

MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14TH APRIL 2021, AT 7.15PM

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

A minute silence was held as a mark of respect to Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, who passed away last Friday. Statement by the Committee Chairman: it is a very sad time for the Royal family as they mourn the passing of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. During his marriage to our Queen, he has steadfastly supported her in her role to this country, overseas and the commonwealth countries, and his family. He was an active naturalist and protector of wildlife, flora and fauna and help set up the World Wildlife Fund for Nature. Members of this committee will also be aware that he was instrumental in setting up the Playing Fields Association, later to be renamed Fields in Trust to protect, promote and provide green spaces for play and leisure, particularly for children.

32/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

33/21 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS ON MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE AGENDA

There were none. 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.

34/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

None present.

35/21 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Nothing to report.

36/21 STREET NAMING & NUMBERING (LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1985)

We have received notification from Central Beds Council of an application for street naming. Location: Land at Astwick Road, Stotfold. Proposal: 100 new dwellings. Members considered proposed names submitted by the applicant (correspondence from Central Beds Council with applicant reasonings for the proposed names is provided to members: Dunton, Walker, Peewit, Kitchener.

Members discussed our existing policy to not name streets in the town after local people, living or dead, but did note the value of recognising the history of the town. Consideration was also given to landowner names, and the historical owners from the Enclosure Map of this particular piece of land. It was felt that the name Dunton would cause confusion with the nearby village of the same name. The area of the town

where this development is situated has recently been named after trees, and there is still an existing list of trees with names not used.

RESOLVED that the suggested names are not taken up, and that the list of tree names is forwarded to Central Beds Council to be used on this development.

37/21 UNAUTHORISED ACCESS ONTO GREENACRE PARK

During the pandemic period, and it is assumed to aid socially distanced arrival and leaving of pupils at the start and end of the day, an unauthorised pedestrian access has been created from the emergency side gate of Roecroft Lower School into Greenacre Park. The current owners of the Park, Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon Homes confirm that they have not given permission for this and would require its removal. Photos were provided to members for information.

As this land is to be transferred to the Town Council, members considered a proposal by the developers to allow the temporary access to remain until the start of the September term or end of pandemic social distancing requirement. If this is agreed, the developers would ensure this forms part of the agreement to transfer.

RESOLVED that we agree with Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon Homes, that the temporary access created by Roecroft Lower School from their side emergency gate onto Greenacre Park to enable socially distanced arrival and leaving of pupils is permitted to remain until the start of the September term or end of the pandemic social distancing requirements, when it is to be removed and area reinstated. This is to form part of the agreement to transfer.

38/21 LAND TRANSFER – PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, PLAY AREA AND MUGA – LAND SOUTH OF STOTFOLD/GREENACRES/TRINITY MANOR

Developers Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon Homes have agreed a 20-year commuted sum figure of £915,000 for the public open space, Greenacre Park, Greenacre Park Play Area and MUGA, park lighting, trees and shrubberies, pedestrian/cycle bridges x2 and associated pathways. This sum is to be 50/50 share between the two developers. Remedial works have been identified, to include repairs to play area gates, bow-top fencing on public open space, re-planting of shrubberies as required. Receipt of an up to date and satisfactory play area inspection report (ROSPA or similar) is required prior to transfer. Members were asked to formally approve signing of the transfer of said items to the Town Council, following our authorised signature procedure in Standing Orders.

RESOLVED that the agreed commuted sum is noted, remedial works to be carried out are noted and must be completed before transfer, and formal approval is given to sign the land transfer as per our authorised signature procedure contained in Standing Orders.

39/21 PUBLIC ART – GREENACRE PARK

For information, we have received notification that public art is now in the country and arrangements are in place for an install at the end of April/beginning of May. The artist is now in contact with Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon Homes, as it is likely that the land on which the art is to be sited will still be in their ownership at that point, and they are considering a risk assessment and method statement. Photos of the artwork were circulated to members.

40/21 LAND TRANSFER – PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND PLAY AREA – PRINCE CHARLES AVENUE DEVELOPMENT

Developers Taylor Wimpey have agreed a 20-year commuted sum figure of £135,000 for the public open space, trees and shrubberies in the development known as Mill View or Queen Street development. Remedial works required before transfer include repairs/replacements to post and rail fence along Kingfisher Way, as per last inspection; repairs/replacements to play area gates; replanting of shrubberies, as per last inspection. Further provisions are Deed of Easements to be finalised between Stotfold Town Council and Central Beds Council for highways soakaways located within the public open space for transfer – Taylor Wimpey to meet our reasonable legal fees for this; receipt of up to date and satisfactory play area inspection report (ROSPA or similar) prior to transfer. Members were asked to formally approve signing of the transfer of said items to the Town Council, following our authorised signature procedure in Standing Orders.

RESOLVED that the agreed commuted sum is noted, remedial works to be carried out are noted and must be completed before transfer, and formal approval is given to sign the land transfer as per our authorised signature procedure contained in Standing Orders.

41/21 HIGH STREET PEDESTRIAN/CYCLE SAFETY

As discussed at the last committee meeting, and referenced at last week's full council meeting, members considered asking Highways to introduce a shared cycle/pedestrian route to one of the footways on High Street. This is to tackle pedestrian/cyclist safety on a busy road, and to address the Government's current focus on reducing use of cars and getting more people on bicycles.

The last time a review was carried out of cycleways in the town, a new cycle route was created on Hitchin Road. Central Beds Council did advise that they would also consider putting in a shared pedestrian/cycle route on the right-hand side of the High Street, travelling towards the crossroads, but this was not pursued.

Encouraging children to cycle or scooter to school is a positive move, but they need a safe route to be able to do this. Any newly created cycleway, shared or as a single designated path, would require a feasibility study by Highways.

RESOLVED that a request is made to Highways to carry out a feasibility study into putting in a designated cycleway on the High Street.

42/21 DOG FOULING CAMPAIGN

Members considered a report from staff members of a proposed campaign to tackle dog fouling in Stotfold, including proposed purchase of dog waste bag dispenser, signage, etc.

Following an increase in complaints about dog fouling on pavements and public open spaces in Stotfold, staff members have investigated a campaign to highlight dog fouling issues and to encourage dog owners to pick up after their dogs.

A meeting has also been held with Central Beds Council's Safer Communities Involvement Officer, as they are currently working on starting the same area-wide campaign beginning of May.

Spreading the word

It is proposed that Stotfold Town Council works in conjunction with Central Beds Council on this campaign, as they have agreed to provide appropriate materials such as posters, stickers, etc. We will be advertising our campaign on our Facebook page, website, posters and in our monthly articles in Stotfold News Magazine.

How do we identify the problem?

We propose using our media pages to ask the public to advise of problem areas 'hot spots' for dog fouling, and to ask if they feel that the current dog bins are installed in the correct places. We have already carried out a town council litter bin audit (in which you can also place dog waste bags) and identified the locations. We will also carry out an audit of dog waste bins around the town.

What are we planning to do?

We propose use of a template for spraying pavements of problem areas – subject to approval by Central Beds Council Highways, and consider asking a small group of volunteers, or our Handyman Contractor to spray in approved locations.

We propose displaying appropriate posters on town council owned notice boards and ask local businesses also to display. We will affix appropriate stickers to town council owned lighting columns to highlight our campaign.

Initially we propose that x2 dog bag dispensers are purchased and installed at either end of Oliver's Lane, subject to agreement of Highways – this is an existing identified problem area.

Having carried out an audit of dog waste bins, we propose asking this committee to consider installation of further bins or re-siting of existing, if found to be required – either town council purchase and install with Central Beds Council permission or requesting provision from Central Beds Council direct.

Members considered the report and proposals contained therein, and it was:

RESOLVED that:

- We wait until Central Beds Council starts their campaign in May, in terms of poster materials and other resources, to see what may be available for us to use.
- An audit will be carried out of existing dog waste bins, identifying which ones fill quickly, and asking the public to identify problem dog fouling areas – this information will be assessed by the committee at a future meeting to establish whether new dog waste bins should be provided in more appropriate locations.
- We start our own campaign to raise awareness, including more signage to be provided around the town to encourage people to pick up after their dog and advise of Dog Control Orders and applicable fines.
- A 'dog waste' stencil is to be purchased and used by the town council, with permission from Central Beds Council, on footways in identified problem areas.
- Existing stickers on lighting columns which advise of a fine for dog fouling are old and missing in some places – these are to be replaced with any issued by Central Beds Council in their May campaign or purchased and replaced by the town council.
- At this time, dog bag dispensers are not purchased.

43/21 CAR PARK LINING

Following the recent delivery and siting of concrete barriers at the Arlesey Road car park for pedestrian safety at the public toilets, it has been determined that white lining is now required - 'permanent' white lining approx. 100mm width to match the other markings on site. It has also been noted that the lines in the Memorial Hall car park are very faded, and that the council now has a number of car parks with white lining.

Members considered two options and costings:

- 1) To instruct a company to lay the required white lines at the Arlesey Road car park – quote provided to members £950.00 plus vat for thermo plastic line marking, as per drawings provided – in front of toilet unit.
- 2) To purchase a white lining machine for in-house use on any car park within the town council's ownership – details were provided to members £452 plus vat to £1,027 plus vat, depending on purchasing machine only for machine bundle with paint.

RESOLVED that a Zebra Pro line marking machine bundle (with 40L paint included) at £1,027 plus vat is purchased (free delivery), and that it is used to paint white lines at Arlesey Road, and any other town council car park requiring lining work. Funds from Open Spaces Maintenance & Repairs budget.

44/21 ARLESEY ROAD PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

Members considered revised quotes to fit timed door locks to the public conveniences at Arlesey Road, following a committee request for a timed lock for the ladies and gents toilet, and a radar lock only for the disabled toilet. It was noted that of the two quotes revised quotes received, only one had visited the site before quoting. Advice has been received that because of the remote location of the toilet unit, the disabled toilet should remain on a timed lock with a radar key, because radar locks can be opened for emergency access without using a specialised key, thereby leaving it open to potential vandalism and unwanted overnight access if not also on a timed lock.

RESOLVED that the quote from Mid Beds Locksmiths for a timed lock on the ladies, gents and disabled toilet at £6,500 plus vat, to include all locking mechanisms, materials, timers, re-enforcing plates, exit buttons and labour.

45/21 NORTON ROAD ALLOTMENTS – TRACK SURFACE

Members considered resurfacing the track of Norton Road Allotments. The potholes are considered to be too great to fill, and the centre line of the track is now rutted up significantly. For 10T load of plannings, to supply and lay within the centre ruts of the track £790 plus vat MJ Grainger Grounds Maintenance Ltd.

RESOLVED that the quote to supply and lay 10T of plannings in the ruts of the Norton Road Allotments centre track at £790 plus vat by MJ Grainger Grounds Maintenance Ltd is accepted. Funds from Allotments Maintenance budget, with remaining funds required from Allotments Hedging Earmarked Reserves.

It is noted that this does not include rolling the plannings, and it is therefore assumed that this relies on vehicles driving up and down the track to compact the surface.

46/21 HIGHWAYS VERGE CUTTING CONTRACT – BALDOCK ROAD

Following recent works to create a new parking bay and shrub planting on the grass verge on Baldock Road, investigations were made into land ownership, and it has been established that a significant amount of the grass verge on Baldock Road is in

fact in private ownership. The town council is contracted to cut Highways owned grass verges in the town - plan showing Baldock Road Highways verge was provided to members. Our Grass Cutting Contractor advises that he has been cutting the whole of the grass verge area in Baldock Road (from the Queen Street corner to 14 Baldock Road) for the last 30 years under his contract with the town council. The Clerk will be checking Land Registry records against Highways grass cutting plans to determine if there are any other anomalies.

Members considered appropriate action to take and felt that it is important to keep this key entrance into the town looking attractive, and noted this is not a difficult area to maintain when also cutting the contracted highways part of the verge.

RESOLVED that householders from 2 to 14 Baldock Road will be advised that we have identified that much of the grass area at the front of their properties, which we have been maintaining for many years as highways grass verge, is in fact private property. However, although now not bound to maintain this grass area, we are happy to continue maintaining this key entrance point into the town, unless they advise that they prefer us not to.

47/21 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 either be reported by the member to the office (in the case of town council related matters), or through the Fix My Street app/webpage which forwards reports of highway faults or street lighting faults to Central Beds Council.

Reporting repair/general maintenance to other parties

- Norton Road, the road-hump sign has been hit by a vehicle and is lying at a 45-degree angle.
- Fly-tipping on Mill Lane, by the public footpath on the land between the cemetery and the Mill – appears to be an old kitchen or bathroom.
- Following recent Internal Drainage Board dredging work of the River Ivel, on this occasion, they went beyond the glass houses up to property on Taylors Road. If the Green Wheel would like to look at this as a potential footpath to form part of the route, this would be an opportune time, as it has been cleared and is already being walked by local people and is now a circular walk.

Council action for repair/general maintenance

- A water pipe leak has been identified between the water meter and the Hitchin Road Rec Changing Rooms, with water surfacing in the corner of the Rec. We have had a quote for around £900 to investigate and repair, with a further quote coming early next week. The water has been turned off at the meter, and although at the moment football teams should not be using the changing rooms, to protect our water system, a notice will be displayed on the changing rooms to advise that the water has temporarily been turned off.
- The Internal Drainage Board has recently carried out their drainage dredge work, and an excellent job has been done. This has resulted good clearance work under the Willow trees in Riverside Recreation Ground. A request was made for the Landscape Contractor/Handyman Contractor to keep this area clear going forward.
- On the corner of Millennium Green close to the rear of St Mary's Academy, there are two fence posts which were originally part of a double barrier, which are now

lying down, with wires attached. The Handyman is asked to cut off the wire back to the next standing post and remove the two fallen fence posts. The vegetation between the double barrier is to remain.

- The BMX track see-saw was vandalised last week. The see-saw top was removed and used to smash up a litter bin. The Handyman has repaired the bin, and will try to repair the see-saw, if not, we will need to ask a professional company to come in and make repairs. We will also be looking at the surfacing of the track as it is now in very poor condition in places.
- The seat on the Riverside Playing Field zip wire needs replacing because there is a large crack in it, which is a health and safety concern as it could cause pinch injuries to users.

48/21 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY

Members were advised that we have had complaints from Norton Road Allotment tenants about access being possible onto the site via boundary hedgerows. There has been theft and vandalism there again recently. The committee chairman has carried out an inspection, and members are asked to also inspect, with consideration of any action to be taken at the next meeting.

The next meeting is to consider the 'black' town entrance signs and possible refurbishment or replacement, with a view to having printed signs rather than painted, and perhaps not with a black background to stand out more clearly.

Clarke Telecom have recently started work on the new telecoms mast on the corner of High Street/The Avenue.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.42pm

MINUTES APPROVED (date):

SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN: