

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9TH MARCH 2022, AT 7.48PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE.

Committee Members present:

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

Also present:

Town Clerk – Mrs K Elliott-Turner

31/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor B Saunders.

32/22 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.

33/22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

None present.

34/22 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Clerk's Report

The Clerk advised that the developers for the Taylors Road/Aspen Gardens development (Taylor Wimpey) have advised that they are ready to transfer the open space to the Town Council. However, it is apparent that it is not yet in a suitable condition to be transferred and requires further work, particularly as the commuted sum is only £20,000 for ongoing maintenance. The Clerk will be arranging a meeting between Councillor Mrs Anderson and the Assistant Clerk to discuss the condition of the open space, before contacting the developer. Councillor Mrs Hyde requested that she join on future walkabouts of the site to discuss its condition before transfer.

It was proposed that agenda item 10 regarding an update on the Arlesey Road MUGA project, is moved forward to this point, as the timescales update might be relevant to upcoming agenda items. **PASSED** by members.

35/22 ARLESEY ROAD MUGA/PLAY/OUTDOOR GYM PROJECT

Members considered a report from the Clerk with a project progress update, funding availability (S106) and as per previous meeting, to consider whether to include all items for the project or to make up the shortfall using council funds or alternative funds.

Project update

Yesterday (8th March), the Clerk met with Councillor B Saunders, David Gilder (Programme Manager – Minor Projects, Central Bedfordshire Council Assets) and Naomi Henry (Play Sites Officer, Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Services) to discuss both the Arlesey Road project and the Riverside Playing Field project.

Focusing on the Arlesey Road project and an update on progress:

The delay to this project relates to planning matters, and the public protection team has required a noise assessment to be carried out as part of the planning application, in relation to the new MUGA. This has been completed.

The planning application is out for consultation, although it is not yet showing on Central Bedfordshire Council's website.

In terms of funding, the Section 106 for the play and fitness aspects has been secured as the deadline for spend was running out.

With regard to the shortfall in funds for the whole project, this is because the original intention was to have either the Yalp interactive arch, or the Sona interactive ball wall, not both. Depending on the which contractor was selected, there was a possibility that both could have been included within project funds, however the result of the tender selection process means that there are insufficient funds to cover all aspects. We have been asked to make a decision as to whether we wish to keep both elements and make up the shortfall ourselves, or to drop one of them. Although there may be Section 106 funds designated for other spends, such as pitch provision, to change this use to the MUGA project would require a deed of variation, and this would hold the project up further – with no guarantee that the developers would agree to this change. Any further delay would also risk an increase in project costs.

Project timescales

The proposal is out for planning consultation, after approval has been granted, there will be around a 4 week period to sign off the contracts and finalise legal matters. Once contracts have been awarded, there will be a 12 week lead-time to construction. So potentially 19 weeks, minimum, before starting on site (end July).

As there are different contractors dealing with different elements of the project, Central Bedfordshire Council's Assets team will co-ordinate which contractors are on site completing which elements. They will also deal with defects and final sign off. On completion, a safety inspection will be carried out before sign-off.

In terms of potential clashes with other uses of the site, i.e., location for site compound, etc, this will be discussed in a pre-start meeting, which will cover things such as logistics, final project timings, and location of compound, etc.

Shortfall for equipment

The two elements which are under consideration are the Yalp arch and the Sona ball wall.

There is £291,097 Section 106 available for this project. If we continue with all tender 'lots' (MUGA, Fitness equipment, Play Equipment, ball wall and interactive arch, this totals £336,709.86, a shortfall of £45,612.86.

Options

- 1) Council makes up the £45,612.86 shortfall – from committee funds, General Reserves, or from other committee reserves.
- 2) Either the ball wall or arch are dropped from the project. If we do not proceed with the ball wall, the interactive arch can be accommodated within funds available. If we drop the arch, we will have a shortfall of £1,008.86.

RESOLVED that the Yalp arch is removed from the project.

Councillor Hayes requested that his name be recorded as voting against this resolution.

FURTHER RESOLVED that committee funds will be used to make up the shortfall of £1,008.86.

Councillor Hayes requested that his name be recorded as voting against this resolution.

36/22 THE GREEN – GOAL STORAGE

Following previous committee approval for Stotfold Junior Football Club to store their goals securely at The Green on a hardstanding, members considered their requested location for the hardstanding.

RESOLVED that we agree to the principle that they may construct a hardstanding and a post to accommodate 2 goal posts, however we note that the goals would be laying down, rather than the previous indication that they would be stored upright. Before giving approval, we require information on how long the goals would be stored in this location, if they are to be stored laying down, would the nets remain attached to the goals. Advise that it would be our preference that the goal posts are stored upright, due to the risks of netting and goal posts lying flat on the ground.

37/22 ARLESEY ROAD – ADDITIONAL PITCH MARKING & CAR PARK USE

Members considered a request from Stotfold Junior Football Club to mark out, additional mini soccer pitches at Arlesey Road playing field for their July tournament, and to have sole use of the car park for the period of their tournament.

RESOLVED that permission is given to Stotfold Junior Football Club to mark out additional mini soccer pitches at Arlesey Road for their July tournament, but we are unable to give sole use of the public car park. If required, we can make the overflow parking available, but will be subject to weather conditions and the club must provide marshalls to prevent access further into the play field area.

38/22 ARLESEY ROAD – USE OF UNMADE SECTION OF CAR PARK FOR PETANQUE

Members considered a request from Chiltern Region Petanque to use the unmade section of Arlesey Road car park for their regional petanque competitions on Sundays during the summer. They have approached Stotfold Football Club. They would require use of the unmade section of the car park from April to September on Sundays. They normally have about 24 teams, of approximately 80 people, and the space they would need for their matches is 12m x 36m. Other events they

organise attract fewer entrance so the space required is less. They would require access to toilets and if the Football Club bar is open, they would like to use that for refreshments.

RESOLVED that we agree in principle to use of the unmade car park for regional petanque competitions by Chiltern Region Petanque, and a meeting is to be arranged with the town council, Petanque club and the Football Club. If all parties agree to its use, this would be reviewed after one year. There would be no charge to use the space, but they are encouraged to use the Football Club for refreshments (if they are willing and able), and to organise a community event to allow residents to try it out.

39/22 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN RURAL MATCH FUNDING

Further to the last meeting, where enquiries were to be made about a proposed application for funding concerning speeding along Vaughan Road, and at its junction with Arlesey Road in terms of cycle/pedestrian crossing, a response has been received from the Senior Highways Officer. They advise that physical speed reducing measures such as humps fall outside of the funding remit, but we could pursue investigations into other measures. With regard to the cycle/pedestrian crossing, they feel that this already has sufficient measures in place but acknowledge that the line markings need refreshing (report attached for members).

RESOLVED that an application is submitted to investigate speeding in Vaughan Road and subsequent required speed reducing measures.

40/22 RIVERSIDE PLAYING FIELD POND MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

Councillor Mrs Anderson submitted proposals for an enhanced wet habitat/pond area at Riverside Playing Field. There is also an opportunity to include a decked area, benches, interpretation boards, etc. Etonbury Green Wheel will provide funding to cover the proposed works.

In recent years the existing pond has stood mostly dry for much of the time, only having shallow water during the wettest periods. It does retain damp soil however and water lies not far beneath the current ground level.

It is proposed therefore to excavate the larger part of the central area of the pond and dispose of the resultant spoil around the edge of the pond to create a low bund that could be mown by the current machine in use on the site. The excavated area will be gently sloping to approximately 750mm below the current level at the deepest part. The excavated area would be left to fill with water and naturally colonise with aquatic vegetation.

The spoil bund would be seeded with an appropriate wildflower grassland mix that would need less frequent mowing moving forward to develop a diverse floral area.

RESOLVED that the proposed work to improve the pond area is approved, working in conjunction with Teasel and BRCC in terms of project work and ongoing maintenance.

41/22 FORMER ROECROFT LOWER SCHOOL PLAYING FIELD – PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE USE

Councillor Mrs Anderson has met with Central Bedfordshire Council Ward Member Dixon on site and there is lots of opportunity. It would be an informal green space. The Academy of Central Bedfordshire is still keen to have use of the space, and so a joint use would be most suitable.

A meeting will be arranged between the Academy of Central Bedfordshire, Ward Member Dixon and Councillors Mrs Anderson and Cooper.

42/22 BUDGET & RESERVES REVIEW

Members considered a budget update and reserves status report and considered any action necessary before the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED that any remaining funds in this committee's budget at the end of the financial year are vired as follows:

- Any funds remaining at year end in Teasel/Centenary Wood budget is to be vired to Teasel Earmarked Reserve.
- Any funds other than Teasel/Centenary Wood budget remaining at year end, to be vired to the Rec Rolling Improvements Earmarked Reserves.

43/22 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.

Bench in Church Road near Oliver's Lane – chase repair

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

Refer to other parties

- Bench in Church Road near Oliver's Lane, damage has been reported previously – chase repair
- Common Road green area leading to Princes' Street – Cherry tree with epicormic growth which has been cut away on one side only and needs the other side cutting back.
- Bench from Millennium Green which was missing, has been found on the bank of the River in Great Close Meadow. It needs repairing and replacing.

44/22 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY

It has been noted that x2 trees have been planted in Vaughan Road and Trinity Road, and x4 in Coppice Mead.

Councillors Hayes and Cooper have met with a representative of the Internal Drainage Board (IDB – Barry Cannon) regarding access to Pix Brook in Sorrell Drive. A dropped kerb has been provided to allow maintenance access, however bollards have been installed which block that access. Once the area has been

transferred to the town council, the Handyman Contractor will be asked to remove two bollards and install two drop-down bollards, chargeable to the IDB.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.12pm

MINUTES APPROVED (date):

SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN: