

# MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2022, AT 7.00PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE.

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## Committee Members present:

Mrs M Cooper (Chairman), Mrs L Anderson, S Buck, B Collier, A Cooper, S Hayes, Mrs J Hyde, B Saunders, J Talbot

## Also present:

Town Clerk – Mrs K Elliott-Turner

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### **14/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Russell.

### **15/22 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS ON MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE AGENDA AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

There were no disclosures of members interests. There were no requests for dispensation. 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.

### **16/22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES**

Not at this point.

### **17/22 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION**

#### Matters Arising for Information

Minute 110/21 – Adam Maciejewski, Senior Definitive Map Officer, has visited the footpath between Home Close and Church Road, adjacent to the former Roecroft Lower School, and although some new fencing has been erected at the northern end of the path, he feels that this does not affect the claimed route. He advises that due to staff shortages, he is unable to give an indication of when our application will be processed to formalise the footpath route.

### **18/22 QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY – PROPOSED LOCATION**

Members considered a proposal to locate one or more trees on the green space at the entrance to Prince Charles Avenue (due to be transferred to the council imminently) from Queen's Street, and on The Green, as part of the Queen's Green Canopy Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

#### **RESOLVED** that

- a) Once the open space at Prince Charles Avenue has been transferred to the council, an Oak tree is to be planted on the grass space on the left bank as you enter Prince Charles Avenue from Queen's Street. This is to be protected by installing a metal tree guard. Tree to be funded by Central Bedfordshire Council, with an application being made to our Ward Members to fund an ornate metal tree guard under their Ward Member Grants.
- b) X2 Lime trees are to be planted on The Green in the corner nearest the stub-end road section of The Green, to fill the space left by two previous trees.

Watering of the plant is key once newly planted, and so a volunteer rota can be set up. Woodland Trust can provide free trees, however they are small sapling size which may not survive in these locations, and so Jemma Luckhurst, currently working on Central Bedfordshire Council's Tree Strategy, will be asked for guidance on applying for the funded trees.

#### **19/22 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN – RURAL MATCH FUNDING**

Members considered submitting an application for up to two small-scale highway improvement proposals for consideration in Central Bedfordshire Council's Rural Match Funding 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 programme of works. Proposals should include schemes to improve health and wellbeing, enhance sustainability and the overall environment, and should include supporting documentation to identify positive outcomes that will be delivered for local communities.

Members discussed Vaughan Road as one of the areas in the town about which we receive the most complaints regarding speeding vehicles. We request professional advice from the highways team as to what measures could be implemented to reduce speeding and increase safety for road users, cyclists and pedestrians.

**RESOLVED** that a proposal is submitted with regard to concerns about speeding along Vaughan Road, and at its junction with Arlesey Road in terms of cycle/pedestrian crossing.

#### **20/22 GREENACRE PARK SLIDE**

Members considered concerns expressed by a resident regarding steps on the slide in Greenacre Park play area and their safety due to the small step tread. This area is currently still in the ownership of developers Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon Homes but is shortly to be transferred to the Town Council.

Research has been carried out on slides and their steps, and site visits made to the slide before the meeting, and it was confirmed that the step tread complies with appropriate regulations, and play safety inspections had no concerns over the equipment and the steps. No further action will be taken on this matter.

#### **21/22 TEASEL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION**

Members considered a request to make council's annual 50% contribution towards Teasel's annual insurance – noting that they carry out maintenance work on behalf of the council in Centenary Wood, Millennium Green and other open spaces within the town. 50% contribution is £245.93.

**RESOLVED** that this year's 50% contribution towards Teasel's annual insurance, at £245.93 is made, with funds from Teasel/Centenary Wood budget.

#### **22/22 EXECUTIVE ACTION – RIVERSIDE PLAYING FIELD STUMP GRINDING RIVERSIDE RECREATION GROUND – CLEARANCE WORK**

Members noted executive action taken by the Clerk in approving a further £150 for W.R. Lewis & Sons to stump grind the root of the tree felled as part of their clearance work at Riverside Playing Field. This was to ensure that the work was able to be scheduled around seeding work on the scrubbed out area and noting that the next available opportunity for tree surgeons carrying out work on the site to stump grind, will be March.

### **23/22 RIVERSIDE PLAYING FIELD – PEST CONTROL**

Members considered a quote for pest control in regard to a recent significant increase in mole activity at Riverside Playing Field, at £48 plus vat per visit – approx. 10 visits. The mole hills are dotted across the site and can be a trip hazard. The grass cutting contractor also notes that their presence will make grass cutting difficult as he has to avoid the soil mounds which blunt his cutting blades.

**RESOLVED** that the quote to carry out pest control at Riverside Playing Field at £48 plus vat, per visit for approx. 10 visits is accepted. Funds from Open Spaces – Maintenance & Repairs budget.

Councillor Mrs Anderson requested that her name be recorded as voting against this resolution.

### **24/22 RIVERSIDE PLAYING FIELD – HEIGHT BARRIER**

Members considered quotes to supply and install a lockable swing-arm height barrier for Riverside Playing Field car park, with signage indicating that no overnight parking is permitted.

**RESOLVED** that the quote received from Flow Plates Ltd at £2,180 plus vat. Funds from Earmarked Reserves – Rec Rolling Improvements.

### **25/22 RIVERSIDE PLAYING FIELD MUGA/PLAY REFURBISHMENT PROJECT**

Members considered proposal option for MUGA/play refurbishment project at Riverside Playing Field. This is a second project option to the proposal for an 'activity hub', previously presented.

The Clerk presented the proposal, which outlined a project to refurbish the existing MUGA, to provide a new skate park (which is required to be at least 35m from the nearest dwelling), replacement play equipment, extended car park and lighting, improved pond area and 'rough cut' grass and path area alongside the river. Project constraints were identified, which includes funding, planning requirements and land ownership. The Clerk advised that all current S106 funding designated for play equipment or outdoor sport has been allocated to the Arlesey Road MUGA, play and outdoor gym project. There are funds available for green landscaping and informal open space, but these can only be used for items such as provision of benches, flowers, community BBQs, etc.

Two recommendations were considered:

- i) Whichever of the two project proposals are pursued, the most pressing project is to refurbish the existing MUGA. The condition of the current facility is a hazard, and it does not bring much value to Riverside. Even if project proposal 1 with an activity hub is taken up, it will be some time before any work is started on the ground. Also, council has been awarded funds for a MUGA refurbishment under Central Bedfordshire Council's Community Asset Grant scheme, there are S106 funds available for this purpose and council also has funds earmarked for MUGA work.
- ii) To engage with the community – put an outline of both project proposals out to the community, with a clear message that these are not 'promised' items, and that funding still needs to be identified. But, asking which proposal they prefer, and which they would like to see completed first. This will assist us with deciding on the project proposal, budgeting and building up of funds,

and helps identify external funding sources at the relevant time of the proposed phase. It is recommended that this engagement runs concurrently with the MUGA refurbishment phase.

**RESOLVED** that

- i) The proposal to refurbish the MUGA, as per Community Asset Grant application goes ahead, with quotes for additional MUGA improvement/repair work as highlighted in the Clerk's project proposal presentation considered at the next or future meeting. Should any costs have increased since the grant approval, excess is to be applied for from the relevant S106 MUGA fund.
- ii) The community is given an outline of both project proposals, using summaries of the two project proposal presentations, together with an indication of cost and noting that much of the proposal work would need to go out to tender and the timescales that would involve. They are to be asked which proposal they prefer, and which aspects they consider to be a priority.

Members discussed other S106 funds available, and particularly those relating to pitch costs. The Clerk reminded members that the committee had already agreed that some of this be directed to training pitch improvement works at Arlesey Road and provision of fencing for that area. There is a possibility that any remaining S106 not specifically aimed at meeting Riverside Playing Field project costs (whichever proposal), could be redirected towards such a project through a Deed of Variation agreed with the relevant developer.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Clerk is to calculate which funds have already been allocated for Arlesey Road, in terms of 'pitch' S106, and with the remaining 'pitch' S106 available, the Clerk is to investigate the feasibility of a Deed of Variation to redirect those funds towards play equipment or outdoor sport.

With regard to the proposed car park extension, which was a separate committee project with funding put aside over the last few years, it was noted that with regulations around construction of new car parks, and the requirements for SUDS to deal with drainage and the associated environmental and planning requirements that come with it, the costs of providing the extension against the number of spaces it can actually provide, needs to be considered. Consideration of Councillor Cooper's plans for an extended car park, together with construction costs, will be brought back to committee to consider.

A general discussion was held regarding S106 money which the council holds, designated for specific purposes, plus S106 available for us to use in Stotfold. The Clerk reminded members that S106 money held by the council can only be used for the designated purpose, as per the legal agreement with the developer. Other funds held by the council but could be contained within another budget or Earmarked Reserve, could be used for any purpose the council might wish to use it for, through council agreement and a virement (to transfer between budgets/reserves).

Reference was made to the separate Arlesey Road project, which currently has a shortfall of around £45,000 to enable all items to be included in the project. Central Bedfordshire Council's Play Officer is currently investigating whether there are any additional funds she can call upon to make up the shortfall, or committee may have to consider dropping one of the pieces of equipment from the project.

The Clerk will include an item on the next agenda for the committee to consider either dropping one of the items or to make up the shortfall using our funds – even if this requires virement from another committee’s funds, in order to complete what will be a ‘showpiece’ project.

**26/22 FORMER ROECROFT LOWER SCHOOL PLAYING FIELD – FUTURE USE**

The agenda asked for consideration of potential proposals for future use of the former Roecroft Lower School playing field from Ward Member Dixon, however as his proposals report was not yet available, this will be deferred to a future meeting. It was agreed that Councillor Mrs Anderson will be council’s liaison for such a project, reporting back to committee on proposals and outlining decisions to be made by council.

**27/22 PUBLIC REALM MEETING REPORT**

The Clerk outlined a virtual meeting she has attended with Bedfordshire Clerks, hosted by Biggleswade and Sandy Town Councils.

The meeting was arranged to discuss Public Realm deployment and funding opportunities.

Central Bedfordshire Council holds capital funds set aside for public realm assistance, as outlined in their document ‘Public Realm Position Statement & Operating Model’. The aim of the meeting was to open up this discussion and see whether there is a need for additional public realm works in neighbouring parishes.

Two options were discussed, with the focus on the second option which would see Biggleswade and Sandy Town Councils, being those with large amounts of public realm and appropriately stocked and sized depots and manpower, being responsible for the ongoing ownership, maintenance, security and delivery of the equipment. In addition to hire of equipment purchased through this proposal, they could also provide support through their existing public realm personnel, which means that neighbouring town and parish councils could ‘buy in’ additional support when workloads or projects require.

The meeting concluded that although the proposal had merit, most town and parish councils in our cluster would not benefit greatly from being able to ‘hire’ in equipment from Biggleswade or Sandy Town Councils, when they could also hire from hire companies. The meeting also noted the ongoing cost and responsibilities that ownership of equipment would have on the two larger councils, and therefore the bid for the funding will not proceed.

However, there was an appetite for further conversation about how personnel might be utilised to support other councils, and this is something that the Clerk will be pursuing with Biggleswade and Sandy Town Councils in the coming months, to report back to committee.

**28/22 ELEEMOSYNARY CHARITY OF WILLIAM FIELD – COMMON ROAD ALLOTMENTS REPORT**

Members noted the Allotment Administrator’s January 2022 report to the Eleemosynary Charity William Field regarding the Common Road Allotments.

## 29/22 PUBLIC REALM WORKS

Members were reminded that matters for Central Beds Council can be reported via <https://www.fixmystreet.com/> and if they have any matters that are to be reported to other parties or are general repair or maintenance work for the council, these should not be held until the next committee meeting but should be reported to the office.

### Refer to Central Bedfordshire Council action for repair/general maintenance

- Seasonal leaf clearance required at the junction of Brook Street/Coppice Mead over the brook, as there has been a lot of leaf-fall in the gulleys which was not collected this year and ends up in the drains
- Noted that many drains in the town are still full of debris, causing backup of water when we have heavy rain
- Query whether the drains and pumps in the underpasses have now been cleared, as the 'flood' signs are still on site
- Outside no. 60m High Street, the road level needs lifting adjacent to the footway, as when it rains there is significant pooling which causes splashing onto pedestrians. Refer to Jack Bowers in Highways who is organising the forthcoming resurfacing works on the High Street
- The weeds need clearing again in the area in front of The Haven, on High Street as it is becoming an eyesore

### Refer to other parties

- In the area behind Silver Birch Avenue (Taylor Wimpey development), a resident is regularly dumping their garden waste over the back of their fence – there are currently five piles of garden waste (wheelie bin size). Developers are asked to leaflet residents to ask them not to do this.

## 30/22 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY

A member advised that Central Bedfordshire Council is currently topping the trees on High Street.

The Chairman advised that some of the newly planted tree saplings at Arlesey Road have been pulled out, and she has cleared away the debris.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.53pm

**MINUTES APPROVED (date):**

**SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN:**