming Mill Weekend.

Councillor Mrs Hyde returned to the meeting.

**5585. To consider costs for replacing the door at the Hitchin Road Recreation Ground tractor shed with a metal door and surround (see minute 5564)**

The Chairman and Clerk are yet to meet with Mr Summerfield and Mr Drewett, however there have been no recent attempts to break into the building.

**5586. Bedfordshire County Council – Parish Liaison 2008/09 (see minute 5568)**

The suggested works, as per the above minutes, have been forwarded to Alan Trille at Highways for the 2008/09 Enhanced Parish Partnership Scheme Fund.

Councillor Mrs Bundock reported on her site visit with Mr Trille:

It appears that cuts have been made to his budget, and has had additional unexpected costs added. Works are not being prioritised by need. County Highways would rather carry out works on more, shorter length roads than one longer road. The amount of works carried out in a town depends on the amount of pressure put on them to do a particular area, we therefore need to get our two County Councillors to be more proactive on this.

**Recommended** that a letter be sent to John Shortland, Watchman in Chief, County Highways, to tell him that we are not satisfied with the way they claim to prioritise roads for resurfacing, since the roads in Stotfold programmed to be done are very clearly not a priority when Trinity Road and Regent Street are in such a shocking state of disrepair, and there are others where the surface is much worse than those programmed. Ask him to arrange a visit to Stotfold with Mr Reece-Jones, Mr Woodgate and Mr Young, who are responsible for the selection of roads for resurfacing, to justify their choice of roads for works. Also point out that we are well aware that the routine maintenance budget will not be able to patch those roads adequately and this is not best value to try to do so.

With regard to Stotfold's Parish Partnership Funding a discussion ensued regarding giving priority to the surfacing of Vaughan Road footway. Because of the difficulty the concrete base presents it is most likely that all our money will be used and works will possibly not stretch the full length. This is because they would need to cut out the driveways and re-do them, not just a top surface. If there was any money left over we would need to suggest a reserve list for works.

**Recommended** that a letter be sent to Keith Stallen at County Highways to confirm that we wish to spend our partnership funding on Vaughan Road footway. Our reserve list for works should there be any money left over, or Vaughan Road proves impossible is as follows: further footway works to Rook Tree Lane, Rook Tree Close, Home Close and Brayes Manor.

Mr Trille has advised that the surfacing of the footpath in the Churchyard is not within his remit, and we need to chase David Leverington, Footpaths Officer for the County Council as it would come out of his budget and it is his responsibility to tarmac an authorised footpath, Highways only maintains them once surfaced.

**Resolved** that a letter be sent to David Leverington, Footpaths Officer for the County Council to chase him on works to surface the footpath in the Churchyard, which he advised would be done some months ago. During the wet weather the path is becoming very muddy as it is a well used route through the Churchyard.

Members may have noticed recent works on the pedestrian crossings in the town. They have all had to be re-levelled because Government has changed the requirements, by a very small amount, but it had to be done to conform with Disability Acts. White and yellow lining works have also recently taken place.

During his site visit Mr Trille noticed that a cable company has seriously damaged a verge and is investigating the matter further. He also had to ask a heavy lorry to move off the verge where it was parked as it could have caused considerable damage.

With regard to recent reports that surfacing is to take place in The Gardens, this is for the footways only as the road surfacing has already been done in the last year.

With regard to the blocked drains in the High Street, Mr Trille is aware that they are still causing problems, however it is in the main line and this will need considerable investigation followed by excavations. He advised that there are currently other areas with higher priority as they are permanently flooded and so they will be done before High Street.

Thanks were given to Councillor Mrs Bundock for carrying out a site visit with Mr Trille.

**5587. To discuss matters relating to lighting issues around the town (see minute 5574)**

The Chairman is to meet with a representative of the Lighting Department at County Highways to establish their plans for updating lamps in the next 2 years. We are awaiting confirmation of a date.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**5588. Campaign to Protect Rural England - AGM**

An invitation has been received to attend the CPRE's AGM taking place on 24<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30pm at Bletsoe Village Hall. Any Member wishing to attend is to advise the Clerk.

**5589. Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) inspection**

Correspondence has been received to advise that this year's inspection of Stotfold's play areas will take place sometime during May.

**5590. The following items of correspondence can be obtained from the Clerk**

- Fieldwork – March 2008
- Wildlife Action – Issue 43 Spring 2008
- Wildlife Trusts Natural World – Spring 2008
- CPRE's Houses & Gardens 2008
- Countryside Voice – Spring 2008
- Bedford Group of Drainage Boards – 2007 Review

**5591. Lights on The Green – Confident Communities Fund**

An email has been received from a Graduate Engineer at County Highways regarding our request for more street lighting on The Green. In order to help justify the costs of any improvement works, they have asked for exact details of the problems and incidents taking place in the area, and statistics to support this.

**Recommended that**

- (i) P.C. Ryan be asked for information on the problems with youths congregating in the darker areas of The Green, for forwarding to the Engineer at County Highways. P.C. Ryan is also to be asked to make contact with the Engineer at Highways to strengthen the need for improved lighting.
- (ii) The plan kept on file of the areas around The Green where lighting is required is to be forwarded to the Engineer at County Highways.
- (iii) Dave Rollings at the District Council be asked to provide the information on problems with youths congregating in the area, as previously shown to the Problem Solving Group, for forwarding to the Engineer at County Highways.
- (iv) Councillor Mrs Hyde speak to a resident in the vicinity who has experienced problems with youths congregating in the darker areas, to see if she could provide some written support for improved lighting.

**5592. Footpaths at land at Malthouse Lane, land near the Millennium Green and paths in the Millennium Green area – Mr Chapman**

The Chairman referred to a letter from Mr Chapman regarding applying for several footpaths in the above areas to be made permanent. Mr Chapman is requesting the overturn of a previous resolution of this Committee regarding the footpaths. As this letter was received at very short notice prior to the last Council meeting and was subsequently forwarded to this Committee by full Council, in order to allow Members the chance to read and fully understand the contents of Mr Chapman's letter it was:

**Resolved** that this matter be put on the agenda for the next meeting of this Committee, with a copy of his letter being circulated to all Members, to allow time for consideration of his request.

**5593. TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM STOTFOLD MILL PRESERVATION TRUST TO USE THE MILLENNIUM GREEN FOR PARKING DURING THE WEEKEND OF THE 10<sup>TH</sup> AND 11<sup>TH</sup> MAY FOR THEIR ANNUAL MILL STEAM FAIR AND COUNTRY SHOW**

Councillor Mrs Hyde declared an interest in this item and advised that she would not take part in any voting on the matter.

The Preservation Trust has advised that car parking will be marshalled and free of charge. They have also asked for permission to put the temporary footbridge over the river, as in previous years, to alleviate queues into Mill Lane. A full risk assessment will be carried out prior to the event.

**Resolved** that the Stotfold Mill Preservation Trust be permitted to use the Millennium Green for parking during the weekend of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> May for their annual Mill Steam Fair and Country Show, and that they also be permitted to put the temporary footbridge over the river.

Posters advertising the event are being displayed around the town and some are fixed to telegraph poles. It was pointed out that if the telecoms company has to remove the posters they will charge £100 per poster.

**Resolved** that the Stotfold Mill Preservation Trust be advised of the above to prevent any fines being imposed for displaying posters on the property of a telecoms company.

**5594. TO CONSIDER THE QUIET LANES INITIATIVE (AS REFERRED BY COUNCIL MINUTE 7752)**

A consultation on the County Council's Quiet Lane Policy Note, forming part of the Local Transport Plan, is due to take place shortly, however paperwork has not been received to date.

**Resolved** that this item be put on the agenda of the next meeting of this Committee, once the relevant paperwork and consultation documents have been received.

**5595. TO CONSIDER THE MATTER OF HIGH SPEEDS OF VEHICLES TRAVELLING PAST THE MILL, AND ALSO THE AMOUNT OF TRAFFIC USING THE ROAD**

Consideration of this matter was requested by Councillor Mrs Wilding in relation to her Community Safety Group report at the March Council meeting.

Councillor Mrs Hyde advised that it is apparent that some satellite navigation systems, such as the one built in her car, will try to send you from the A1 via Wrayfields into Stotfold, rather than coming in via the A507. There are concerns that young drivers are building up high speeds when travelling past the Cemetery along Mill Lane, although it was pointed out that the car which is often parked outside the Mill slows speeding vehicles down as it is on a blind bend. Speeding is often the perception of a pedestrian and not a driver. Another road with speeding problems is Astwick Road as it is a long straight road and is used much more than Mill Lane.

**Recommended** that a letter be sent to the satellite navigation company who provide Councillor Mrs Hyde's system to point out that the route it tries to send you, from the A1 via Wrayfields and past the Mill, is not suitable and advise that the correct and safer route to enter the town is via the A507.

**5596. TO RECEIVE A QUOTATION FROM TERRY SEYMOUR TO PROVIDE END CAPS FOR THE NEW MUGA LIGHTS. TO CORRECTLY CAP OFF THE COLUMNS WOULD BE £250 PLUS VAT.**

During the recent works it was noted that when the original lighting columns were installed the tops of the columns were not sealed off as they should be. This has resulted in the base of each column becoming clogged up with dry leaves, dead birds and heavy water damage, which could add to shock risk.

**Recommended** that Terry Seymour's quotation to purchase and fix caps to the tops of the lighting columns in the MUGA in the sum of £250 be accepted, with the work to take place when he adjusts the angle of the floodlight heads.

Members discussed the new floodlight heads and although the glass plates are apparently toughened, it was felt that we should ensure that enough measures are taken to try and prevent them from being smashed in the future. It was therefore:

**Resolved** that Terry Seymour be asked to provide costs for fixing grills/grating covers to each floodlight head to prevent them from being smashed. This information to be presented to the next meeting of this Committee.

**5597. TO CONSIDER QUOTATIONS FROM DANFO FOR A SERVICE AGREEMENT AND REPAIRS ON THE PUBLIC CONVENIENCES IN BROOK STREET**

Members were previously circulated a copy of the Assistant Clerk's report on the receipt of an excessively high water bill for the public conveniences, and details on the investigations that followed. Following an inspection by Anglian Water and Danfo they have concluded that it wasn't a leak which caused the recent larger water bills, but that the units themselves have deteriorated and replacements need to be purchased. It appears that the cisterns are constantly flushing through, which has led to the very high water bills. Unfortunately the bill requires payment.

- 1) Service costs  
4 visits per year £1,000  
2 visits per year £500
- 2) Necessary replacements  
On examination it was found that the three toilet cisterns need to be replaced, two in particular, and one hand dryer. They only have two cisterns of the existing type as it is a discontinued stock item.
  - a) The cost for replacing the x2 cisterns as existing, and x1 hand dryer will be £675 + vat, inc labour.
  - b) To replace all three cisterns they would need to upgrade x1 cistern to the new type, which would also require changing the pipework as it is a different size. To replace x2 cisterns as existing, x1 new type and x1 hand dryer would be £775 + vat, inc labour.
  - c) To upgrade x3 cisterns and x1 hand dryer would be £850 + vat, inc labour.

These repairs would have to be carried out before any maintenance programme could begin due to the high costs. If we would consider taking a three year maintenance programme with four visits per year, Danfo will include the above repairs as part of the maintenance. Any maintenance programme does not include vandalism or graffiti.

Members were therefore asked to consider which service/maintenance programme they would wish to follow, and also which replacement parts option.

**Recommended** that the three year maintenance programme with four visits per year, be taken up, at £1,000 per year. The replacement option c) be included as part of the maintenance programme, as offered by Danfo.

With regard to the hand over of the public conveniences from the District Council to the Town Council and the fact that they should have had a service before changing ownership, Danfo have

confirmed that they have no record of a service being undertaken prior to exchanging ownership, however they do not have a lot of paperwork to be able to refer to and it may have been done without keeping a record. The District Council verbally confirmed to the Clerk some time ago that a service was carried out.

**Recommended** that the Clerk investigate further with the District Council whether a service was carried out before handing over ownership of the public conveniences to the Town Council, and to ask for written evidence showing when it took place and any works that were carried out. If no service was carried out then the District Council are to be presented with the recently received high water bill for recompense.

**5598. TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO ANY LIGHTING ISSUES AROUND THE TOWN**

**Resolved** that the following be reported to County Highways:

- B21 on the High Street outside the pharmacy is not working.
- B1 on Regent Street at the cross roads is not working.

**5599. GENERAL WORK TO BE CARRIED OUT AS ADVISED BY MEMBERS**

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

**Mr Summerfield**

- To remove the collection of road works signs dumped at the entrance to The Green, by the bottle banks.

**County Highways**

- The lights at the Hitchin Road/Regent Street/Arlesey Road/High Street cross roads are working intermittently, and there is a timing fault. This is an urgent matter as it could cause a road traffic accident.
- The green light on the pedestrian crossing on the High Street on The Avenue side of the road going towards the cross roads is not working.

**Mid Beds District Council**

- A tree at 17 Home Close, believed to have a Tree Preservation Order on it, has been reduced to a stump and should be reported to Bob Morwood, Tree Officer.

With regard to the lime tree at Walnut Close which had been severely trimmed, it has been reported to the office that it was apparently the resident of number 1 Walnut Close who authorised the work. This information has been forwarded to Bob Morwood at the District Council.

The notice board at The Green has recently been vandalised and repaired by Mr Summerfield, although it was noted that it is in very poor condition and a replacement should be considered in the near future.

**Resolved** that consideration of a replacement notice board at The Green be put on the next agenda for this Committee, with costs for possible replacements.

**5600. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY**

A Member queried why the surfacing of Littlebury Close had not yet been done and was advised that the Section 38 Agreement document was signed some time ago and that the developer would only complete the road surfacing once this Agreement is in place. A representative of Highways has now confirmed that the developer returned to the site during the week beginning 31<sup>st</sup> March and is working through outstanding items. County Highways will then inspect the works, which will take three to four weeks.

Members were advised of a pile of rubble placed against the gate which prevents access to the closed off part of Baldock Road, and a works lorry was parked beyond the gate. The padlock from the chain is also missing, but is the responsibility of the County Council. Apparently investigations are taking place on sewerage pipe problems from the closed off Baldock Road area to the A1 service station.

There being no further relevant business the meeting was declared closed at 8.25pm

**CHAIRMAN**

**DATED**