

# MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021, AT 7.20PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE.

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## Committee Members present:

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

## Also present:

Assistant Clerk – Ms Caroline Jenkins, Mrs J Everitt – Administration Assistant, Mrs T Bhasin.

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### **49/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Glen Russell and John Talbot.

### **50/21 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.

### **51/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES**

None present.

### **52/21 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION**

For members information at this stage, I can confirm that we have been successful in our Community Asset Grant (CAG) application to refurbish the MUGA surface (hard court) and replace an internal fence. We have been awarded £15,000, which is to be match funded through available S106 funds. A copy of our application, together with letter confirming successful application is provided for members.

The S106 pot of money being used is specifically directed to the Riverside Playing Field MUGA, and the sum of £26,369.16 is currently being held by Central Beds Council. The remaining money after the matched funding is taken out, will be directed towards the wider MUGA/Riverside Playing Field project (proposals report underway).

#### **Proposed timeline:**

Committee meeting 13<sup>th</sup> October - members will be provided with a report on findings of the recent survey and proposed projects – likely to be phased.

After committee has approved a project route for the wider project and phases, firm quotations will be sought for the work funded through the CAG - the fencing (in case material costs have increased) and the hard court MUGA surface. It is suggested that to be expeditious and because these projects and costs have already been approved through the application) the updated quotes (if required) are considered and approved under delegated decision by the Clerk in consultation with the committee chairman.

The wider project decision may determine exact specification for the CAG work, for example, the surfacing of the MUGA (approval currently given under the funding for

tarmac, but we may be able to add funding to the CAG project to provide coloured wet-pour as an alternative).

Committee meeting 10<sup>th</sup> November - following decision (at Oct meeting) on a phased wider project for Riverside Playing Field and the MUGA, quotes will be supplied for consideration at this meeting.

### **Update on public open space transfer – ‘Greenacres/Trinity Manor’ development**

Agreement had been reached between the Town Council and developers Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon Homes on public open space to be transferred to the Town Council, with associated commuted sum.

After querying and resolving a few small areas of detail with the developers, the Clerk confirmed to them that we were ready to adopt the public open space as per transfer plan, which did not include the large metal frame footbridge crossing Pix Brook into Howard Close.

The developers queried who would then be adopting the bridge as this did not form part of the highways land transfer to Central Beds Council Highways, recently completed.

The Clerk has reiterated the Town Council’s stance that it will not be adopting the bridge, supplied the developers with the evidence that the Town Council is not obliged to take ownership of it, and suggested that they revert to Central Beds Council for adoption, as this is a public highway, route to school, etc. The Clerk has further evidence to forward on these matters, should the developer continue to press for the Town Council to adopt the structure.

It should be noted that the S106 Agreement for this development does not oblige the Town Council to take ownership of the footways and two small bridges which cross the brook tributary, however we have agreed to these aspects, and this was reflected in the agreed commuted sum.

Reasons for the Town Council not taking ownership of the large footbridge include the cost of regular maintenance, structural checks we may be obliged to carry out which is not something we would usually undertake or have knowledge of, and insurance – our insurers are not readily happy to insure and have asked for full detail on the current structural condition, regular maintenance schedules, and a replacement cost.

There are four possible outcomes for this large bridge:

- 1) The Town Council takes ownership – we have stated from the start of the development proposals that the Town Council would not adopt this structure, and there are risks and significant ongoing costs if we did.
- 2) Central Bedfordshire Council takes ownership – they have also advised that they do not wish to take this on, and feel that they are also not obliged, but it is acknowledged through documentation that this was a Highways requested route to connect the existing areas of the town with the new development. It is also a public footpath and so falls within the usual remit of Central Bedfordshire Council Highways.
- 3) Developers Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon Homes retain ownership and maintenance responsibility – this would be unlikely as they would have to meet ongoing costs.

- 4) The bridge closes and is removed – who would pay for its removal and disposal?  
Consideration of feeling of community by removing this link.

The Clerk will continue to reiterate the Town Council's decision not to adopt the large footbridge leading to Howard Close and will push for completion of the adoption of the public open space, as agreed.

Councillors asked for it to be made very clear the responsibility for the 3 bridges. As it stands Stotfold Town Council would be in agreement to take ownership of the 2 smaller bridges which cross the brook tributary, however we are not obliged to do this.

It was clarified that reasons for the Town Council not taking ownership of the large footbridge include the cost of regular maintenance, structural checks, and insurance. Some members stated that as this is part of the highways network in the town, that Central Bedfordshire Council should be responsible for the large footbridge.

The clerk was asked to clarify the current position at the next committee meeting.

### 53/21 OPEN SPACE AND PITCH USE

- (i) Members considered the notes from an informal meeting held with Stotfold Junior Football Club (SJFC) to outline current arrangements and difficulties experienced by the town council in hiring out football pitches and facilities, and to understand the position of Stotfold Junior Football Club.
- (ii) Members considered the requests from Stotfold Junior Football Club for the following:
  - a) To lay a hard surface (suggested paving slabs) in the corner of The Green near The Crown public house, on which to secure their set of goal posts.
  - b) To install a post fixed in concrete at Riverside Playing Field (rear boundary of field with new Taylors Road development) to which a set of goal posts can be secured.

**RESOLVED** that we agree both works to be carried out to enable the security of goal posts at both venues, we will require a plan of the exact position of both sites and all costs should be met by the Junior Football club.

- iii) It was considered, based on the discussions document circulated, whether to hire Hitchin Road Recreation Ground to outside teams. It was also asked whether, as other hiring rates for non-residents are doubled, the fees for hire should be doubled on occasions that teams from outside Stotfold hire the pitch.

**RESOLVED** that Hitchin Road Recreation Ground should be hired to outside teams. Hiring rates for teams outside of Stotfold would remain at single rate charge.

- iv) The draft proposed Football Pitch, Open Space & Facilities Hire Policy was considered for adoption.

**RESOLVED** that subject to amendments, the draft proposed Football Pitch, Open Space Facilities Hire Policy was adopted.

#### 54/21 ROSPA INSPECTION AND FINDINGS

Members considered the ROSPA findings report from their inspection of our play equipment carried out in May 2021, in particular noting current issues with the BMX track and skate park.

Councillors noted that ROSPA trained officers have been approached to provide quotes to purchase and fit required items to comply with the reports for Pix Brook Play Area, The Green and Hitchin Road Recreation Ground.

It was noted that the supplier had been informed about the ongoing problem with the rotation of the inclusive roundabout at Hitchin Road Recreation Ground. Members also noted that this piece of equipment is still under warranty.

Members discussed the Skate Park at the Riverside Recreation ground and noted that this is now not viable to repair. The ramps are made of metal which is now failing and causing a health and safety problem. It was also noted that where the houses on the old Roker park site have been built, the ramps are now not in the best place for noise pollution. A quote for removal has already been sought by members of £2000. Councillors then agreed that funding will be sought in the future for replacement of the skate park.

Regarding the BMX track, contractors have been approached to provide quotes to resurface the track. Other items will be checked and repairs organised. More information will be provided by Councillor Glen Russell at the October meeting.

Members then discussed surfacing that is in need of replacement at The Green, Riverside and Hitchin Road. It was agreed that the sites will be checked to comply with ROSPA regulations first, then additional repairs will be looked into.

**RESOLVED** that we agree to complete removal of the Skate Park at the Riverside Recreation Ground as soon as possible. Agreement to also gain quotes for repairs to be carried out at Pix Brook Play Area, The Green and Hitchin Road Recreation Ground to comply with ROSPA regulations.

#### 55/21 ETONBURY WOOD UPDATE

Members received and noted an update on work at Etonbury Wood during lockdown.

#### 56/21 SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP – DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS

Members were given details of the documents now required by the Safety Advisory Group (CBC) in order for us to take bookings for our open spaces safety and meeting our duty of care to users.

Members queried if this was a legal requirement for every event. It was noted that the Town Council may be liable if any event went ahead without being agreed by the Safety Advisory Group. This would be checked and confirmed.

#### 57/21 BOOKING OF THE GREEN – HUMAN CIRCUS

Members were asked to consider a request to hire The Green in late May/early June 2022 (dates to be confirmed), subject to agreement by Safety Advisory Group. Small, family orientated, all human circus.

**RESOLVED** that we accept the request for hire, subject to all usual documentation requested and agreement by the Safety Advisory Group.

#### 58/21 **BOOKING OF THE GREEN – KINGS BAPTIST CHURCH**

Members were asked to consider a request to hire The Green, late September or early October 2021. Committee has previously given approval for Kings Baptist Church to hold an open air service on The Green to celebrate Pentecost 2020, which unfortunately did not go ahead. They would now like permission to hold a 'stripped back' version.

**RESOLVED** that we accept the request for hire, subject to all usual documentation requested and agreement by the Safety Advisory Group.

#### 59/21 **RIVERSIDE PLAYING FIELD – MEASURES TO DETER ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

Members were asked to consider two suggested measures which might help deter antisocial behaviour in the Riverside Playing Field car park area (Central Bedfordshire Council's Community Safety team)

- i) Lighting of Riverside Playing Field car park – Quote from Terry Seymour Electrical Contractor: To install 3 new lighting columns along the crash barrier side of the carpark - £5575.00 +VAT

**RESOLVED** that the quotation of £5575.00+VAT be accepted, and lights be installed as soon as possible.

- ii) Lifting the crowns of the trees and cutting back the hedge (or even removing it, to increase visibility into the car park. Again, this is considered to be a measure which would help deter antisocial behaviour in this area.

**RESOLVED** that we seek quotes to lift the crowns of the trees and reduce the hedge to approx 4ft in height. Members requested that the hedge is not completely removed.

#### 60/21 **HIGHWAYS SAFETY**

- i) Committee's request for study on speed in Mill Lane
- ii) Committee's request for feasibility study on introduction of a cycleway on High Street
- iii) Speed reducing measures on High Street

Members received the information in response to their request for the study on Mill Lane. It was felt that the study was carried out in the incorrect area of Mill Lane, therefore not showing a true record of the speeding out towards the Stotfold Cemetery.

It was also noted that as Stotfold has a blanket 20mph speed limit, speeding would not be enforced as opposed to if there was a 30-40mph limit.

Councillors also stated that they did not see speed humps being installed on Mill Lane.

**RESOLVED** that:

- Central Bedfordshire Council will continue to be asked about the speed reducing measures and the requested feasibility study on introduction of a cycleway on High Street. Central Bedfordshire Councillors Brian Saunders and Steve Dixon will be asked to provide officer names to progress these enquiries.
- Trustees of the Mill will be contacted for their views on the speeding situation on Mill Lane.

- Councillor John Talbot will be asked to raise the issue of speeding on Mill Lane and the possibility of speed camera installation, as our representative on the Police priority setting meetings.

#### **61/21 TREE SURVEYS**

Members considered reports from the recently completed tree surveys at Riverside Playing Field, The Green and Hitchin Road Recreation Ground.

**RESOLVED** to discuss these at the next committee meeting. Members also asked for maps for each site to be made available.

#### **62/21 NORTON ROAD ALLOTMENTS – HEDGE WORK**

Members were asked to consider 2 quotes to cut the top and sides of Norton Road Allotments hedge this autumn.

**RESOLVED** that the quote from Steve Dear for £350.00+VAT be accepted.

#### **63/21 PUBLIC REALM WORKS**

Members expressed their thanks that the tree in High Bush Road has been cut down, this has been a problem for some time.

It was noted that many of the drain gully's in Stotfold have not been cleaned out since 2019 and drains in both Regent Street and The Green have been reported as blocked. Central Bedfordshire Council have stated that the gullies are cleared every 3 years.

Councillors also noted that litter bins on the Greenacre Park state "bins not for dog waste". Stotfold Town Council recommend that public are allowed to deposit dog waste into general litter bins, provided they are not bins on a play area. Once this area has been adopted by the Town Council, this problem will be monitored.

Councillors asked if the developers, Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon, would look into installing another dog waste bin in the bottom right corner of Greenacre Park, near to Champion Avenue.

Members also noted that some of the plaques attached to the blocks in the new public art on the Greenacre Park have spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. The proof of the wording was checked and agreed by the Town Council. From the plaques it looks to be a printing fault of certain letters. This will be reported to the artist to be corrected.

#### **64/21 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY**

Councillors asked for Anglian Water to be contacted regarding their use of the car park at Arlesey Road Football Club as a compound for their works on Arlesey Road. This was initially until 27 August 2021 but works have overrun.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.19pm

**MINUTES APPROVED (date):**

**SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN:**