

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8TH JUNE 2022, AT 7.19PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE.

Committee Members present:

J Talbot (Vice-Chairman), Mrs L Anderson, B Collier, A Cooper, Mrs M Cooper, S Hayes, Mrs J Hyde, G Russell, J Talbot, J Smith

Also present:

Mrs K Elliott-Turner – Town Clerk

72/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors S Buck and B Saunders.

73/22 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.

74/22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

None present.

75/22 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Correspondence

Members noted the following items of correspondence:

- From a resident querying the locations chosen for the x3 new Jubilee benches
- From an allotment tenant complaining that the new Norton Road Allotment gate (yet to be installed) would be heavier and more difficult to use than the existing 5-bar gate

Matters Arising from previous minutes

Minute 66/22 - for information, quotes are being sought for boundary works at Norton Road Allotments.

Minute 18/22 – correspondence was read out from Gemma Luckhurst, Central Bedfordshire Council's Sustainability Officer – Trees, who advises that the tree species we were looking to plant under the Queen's Green Canopy Scheme do not fall within their free tree giveaway projects. They have two options available to us – supporting planting projects of 5+ trees for community groups, etc under a tree planting grant, or if we were happy to agree to other species, their next 'free tree giveaway' event is from September onwards, in line with the planting season. However these do not include larger more expensive trees. The Assistant Clerk and Councillor Mrs Anderson are to discuss the options further with Gemma Luckhurst.

Minute 63/22 – a member queried the previous minutes where it was reported that we had changed from using ROSPA to carry out our annual play equipment inspections to The Play Inspection Company. The member felt that this should have come to committee to consider. The Clerk explained that coordinating such contractors fell within her remit to keep council's operations going, and to ensure that our health and safety obligations and our insurance obligations are met. She explained that The Play Inspection Company provided the same inspections as ROSPA but were cheaper and gave more detailed inspection reports.

76/22 REPORT FROM HIGHWAYS REPRESENTATIVE ON MEETING WITH PRINCIPAL HIGHWAYS OFFICER

As our Highways Representative, Councillor Smith gave the following report:

On Wednesday 18th May 2022 a meeting was held with Scott Terry of CBC to discuss the priorities for Highways repair in Stotfold.

Present were:

- Cllr Steve Buck, Mayor
- Cllr Jonathan Smith, Highways representative
- Scott Terry, Principal Highways Officer – North Area One

A tour of Stotfold was undertaken to view the current state of repair of gulley's and drains, as well as recent pavement overlay works in Silver Birch Avenue which has already failed.

Initially the following are being addressed:

Site	Issue	Action
Silver Birch Avenue	New Overlay failures	CBC have reported to contractor
The Green	Blocked Drains/Gulley's	CBC 28 day priority task order raised
Regent Street	Blocked Drains/Gulley's	CBC 28 day priority task order raised
High Street, Brook Street to Crossroads	Blocked Drains/Gulley's	CBC 28 day priority task order raised

Other issues are to be addressed, including:

- Malthouse Lane, lack of Kerb meaning constant repair required.
- White Lining around Stotfold requiring reinstatement.
- Arlesey Road cycle path, uneven surface along entire length.

The above is not an exhaustive list, and no work is currently planned but Central Bedfordshire Council will be reminded of their priority. Any confirmed action will be included in the table above on future reports.

The interaction with Scott from CBC has been positive so far and we hope to see movement on the issues in the table above during June 2022.

If members have any other highway concerns, they are to advise Councillor Smith who will take it up with Scott Terry.

A member referred to recent notification of forthcoming roadworks to put in speed humps on Astwick Road, and queried the alternative routes proposed during the road closure. Astwick itself will be completely cut off from Stotfold and would have to use the Wrayfields/A1 junction which is very dangerous. Councillor Smith has already raised this with Scott Terry, who has forwarded concerns to the StreetWorks team. Following the work to install road humps, the bus stop will be removed, and a roundabout is to be installed, although there are no details on this as yet.

77/22 TREE GUARDS – JUBILEE TREES

Members considered quotes for tree guards to protect the Jubilee trees to be planted later this year as part of the Queen's Green Canopy.

RESOLVED that tree guards are purchased from Vigrass Ltd, as follows 6ft x 2ft x1 in black for Prince Charles Avenue, x2 for The Green in 'self-colour' at a total of £574.00 plus vat, plus delivery at £81.00 plus vat.

78/22 STOTFOLD JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB – GOAL STORAGE, THE GREEN

The Chairman has met with the Junior Football Club to discuss their proposed storage of goal post at The Green (minute 67/22). They will install two metal posts 16' apart, 7' tall behind the hedge on the 'Crown' corner, to which they will secure folding, upright goal posts. They will be instructing a local contractor to erect the posts, ready for use in the coming season. The posts can be painted if required, committee may select the colour. The siting of the goals will be monitored for the forthcoming football season.

Members agreed with the proposals, subject to the external contractor carrying out the work providing evidence of appropriate insurance, risk assessment and method statement.

79/22 FUTURE ADOPTION OF OPEN SPACE AT TAYLORS ROAD

Members considered a report from the Assistant Clerk, following her site meeting with committee members to establish the current condition of the open space at Taylors Road (Aspen Gardens) development, which we are being asked to adopt.

A member pointed out that reference to £20,000 commuted sum is incorrect, as this refers to 'plan 1' in the legal pack which is the area of housing and the green areas immediately adjacent, plus equipped play area and the swale. 'Plan 2' (app ref 17/01619) is the area we are being asked to take on, which consists only of green space, and this does not come with a commuted sum. The maintenance plan says that it will be transferred to either the developers through a management company, or to Central Bedfordshire Council, which usually means it is ultimately transferred to the Town Council.

A question is to be raised with Central Bedfordshire Council as to why there is no commuted sum for the 'meadow' field, which we are being asked to adopt.

The current condition of the field concerned is not to a standard for adoption, and as the site has now been built out and sold, there is nothing to hold them to, except that there was a requirement for the developers to build the entire site as per conditions. In order for them to transfer the land, it needs to be to a standard, therefore, if the developers provide us with a sum of money (to be calculated –

planting and ongoing maintenance as per the landscape management plan) we will consider taking on the land and doing the work ourselves to get it to a suitable standard.

A site meeting will be arranged between Taylor Wimpey, Central Bedfordshire Council S106 Officer, Ward Member Dixon and the Town Council.

With regard to bullet point 3 in the Assistant Clerk's report, as this refers to litter bins within the play area shown in 'plan 1', this would never come to the town council to maintain or empty as it comes under the management company's remit.

In the future, once the 'plan 2' area has been adopted, we will consider putting in wooden bollards to show the boundary between the management company maintained 'plan 1' area, and the town council adopted area.

A member noted for future interest, the ditch between the 'plan 2' area and Riverside Playing Field is within the developer's current ownership, with the hedge being the boundary line.

A cost is to be calculated to maintain the meadowland with trees, and a cut in late August/September (for hay collection), with paths mown through the grass.

80/22 MUGA CONTAINER & ADJACENT FENCING

Members considered a report from the Clerk following a complaint by the developer of the former Roker Park about the MUGA container and their site boundary fencing.

Members discussed the possibility of painting anti-climb paint around the top of the container; the Clerk will investigate the minimum height for this.

The developer has said that they will be looking to improve their own site security by increasing the height of the site boundary fencing.

A member noted that on a recent visit to the MUGA, they spotted that a ladder which goes up to the first floor of the scaffolding, with their security gate wide open. Their internal site security is very poor.

A discussion took place around the condition of the container, with people standing on top of it. The future of it is uncertain – we would like to remove the container and replace it with something more appropriate and watertight, but this hasn't yet been decided. The logistics of removing it may be difficult due to its location within the site. Cost of a new container, second hand, is not prohibitive, however the main costs involved would be of its removal and disposal.

RESOLVED that due to health and safety concerns over the condition of the roof of the container, it is to be removed at the earliest opportunity.

81/22 S106 ALLOCATIONS – PLAY, OUTDOOR SPORT & INFORMAL OPEN SPACE

At a previous meeting, members were advised that Central Bedfordshire Council have asked for a list of items we might wish to provide at our recreation grounds in the future. The Clerk has submitted the following:

“The town council may be looking to install the following types of equipment at one or more of our recreation grounds in the future:

Timber play equipment

Timber trim trail

Outdoor gym equipment

Skate park

Yalp sona arch

MUGA improvements – basketball hoops, tennis nets, etc

Play equipment in general – to replace some of our old and outdated equipment

New storage solution for play equipment/open space maintenance

Picnic benches/seats/bins/bbqs

If possible, we would like for future S106 allocations not to be specific to a set recreation ground/open space, so that we may be use for the numerous other recreation grounds we now have”

The following items are to be added:

Zip wire

Large ‘witches hat’ climber – similar to the one at Henlow Park

Football wall

Band Stand/performance area

The Clerk will identify costs for each item to be forwarded to the S106 Officer.

82/22 STREET LIGHTING CONTRACT

The current Street Lighting Contract (period 2017 to 2023) comes to an end on 31st March 2023. Members considered the tender period and the draft contract specification.

RESOLVED

- i) The tender period is for 3 years from 1st April 2023
- ii) The draft contract specification is approved

83/22 LANDSCAPE & GRASS CUTTING CONTRACT

The current Landscape & Grass Cutting Contract (period 2017 to 2023) comes to an end on 31st March 2023. Members considered the tender period. A walkabout is being arranged with the current contractor to mark up on a plan the exact areas to be maintained under the contract, together with frequency of works. A draft specification will be presented to the relevant committees.

A member referred to the National Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 and the duty for public bodies to have due regard to the conservation of biodiversity. A paper will be put together to consider how we might tackle this, together with a proposal by the Clerk and Councillor Cooper on improving biodiversity within the Greenacres development. A resident has also put a request to Councillor Cooper for the creation of a ‘community garden’.

RESOLVED that the tender period is for 3 years from 1st April 2023

84/22 PROJECT UPDATES

The Clerk gave the following update report on the Arlesey Road MUGA, play and outdoor gym project and the Riverside Playing Field MUGA and site rejuvenation.

Arlesey Road MUGA/play project

The Clerk has sent a strongly worded email to Central Bedfordshire Council officers involved in this project to advise that we have still not received an update, following her site visit with them towards the end of March. Central Bedfordshire Council was advised that this council is concerned that the now lengthy delays could see an increase in material costs, thereby causing a risk to the continuance of the project with the Section 106 sums available. The Play Officer confirms that material costs have indeed increased, and an emergency Arlesey Road Task & Finish Group meeting has been called for this Friday to consider the increases and to put together a recommendation to an Extra Council meeting next Wednesday. The Clerk confirmed that planning permission was granted earlier today.

Riverside Playing Field rejuvenation project

Councillor Russell is due to meet with our local schools to discuss putting the options to our younger residents and to engage with them on what they would like to see at Riverside Playing Field – based on some of the questions used in the original SurveyMonkey consultation.

An initial report on the outcome of the 'options' survey has been produced (i.e., rejuvenation of existing playing field and facilities or provision of new community activity hub and some replacement items), and the outcome of the engagement with our young residents will be added with a findings and recommendations report to be submitted to committee for consideration. A recommendation from that committee meeting will then be made to council identifying the recommended project to pursue.

With regard to the first part of the project already approved (under the approved Community Asset Grant and S106 funding), the Clerk and Councillor Buck have now found quotes to resurface the MUGA hard court side, replace the aco drain and carry out repairs to the astro-turf court, together with replacement fencing within the MUGA to separate the courts and the viewing area. Costs for the repairs to the astro-turf court will need to be met by the council, rather than using S106 which is for new items such as a new surface and new fencing.

85/22 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 council's contractors

- The litter bin in Brook Street near the pharmacy has been overlooked and needs emptying
- The nettles at the pedestrian entrance to Riverside Playing Field need cutting back

Refer to other parties

- River Ivel Drainage Board (IDB) - There is more vegetation growing in Pix Brook close to the Brook Street bridge which needs removal so as to avoid blockage

86/22 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY

Thanks were given to council's contractors, grounds contractor and current Handyman for their work in getting the town prepared for the jubilee week celebrations – the open spaces, floral displays, etc, and office staff for the event at the cemetery.

Richard Lawrence from BRCC has spoken to the IDB who are happy to carry out the pond rejuvenation works at Riverside Playing Field, and no permissions are required. This work will be carried out shortly. The IDB is also going to do some work by the river alongside the Manor Farm Co-operative farmed land, where the bank is wearing away, to reinforce the bank.

A query was raised about why the boundary of Riverside Playing Field car park had been recently cut back, including a tree – it is likely that this was part of the committee approved tree work.

It was noted that a person has been seen planting sycamores at Riverside Playing Field car park, up against the armco barrier, in addition to the previously unauthorised planting of a walnut tree. This unauthorised planting may cause issues with the adjacent car park surface and damage to the armco barrier.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.07pm

MINUTES APPROVED (date):

SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN: