

# MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2021, AT 7.10PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE.

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## Committee Members present:

S. Buck, B Collier A Cooper, Mrs M Cooper (Chairman), S Hayes, Mrs J Hyde, C Phelps, G Russell, B Saunders, J Talbot

## Also present:

Town Clerk – Mrs K Elliott-Turner, Councillors Mrs L Anderson and Mrs T Bhasin.

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### **65/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs A Clarey.

### **66/21 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS ON MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE AGENDA**

Councillor Talbot declared an interest in agenda item 9 regarding allotment charges, as his wife is an allotment tenant at Common Road Allotments. 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.

### **67/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES**

None present.

### **68/21 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION**

#### Clerk's Report

- Central Bedfordshire Council Highways have approved replacement of shrubs removed/damaged during the Pix Brook Academy service road works.
- Anglian Water's representative has advised that they have experienced problems during their water supply works on Arlesey Road, and therefore require an extension to use of the Arlesey Road car park as compound for their highways/water works), as per agreement. It is anticipated that this will now be completed and compound removed by the end of October. They have been advised that the compound must be removed and any reinstatement works completed before the Football Club's Fireworks Night on 5<sup>th</sup> November.
- Consideration of the Tree Surveys will be at the November meeting, now that we have received the final report for the Pix Brook Play Area tree inspection.
- Proposals for a MUGA/play project for Riverside Playing Field will be considered at a meeting in November – this may need to be an extra committee meeting.

#### Matters Arising

Minute 52/21 – adoption of public open space, Greenacres and non-adoption of Howard Close footbridge – the developers have confirmed that the large footbridge has been removed from the transfer plan, the two smaller bridges are included as previously agreed (developers reminded that we are not obliged to take these two bridges, but have agreed to). Outstanding works are replacement shrubs/plants where they have died, and replacement bow top fencing along Angelica Avenue boundary

with Greenacre Park and the missing bow top fencing along its boundary with Marigold Way. Transfer of the public open space on this development is underway, with a legal agreement that the two outstanding works must be completed within three months of transfer.

Minute 63/21 - further to a request for Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon Homes to install a dog waste bin in Greenacre Park, in the corner by Campion Way, they advise that they are not intending on installing any further waste bins on this site. Once the land is transferred to the Town Council, we may wish to consider adding additional bins at our cost.

#### **69/21 CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL SALT BAG SCHEME**

Central Bedfordshire Highways' free bag scheme offer town and parish councils either a 1 tonne or ½ tonne bag of road de-icing salt, free of charge, starting in October and throughout the winter maintenance season. The scheme gives town and parish councils the opportunity to identify local community volunteers to help spread the salt, which is to be used on minor roads and pavements that are not covered by the Highways gritting routes. Members considered if we wish to take advantage of this scheme, and whether we wish to recruit volunteers.

Highways will be asked for a map of bus routes around the town, together with a map of their gritting route. The Handyman is to check the condition of the existing salt bins at Queen Street and Hitchin Road, and assess whether additional salt, or additional/replacement salt bins are required.

#### **70/21 PLAY INSPECTION TRAINING**

Members considered Councillor Buck attending the RPII Operational Training Course on play equipment inspections, 'aimed at those responsible for the operational monthly to quarterly inspections and those in a supervisory or maintenance role'. It is recommended that more than one person from an organisation attends the course. The qualification is valid for 3 years, after which a shorter refresher course (valid for a further 3 years) is required. <https://playinspections.co.uk/training/rpii-operational-training-course/>

Course dates: 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Course hosted by Wokingham Town Council and run by The Play Inspection Company.

Cost: Training and examiners fee £365 plus vat, RPII Operational examination £210 plus vat. Total £575 plus vat. Councillor mileage claim to and from Wokingham.

Request made for overnight accommodation at £48 due to distance to be travelled.

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Buck attends the RPII Operational Training Course (The Play Inspection Company) at Wokingham. Cost of course £575 plus vat. Mileage claim and overnight accommodation is approved. Funds from Establishment Councillor Training/Mileage budget.

#### **71/21 RIVERSIDE PLAYING FIELD – TREE AND HEDGE WORK**

Members considered a quote for tree and hedge work at Riverside Playing Field, to raise crowns of trees and reduce height of front boundary hedge, or to raise crowns and remove front boundary hedge.

Members reiterated their wish from the last meeting, not to completely remove the front boundary hedge, but noted that the quote was to reduce the height to much

higher than originally requested. A further quote is to be obtained to reduce the height of the front boundary hedge to 1.5m.

**72/21 CLEARANCE WORK OUTSIDE RIVERSIDE PLAYING FIELD MUGA**

(lead Councillor A Cooper)

‘With our intention of carrying out a major upgrading of the existing MUGA area at Riverside Recreation Ground it is going to be necessary to have vehicular access into the site to both remove and deliver materials for the work to be done, only route possible for this would be from the South side. In preparation it is suggested we investigate the practicality and cost of undertaking the work illustrated on the attached pictures with consideration of the cost coming from general funds. This would both tidy up the very neglected area alongside the palisade fencing and create a level route for the vehicles to take through to the opening created of around 10-12ft width.’

**RESOLVED** that quotes are obtained for the next meeting.

**73/21 ALLOTMENT FEES**

An allotment year runs from 29<sup>th</sup> September of one year to 28<sup>th</sup> September of the second year and fees are usually considered in July of each year in order to meet the requirement to give one year’s notice of a change to plot fees.

Allotment fees for the current allotment year 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021 to 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022 are £52 full plot and £26 half plot. Consideration of allotment fees was not carried out at the usual time this year

**RESOLVED** that the 2021/2022 allotment rates of £52 full plot, £26 half plot, are carried over for the next allotment year starting 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

Allotment fees for Norton Road Allotments also apply to Common Road Allotments being managed by the Town Council on behalf of the Eleemosynary Charity of William Field.

**74/21 STOTFOLD JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB – REQUEST FOR REDUCED FEES DUE TO COVID-19**

Members considered a request from Stotfold Junior Football Club for reduced annual fee for the use of pitches due to Covid-19. A copy of the supporting letter was provided for members, and it was noted that there was no reference to any income losses they may have suffered as a result of any Covid-19 restrictions. Members also noted that the council still had to maintain the public open space and the drained pitch area during this time, at a cost, in order that it could still be used for football.

Stotfold Junior Football Club are to be asked for evidence of their income and losses during the Covid-19 period, and we will bring the matter back for consideration.

**75/21 CHARGES FOR 2022/2023**

Members considered charges to be levied for the year 2022/2023, having previously been provided with details of past year charges.

**RESOLVED** that charges for 2022/2023 will remain at current rates as follows:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>2022/2023</b>
Casual Football charge - Hitchin Road Recreation Ground Adult – charge per game	£45

Junior – charge per game per team	£25
Stotfold Junior Football Club – (The Green, Hitchin Road Recreation Ground, Riverside Playing Field, Arlesey Road) charge for non-exclusive use by the club, per season	£5,000 per season
Dean’s Fair/other circus/fair visits	
Charge per non-opening day	£30
Charge per opening day	£60
Arlesey Road playing field	
Casual Adult - charge per game	£45
Casual Junior – charge per game	£25
Commercial use (activity where a charge is being made or for profit) of The Green, Hitchin Road Recreation Ground, Arlesey Road, Riverside Playing Field, Greenacre Park and any other open space under responsibility of the Town Council for non-football use	£10 per session, per site used
Car boot sales/Annual Classic Car Show (The Green)	FOC

**76/21 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chairman proposed that the press and public are temporarily excluded whilst matters pertaining to staff issues are discussed and that they be instructed to withdraw from the meeting for the following item. **RESOLVED** by members.

**77/21 SALARIES 2022/2023 – MUGA CARETAKERS**

Members considered the Confidential Report regarding staff salaries for the MUGA facility for 2022/2023.

**RESOLVED** that further consideration is given to these roles and future requirements at the November meeting.

The press and public were readmitted after the conclusion of this item.

**78/21 REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES AND EXPENDITURE PRIOR TO CONSIDERING ESTIMATES**

Members considered and noted a report from the Clerk on committee budgets in the current financial year, highlighting points of note and explanation (copy available on file).

**79/21 COMMITTEE BUDGET SETTING 2022/2023**

Members were previously provided with a copy of the figures for the first six months of the current financial year and undertook an appraisal before the estimates of the general running costs for the committee were considered:

Estimate figures for 2022/2023

Estimated running costs	£164,451
Less estimated income	£ 12,315
<b>Total</b>	<b>£152,136</b>

Earmarked Reserves

Rec Rolling Ground Improvements	£20,000
Rec Street Lighting	£10,000
Rec MUGA	£30,000
Rec Allotment Hedging	£ 1,000
Rec Tree Work	£10,000

Rec Handyman role	£ 2,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>£73,500</b>

**RECOMMENDED** that:

- i) The sum of £152,136 is submitted as this committee's budget request for 2022/2023.
- ii) The sum of £73,500 is submitted as this committee's Earmarked Reserves request for 2022/2023.
- iii) These amounts are to be submitted to the Establishment Committee for collation with other committee requests, in order to produce a draft council budget and precept request for approval by full council.

With regard to costs for the unmetered street light supply, it was noted that our list of street lights provided to the ONS is incorrect, as their type is recorded incorrectly and there are some lights which aren't recorded at all. Our Street Lighting Contractor is to carry out a review of town council owned street lights, to ensure that they are recorded correctly.

The Chairman proposed that as the meeting was nearing its two hour limit, as per Standing Orders, should it be required the meeting will be extended by 15 minutes to complete remaining items on the agenda. **PASSED** by members.

**80/21 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.

Council action for repair/general maintenance

- Riverside Playing Field – car park – trim nettles by new pedestrian entrance
- Millennium Green – a bench is in the river and needs pulling out and likely requires replacement due to damage caused
- Millennium Green – the fence by the squeeze stile close to Bury Farm is still down – it is a post and rail type and was previously covered in ivy. This has been removed, which may have contributed to its instability
- Millennium Green – Rook Tree Lane kissing gate is broken. The Handyman is to assess work required to repair
- Church Road – bench at the start of Olivers Lane has been vandalised. Slats are to be replaced with recycled plastic planks

Reporting repair/general maintenance to other parties

- Astwick Road near Fen End – overgrown Willow tree is causing an obstruction to pedestrians, who now have to step out into the road to pass

**81/21 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY**

Nothing to report.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.06pm

**MINUTES APPROVED (date):**

**SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN:**