

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2020 AT 7.15PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE  
CENTRE, STOTFOLD**

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Committee Members present: Mrs M Cooper (Chairman)

Mrs S Bundock	Mrs A Clarey
B Collier	A Cooper
S Hayes	Mrs J Hyde
C Phelps	G Russell
J Talbot	

Also present: the Assistant Clerk – Ms Caroline Jenkins, 2 members of the public.

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**12/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor G Russell sent apologies for being late for the meeting.

**13/20 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS ON MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE AGENDA**

Councillor J Talbot declared an interest for the item 5 on allotments as his wife is a tenant. 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.

**14/20 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSE**

A member of the public commented on the condition of the underpass in Fairfield. Broken glass bottles and litter are making the area a mess. There have also been fires lit in the underpass.

Members asked for Fairfield Parish Council to be informed that a resident had raised this at the meeting and for their contactors to clear the area more regularly.

It was also noted that the Co-op store have recently had incidents of youths stealing alcohol from the store. Letters will be written to all schools in the area to highlight this. A letter will also be sent to the Co-op store to advise support.

Finally, a resident asked about the junction of Valerian Way and Grange Drive. They were concerned that the road has no white markings. Drivers do not stop at this junction and this is a prime area for an accident to occur. It was also pointed out that the fencing on the corner of the junction impedes the vision of the driver to traffic coming up Valerian Way.

Members asked for the developers of the estate to be made aware of these points and to enquire when the roads will be adopted by Central Bedfordshire Council.

## 15/20 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

### Matters Arising

Minute 4/20:

- Rook Tree Lane (particularly by the school) and The Green – there is a large amount of fallen leaf debris causing drain blockage and slippery surface hazards.  
*Reported to CBC ref. 333288 04/12/19- Chased- Biffa have checked the drain which needed no further action. The leaf clearance has been passed to Waste Services ref. 19-067081 for the job to be done. 04/01/20 chased: job was signed off as completed 17/12/19. Reported again 30/01/20: Fallen leaf debris reported to Waste Officer. STC staff member drove along this lane 31/01/20 - leaves had already been cleared. 31/01/20- when along lane noted most drains seem clear, but reported two that were not- outside pub car park and no. 61 Rook Tree Lane which had moss etc growing across openings. REF. 336575*
- X3 drains on the High Street, outside Peking House Chinese takeaway are full of silt.  
*Reported 20/12/19 Ref. 334512 for drain outside Peking House, ref. 334513 for further two drains. Update: Highways plan to inspect the site during the next instance of significant rainfall (that takes place during working hours) and decide on the best course of action. 06/01/2020. 06/02/20- No further update to that showing online as yet.*

Members asked that Central Bedfordshire Council be requested to clean the drains out with the Gulley Cleanser.

- Footpath from High Street to The Crofts and Alexander Road – green bollard has been knocked over and is now nearly out of the ground.  
*Reported 20/12/19 ref. 334516. Chased 07/01/19 and checked online updates 06/02/20: No further update yet.*

Members asked for a response to be chased.

Minute 10/20:

- To inspect and advise on what the plant is growing on the banks of the Riverside Playing Field and adjacent field heading north. Question if it is bamboo, and if this is positive or negative on wildlife and river invertebrates  
*After emailing Elizabeth Anderson (CBC Ecologist) 31/01/20, she then visited the site Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February and confirmed it is not bamboo. There is a biomass / cover crop on the other side of the river that has moved across. This is **Miscanthus**;*  
***Miscanthus** (commonly known as **Elephant Grass**) is a high yielding energy crop that grows over 3 metres tall, resembles bamboo and produces a crop every year without the need for replanting. The rapid growth, low mineral content, and high biomass yield of **Miscanthus** increasingly make it a favourite choice as a biofuel, outperforming maize (corn) and other alternatives.*  
*She is not concerned regarding its impact on biodiversity, it still provides cover for invertebrates, birds and other wildlife and the IDB have plans for works on that stretch of the Ivel so it will all be cleared at some point anyway either by them or by the developers of the adjacent site once they make good the public open space.*
- Riverside Playing Field – the area under the Willows by the river needs clearing of litter and overgrowth.  
*Previously referred this work to Handyman Contractor prior to last meeting – checking if completed*

Members noted that this had been completed by the Handyman Contractor.

- Riverside Playing Field – collect the fallen kissing gate from Kingfisher Way access to the playing field, which is in the car park – the office is to chase the Public Rights of Way team for its replacement, and advise that we hold the gate.

*30/1/20 Handyman asked to remove this, however 3/2/20 Teasel have replaced the broken gate post on Stotfold FP14 at Malthouse Lane*

Town Council office to chase the Rights of Way team for a replacement.

- Brook Street – on the cycleway, where the brook goes under the road, on the northern side of the road there is a sycamore sapling growing out into the cycleway – please remove

*30/1/20 – left message for Landscape Contractor to complete – checking if completed.*

Members were notified that the sycamore sapling is now clear of the cycleway.

## **16/20 WATER AT ALLOTMENTS**

Members were asked to consider a request from a plot holder for the decision to enforce the previous policy of turning water off 31<sup>st</sup> October and back on 31<sup>st</sup> March to be reconsidered. Over the past couple of years, the previous allotments administrator amended the tap turning on and off dates to suit plot holder requests, however the policy dates have recently been enforced.

Councillors noted that seeds planted at the allotments during March would need to be watered in.

**RESOLVED** to switch the water on at the beginning of March and continue to turn the water off on the 31<sup>st</sup> October each year. A letter of confirmation will be sent to the plot holder.

Members also asked if the Handyman could quote for tap boxes to be installed at Norton Road Allotments, similar to the ones at the Stotfold Cemetery. These would protect the taps during the colder weather. The Handyman will also be asked to check the condition of the water pipes at Norton Road Allotments and insulate them if needed.

## **17/20 CHILDREN'S AMUSEMENTS FAIR VISIT – THE GREEN**

Members were asked to consider a request from Gumbles Amusements to hold a 'Children's Wristband Fair' on The Green. They have put forward three potential dates for visits, however the only available date at this time is 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> April 2020. The Town Council office have been in contact with another facility which hires out to Gumbles Amusements, who have confirmed they are excellent hirers.

**RESOLVED** that Gumbles Amusements can hire The Green between 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> April, providing the site is managed and left in a good condition, the area to be used by the fair is cordoned off and access to the play equipment on the green is not blocked for the general public. The Town Council reserves the right to ask any hirer to pay for any damages to the surface of The Green.

### **18/20 BUS SHELTER REQUEST**

Members were asked to consider correspondence from a resident requesting additional bus shelters/stops to serve Stotfold's buses and to look at possible new routes to accommodate the Beauchamp Mill estate.

Members thought this was a good idea in principal, however there is no round circular route in this area for a bus to take. There is also no area for a bus to turn around to enable a return trip. It was also discussed whether the majority of people in this area would use the bus service.

It was noted that any new housing developments should be within 400 metres of a bus stop. The Town Council has pointed this out to Central Bedfordshire Council but no comments have been forthcoming. In the case of the new developments on Astwick Road and Taylors Road, Central Bedfordshire Council have measured the 400 metres from the bus stop at the Crown Public House. This stop is not on the official bus route and the distance should have been measured from the bus stop opposite the Coach and Horses Public House.

It was requested for a letter to be sent regarding this to the Transport Department at Central Bedfordshire Council, copied to the Member of Parliament for North East Bedfordshire.

At this point Councillor G Russell joined the meeting.

Councillors discussed whether Aspen Gardens had any possible circular bus routes, but it was felt there were none suitable. The roads are not wide enough for a bus to get past parked cars and the only possible solution would be for smaller buses to be used.

### **19/20 TREE PLANTING DONATION "TREES FOR STOTFOLD"**

Members were asked to consider a suggestion from a resident that donations could be encouraged from residents towards planting trees for Stotfold.

It was thought, in principal, that this was a good idea. Stotfold News will be contacted and the Town Council will arrange for part of their monthly page to advertise that donations towards trees for planting in Autumn 2020 would be encouraged.

Members discussed the logistics of planting trees. Licences need to be obtained, volunteers to plant the trees, ongoing maintenance, possible vandalism to trees, land to plant them on. Councillors had two suggested areas, at the rear of the new Arlesey Road recreation ground and to reinstate the circle of trees at the Riverside recreation ground.

It was also suggested that the ecologist from Central Bedfordshire Council could advise on planting and appropriate trees to use.

The Chairman of the committee will contact the resident for more information.

### **20/20 KEEP BRITAIN TIDY – GREAT BRITISH SPRING CLEAN 2020**

Members were asked to consider a date for the Great British Tidy Up, which takes place from 20<sup>th</sup> March to 13<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

The Stotfold Big Tidy Up is already scheduled for Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2020. Members did consider moving our event to coincide with the Great British Spring Clean, but decided to leave at this date to avoid clashes with other events and the Easter Holiday.

As the Town Council now schedules two of the Tidy Up events per year, members discussed splitting the area of the town between the two events as the town becomes a larger area.

**RESOLVED** that the event on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May is to be centred around The Green. The event on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2020 is to be centred at the Greenacre Centre. Allocated areas to be cleared will be split between the two events to concentrate the efforts of the public.

The Town Council office will contact Central Bedfordshire Council to look into providing more equipment such as volunteer vests, litter pickers, gloves and the correct disposal of the litter.

Etonbury School will be asked again this year if they would like to participate in a weekday litter pick by their students. Members noted that the local Brownie group also participate in their own litter pick during the year.

## **21/20 GENERAL WORK**

**RESOLVED** that the following is actioned:

### Central Beds Council

- The Haven – weeds and grass to be cleared and trimmed as very overgrown – this should be completed twice a year.
- High Street – from the traffic lights at the junction with Hitchin Road, to the junction with Queen Street – a trench in the tarmac is slowly appearing in the middle of the road. Request that this is filled.
- Rook Tree Lane – areas of potholes have been patched, but this is now breaking up and in places, the content is all over the road. Check with Area 1 highways Officer as to whether Rook Tree Lane is on schedule for work this year.
- Baldock Road Roundabout – Norton Road – potholes in trench in the middle of the road.

### Central Beds Council – Rights of Way

- Footpath behind the old Roecroft School, Church Road – not on current footpaths map. Please contact Rights of Way officer to reinstate this.

## **22/20 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY**

It was reported that the Town Council has been overcharged for its water bill from the Brook Street Toilets. This is currently being discussed with Wave/Anglian Water.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.21pm

**CHAIRMAN**

**DATED**