

MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13TH JANUARY 2021, AT 7.30PM

Committee Members present:

Mrs A Clarey, B Collier A Cooper, Mrs M Cooper (Chairman), S Hayes, Mrs J Hyde, C Phelps, J Talbot

Also present:

Town Clerk – Mrs K Elliott-Turner, Councillor B Saunders

1/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

2/21 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS ON MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE AGENDA

Councillor Mrs Hyde declared an interest in agenda item 7 – street training licence, Boundary Farm, as the Manor Farm Co-operative (she is a member) is now the tenant of the farm. Members were reminded that if at any time during the meeting they feel they have an interest in an item being discussed, they should declare it at that point.

3/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

None present.

4/21 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Matters Arising

Minute 65/20 – following a request to Grand Union Housing to close the unauthorised access point from Vaughan Road to Central Beds Council owned land at the rear of Pix Brook Academy and onto Town Council leased land at Arlesey Road, they advise that a Property Manager has inspected the site and provided some recommendations to resolve the issue. Before any recommendations can be looked into, a thorough investigation needs to be carried out to ascertain the position of any underground cables, after written permission is obtained from those responsible for the sub-station and cables. They will keep us updated on the situation as it progresses.

Minute 92/20 – investigations are still ongoing into the possibility of adding timed locks to the Arlesey Road toilet facility doors, for use after the pandemic period.

Correspondence

A copy of CPRE Bedfordshire Matters was previously circulated to members, and the article regarding the Luton Airport consultation was noted.

5/21 GRASS CUTTING OF HIGHWAY VERGES

Members considered a quote from the Landscape & Grass Cutting Contractor to add the following recently adopted (by Central Beds Council) highway verges, as part of our verge cutting contract with Central Beds Council: Marigold Way, Cowslip Drive, Bryony Road, Tansy Avenue £200 plus vat, per cut.

RESOLVED that the quote from the Landscape & Grass Cutting Contractor, Rik Golder Ltd, to grass cut verges: Marigold Way, Cowslip Drive, Bryony Road, Tansy Avenue at £200 plus vat, per cut, is accepted.

6/21 **CENTRAL BEDS COUNCIL – TREE PLANTING SCHEME**

Central Beds Council has launched its new Tree Planting Grant Scheme, aimed at delivering tree and hedge planting schemes across Central Bedfordshire. Town and Parish Councils, local voluntary and community organisations, schools and other groups can apply for funding (or match funding). Projects can vary in size, from a minimum of five trees upwards, to larger areas of new woodland. 'Planting more trees and hedgerows represents one of the key ways in which the climate challenge can be met. It will help increase biodiversity and mitigate other environmental issues such as flooding and air pollution. In addition to this, it will help create a better environment that benefits communities in many ways' (ref. CBC). The deadline for applications is 28 February 2021. A copy of the Guidance for Tree Planting Grant Scheme is provided for members.

Members expressed interest in the scheme, but were concerned about the maintenance implications, particularly initially with the amount of watering required for newly planted trees.

RESOLVED that for the 2021 planting scheme, we do not participate, however a proposed area for planting in a future scheme is the hedge line between Riverside Playing Field and the public open space to the rear of the current Taylors Road development. An item will be added to a future agenda (April/May) to consider potential areas for a future scheme, and an invitation will be sent to Liz Anderson, Central Beds Council's Ecologist to attend and give her thoughts on potential areas.

Members were advised that Ward Member S Dixon is currently working on a scheme to put in hedging on Malthouse Lane on the top of the bank of the Great Close Meadow and also on Mill land on Mill Lane.

7/21 **STREET TRADER LICENCE REQUEST**

Central Beds Council has received a street trading application and has invited comments from the Town Council:

Trading Name: Pizza Stella

Trading Site: Boundary Farm, Baldock Road, Stotfold, SG5 4BN

Trading Days: Monday to Friday

Trading Hours: 1000hrs to 1600hrs

Councillor Mrs Hyde advised that Stotfold Manor Farm Co-operative are now resident at Boundary Farm, and she has checked that this is not an application from them.

As there is no plan to accompany the application, it is assumed that the trading site is not Boundary Farm, but in fact the lay-by on the A507 adjacent to Boundary Farm. There is already a burger van trading from this lay-by, and they have a trading licence. Concerns were expressed that Uber vehicles are now supporting food outlets at the A1M services and parking up to wait in this lay-by. On a recent evening, 10 Uber vehicles were parked up at the entrance to Boundary Farm, which meant that the residents were unable to use their access. It is understood that there is already a large number of Uber vehicles parked up at the A1M services, which is in

Hertfordshire, with a further large number using the lay-by on the A507 which has a different postcode, which means that they can also then service Bedfordshire.

RESOLVED that the following response is returned: We assume that this application is referring to the A507 west-bound lay-by – the application incorrectly states that the trading site is Boundary Farm, which is adjacent to the A507. The application should be accompanied by a plan showing the location. We have concerns about the current high usage of the lay-by and access road to Boundary Farm with parked Uber vehicles which are supporting food outlets at the A1M services, and that there is already an authorised burger van trading from the same lay-by.

8/21 ARLESEY ROAD – MUGA, PLAY AND OUTDOOR GYM EQUIPMENT

For information, progress is being made on the draft tender specification for the S106 funded MUGA, play equipment and outdoor gym (joint Central Beds Council and Stotfold Town Council) project for Arlesey Road. The first draft has been produced and reviewed by the S106 Play Officer and the Clerk and has been forwarded to Central Beds Council's Surveyor to provide specification for the MUGA, floodlighting and associated hard landscaping. The Clerk's next meeting with the two Section 106 officers is on 2nd February to go through the draft documents, and the finalised version will then be forwarded to the Town Council's Task and Finish Group prior to publishing.

9/21 SITE MEETING WITH PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY OFFICER

Councillor Mrs Hyde has met with the Public Rights of Way Officer, Chris Dorow, in December to discuss the following points:

Kingfisher Way – access into Riverside Playing Field

Chris Dorow looked at the pedestrian access on site from the car park to the left side of the vehicle gate. Access is already in place via this route but the surfacing and space available is not adequate. He proposed removing some of the weed overgrowth to widen the access, installation of a post and Armco barrier to prevent unauthorised vehicular access, laying mot surface at the gated vehicle access, laying hard surface from the car park into the playing field through the pedestrian access and lowering the kerb to enable easy and safe access for mobility scooters and children's pushchairs. This will require regular maintenance to keep the weeds back. Chris Dorow is now putting together a plan and proposal for funding in the next financial year.

Public Right of Way through St Mary's Churchyard

Many years ago, the Town Council asked for surfacing of the current grassed public right of way running from Chequers Close through the Churchyard to link with the footpath from Rook Tree Lane into the Churchyard, however Central Beds Council suggested hard surfacing of the route which is used, but is not a public right of way, from the end of Chequers Close around to the left of the church, linking with the south porch footpath. This required the Church to seek a faculty from the Diocese in order to carry out this work. This work was planned to be carried out before last April, and the faculty has now expired (lasts 6 months). Chris Dorow has advised that they have reviewed this proposal, concluding that can't tarmac a path which isn't a public footpath. They are now going to tarmac the original Town Council requested path, next financial year. This will also require a faculty from the Diocese.

Possible environmental enhancements and future use of land at Mill Lane and Malthouse Lane

A meeting was held with the Mill Trust, the Stotfold Manor Farm Co-operative and Ward Member Steve Dixon to discuss installation of kissing gates on the footpaths which border Malthouse Lane. Councillor Mrs Hyde discussed this with Chris Dorow at her meeting and advised that it was this council's policy not to put in kissing gates where possible, as they make access more difficult. Chris Dorow advised that Central Beds Council are also going away from kissing gates. The topic of environmental enhancements was covered under a previous agenda item 'Central Beds Council Tree Planting Scheme'.

10/21 STOTFOLD FOOTBALL CLUB – REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FENCING

The football club wishes to erect 2.4m high fencing, as per specification previously provided to members, along leased training area boundaries with the recreation land and the Pix Brook Academy service road. There is already a fence along the Pix Brook Academy build, which is of similar design to the football club proposal, but a small section will also need fencing by the football club.

Erecting higher net type fencing to catch stray balls is on the football club's wish list, however this is very expensive, and not something that funding will allow at this time. They still wish to obtain permission for this and advise that they would target specific areas along the Pix Brook Academy service road boundaries of the training area and the stadium, including the stadium boundary between the main pitch and car park.

Central Beds Council advise that it is likely that planning permission will be required for the 2.4m high fencing, and permission will also be required from Central Beds Council as the head landlord, by way of a licence, to erect a structure or building on the leased land.

The football club advise that they are keen to move forward with the re-seeding of the training area, with plans to commence this at the earliest possible growing season. Therefore, it is their desire to have the area enclosed and secure once they commence the required development works on the pitch area.

They propose installing pedestrian gates in the boundary with the Pix Brook Academy service road as a fire escape route and to enable retrieval of stray balls, and also in the boundary with the recreation land to allow player access between the two areas and for retrieval of balls; neither gate will be for general public access. Training area maintenance vehicles are to access via the rear gate in the stadium boundary. Future access by maintenance or emergency vehicles cannot be granted via the proposed fence between the training area and recreation land, because this is public open space and there is a risk to those using it, and it would require access via the bollards separating the car park from the recreation land. Emergency vehicle access has been provided on the front boundary of the stadium.

The rear stadium access gate into the training area has not been constructed to the required or agreed width to allow a tractor or emergency vehicle through and this has been added to the defects list. This is something that is being pursued to ensure that the club has the correct access they require.

RESOLVED that we have no objections to:

- Installation of a 2.4m high fence along the boundary of the Pix Brook Academy service road, the boundary between the training area and the recreation land, and

a section, which is currently unfenced, between the training area at Pix Brook Academy

- Installation of lockable pedestrian gates on the Pix Brook Academy boundary and the training area/recreation land boundary for ball retrieval, as emergency exits and a route between the training area and recreation land by junior football club teams
- Installation of net type fencing to catch stray balls along appropriate sections of the Pix Brook Academy (to include the stadium pitch land) and the boundary between the stadium pitch land and the car park

The Clerk will pursue a licence with head-landlords, Central Beds Council, to enable construction of these structures.

Permission will be given, by arrangement with the Clerk, for temporary access via the recreation land in order to carry out initial pitch work on the training area, until the fencing is erected.

We will also support the Football Club in ensuring that the rear access gate from the stadium land to the training area is increased to a suitable width to accommodate maintenance and emergency vehicles.

11/21 PUBLIC REALM WORKS

Members were reminded that if they have any matters that are to be reported to other parties or are repair/general maintenance work for the council, these should not be held until the next committee meeting but should be reported to the office in the first instance.

Reporting repair/general maintenance to other parties

- A request was made for a street name sign to be erected at the Pix Brook Academy service road junction with Arlesey Road 'Old Stone Road'
- Hitchin Road – the surface along the middle of the road is in very poor condition with numerous road holes, and there is also an exposed cable, which is believed to be part of the detection system for the traffic lights
- High Street – the centre white-line section of the road is in extremely poor condition with large sections with lengths of road holes
- Office to check – there is a property on the junction of The Green and Rook Tree Lane which had a road name sign in the grass verge in front of it. This property has recently changed hands rubble has been placed on the verge and a trench dug. The office will ascertain whether this verge is highways land, and if it is and the rubble and trench is preventing our contractor from cutting it on behalf of Central Beds Council, this will be reported to Highways.

Council action for repair/general maintenance

- The grass verge on Hitchin Road is in a very poor condition due to cars parking on it. A letter will be sent to houses along the stretch of road concerned to ask them not to park on the verge and advise on the damage it is causing.
- Riverside Playing Field car park – the drain in the car park is blocked, and the silt bucket is found to be missing. This is causing an amount of flooding in the car park and needs rodding and clearing by a professional company, and the silt bucket replacing.

Members were asked to bear in mind that we will need to nominate a new Highways Representative, following the passing of Councillor Mrs Bundock.

12/21 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY

A member advised that the street light at the end of Grange Drive is now working; the fencing has been removed although bollards remain.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.43pm

MINUTES APPROVED (date):

SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN: