

# MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2021, AT 7.17PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE.

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## Committee Members present:

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

## Also present:

Town Clerk – Mrs K Elliott-Turner, two members of the public (Roecroft Lower School)

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### **99/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Buck, Mrs Clarey, Russell (who advised that he would be late to the meeting).

### **100/21 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.

### **101/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES**

Not at this point.

### **102/21 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION**

Nothing to report.

The Chairman proposed that agenda item 10, Roecroft Lower School Emergency Gate, be moved to this point, to allow the representatives of the school present to speak, listen to consideration of this item, and then leave the meeting. **PASSED** by members.

### **103/21 ROECROFT LOWER SCHOOL EMERGENCY GATE**

Members considered a letter from the Headteacher of Roecroft Lower School regarding use of their emergency side gate to create a permanent access point to the public open space 'Greenacre Park'.

Two representatives of the school, Arlene Hui – Chairman of Governors, and Jan Howieson – School Business Manager, outlined the reason for their request.

Parents and pupils have been using the small gate to the side of the school to access the green space adjacent. They have laid some temporary grass matting and bark, as the area became very muddy last winter. Use of this entrance has helped immensely as it helped to reduce the amount of congestion at their other entrance. A request was made for the committee to install a permanent path to the gate and the school would replace the single gate with a double gate, which would further reduce congestion. This would also provide a safe access should they need to use as an emergency access.

Members asked questions, and were reminded of the timeline of this matter – some time ago, the path was discovered, and we approached the developers to see if they knew anything about it. They weren't happy about the path, and therefore as the land was due to be transferred to the council, this matter came to the April committee meeting – a copy of the resolution from that meeting was forwarded to the school, which advised that the path should be removed and land reinstated by the start of the September term. This council was not approached by the school about the path, however this was because the school was uncertain about ownership of the land at the time the path was installed.

The land on which the path sits has still not been transferred to the Town Council, however the transfer plans have now been agreed, and outstanding works have been confirmed for completion in January 2022. The intention is for the land transfer to be completed before Christmas, however it is more likely to be in the new year.

**RESOLVED** that we agree in principle to an access being created from the Roecroft Lower School emergency gate to link to the existing tarmac path in Greenacre Park.

The Clerk will check the legal implications in terms of creating a permanent access, rather than an emergency access onto public open space.

It was noted that Roecroft Lower School would fund the widened gate, and would help fund the path, but it is expected that as eventual owners of the land, the Town Council would be responsible for the path and would determine its construction, etc.

#### **104/21 BROOK STREET CAR PARK – ACTION DAY**

Members considered a request by Central Bedfordshire Council to use Brook Street Car Park for a Community Action Day (and therefore closed as a car park for that day), in August 2022. The aim of the Community Action Days is to inform residents of all the services offered by Central Bedfordshire Council, Stotfold Town Council and other partners, such as Bedfordshire Police.

**RESOLVED** that use of Brook Street Car Park for a Community Action Day in August 2022 is approved.

#### **105/21 STOTFOLD ENTRANCE SIGNS**

Members considered the condition of the black and artwork town entrance signs and possible refurbishment or replacement. Previous suggestion of the committee is to have printed signs rather than painted for longevity, and not with a black background to stand out more clearly. Discussions concluded that although some of the black paint is a little worn or flaky, particularly where signs have been hit by vehicles in the past, they are still in adequate condition, and the black paint could be touched up where necessary.

**RESOLVED** that the signs are left as they are, but with the one on Norton Road being set higher on posts than at present for better visibility.

#### **106/21 TREE WORK**

Members considered quotes for 'red' urgent and 'amber' medium level tree works, following a recent inspection of trees at the following locations: Pix Brook Play Area, Riverside Playing Field, The Green, Hitchin Road Recreation Ground, Heron Way, Waters End, Simpson Centre. As per tree inspection report, Centenary Wood requires more detailed assessment.

**RESOLVED** that the quote from Steve Dear Tree Surgeons at £11,125 plus vat is accepted, and that both red and amber works are completed. He is to be asked for an additional quote to plant missing trees identified on the tree inspection report. Funds are to be taken from remaining available in EMR - Norton Road Highway Works, now that the works are completed, and the rest from Open Spaces – Maintenance & Repairs budget. This will take the budget over spend, and therefore will ultimately come from General Reserves - if whole committee year end budget requires.

Councillor Anderson, with her ecologist skills, will be asked to consider a suitable location for some logs to be securely piled to encourage wildlife, in the long grass close to the wet area of Riverside Playing Field.

#### **107/21 RIVERSIDE PLAYING FIELD – CLEARANCE WORK BY MUGA**

Members considered quotes to carry out shrub/debris clearance work in the area outside and leading up to the MUGA at Riverside Playing Field. There was some confusion over one of the quotes, as it appears to have omitted removal of a large tree on the boundary with the former Roker Park, which was in the original specification.

This matter is to be held over until a revised quote is obtained to include taking the tree out with stump grinding. To aid comparison, a third quote is to be obtained if possible.

#### **108/21 PLASTIC TREE GUARDS**

Members considered a letter from a resident regarding concerns over use of plastic tree guards. They have been advised that the locations they refer to and included in their photos, are not in the ownership or responsibility of the town council, and they are happy for their concerns to be passed onto the relevant parties. Members considered not using plastic tree guards in any future tree/shrub planting on land for which we have responsibility.

Members agreed that going forward, in regard to this committee's operations, we will endeavour to use eco-friendly tree supports.

It was noted that the planting currently underway at Arlesey Road by BRCC is using bio-degradable plastic supports.

#### **109/21 GREEN WHEEL MINUTES**

Members noted minutes of the Green Wheel meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

#### **110/21 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.

##### Reporting repair/general maintenance to other parties

- Bollard outside the parade of shops on High Street is still down, and causing a serious trip hazard, despite being reported as urgent

- Footpath from Church Road to Home Close is still on the waiting list to be adopted – Adam Maciejewski, Senior Definitive Map Officer to be chased for a progress update

**111/21 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY**

Nothing to report.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.25pm

**MINUTES APPROVED (date):**

**SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN:**