

# MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2023, AT 7.18PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE.

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## Committee Members present:

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

## Also present:

Mrs K Elliott-Turner – Town Clerk and one staff member attended virtually

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### **1/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none, as all committee members were present.

### **2/23 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS ON MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE AGENDA AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

There were no disclosures of members interests or 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.

### **3/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES**

None present.

### **4/23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee meeting held on 15th December 2022 are confirmed as a correct record.

### **5/23 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION**

#### Clerk's Report

We have received the following date on the EV Charge Point project:  
"Central Beds Council have a proposal on the table from BP Pulse (their contracted Charge Point Operator) for the installation of 1x 50kW rapid charge point in the car park adjacent to Stotfold Football Club, subject to agreements and detail being worked through. Once legal agreements are signed, the project can be handed over to BP Pulse's Implementation Team to draw up the detailed scheme and provide more accurate timescales. Central Beds Council hope that the unit can be installed within the next 3-4 months".

For information, this Friday they are starting installation work for the Memorial Hall car park. The Brook Street installation is in February, and a date is to be confirmed.

### **6/23 PROJECT UPDATES**

Members noted the following updates:

- Tractor shed – work to line the ceiling and remove inner walls has been completed, smoke detector and sounder are scheduled to be completed in the next week, door lock has been changed, emergency flood kit relocated to container and racking for the container is on order.

- Arlesey Road – outdoor gym area completed, play area completed, MUGA completion was delayed due to poor weather before Christmas – work has now recommenced.
- Riverside Playing Field – work to complete fencing at the MUGA was delayed due to poor weather before Christmas, now due to be completed week beginning 9th January.

### 7/23 THE GREEN HEDGING

Members considered a request from a resident of The Green, to remove and replace the Beech hedging on The Green, adjacent to his property.

The hedge, which is quite straggly, should have been maintained under the Grass Cutting & Landscaping Contract, but appears to have been missed.

**RESOLVED** that we respond to explain that we understand his desire for privacy, he is within his rights to put a fence up on his boundary, and we will ensure that the Beech hedge is maintained going forward.

### 8/23 CENTENARY WOOD – FOOT BRIDGE

The old foot bridge crossing the ditch from Malthouse Lane into Centenary Wood was constructed using wooden beams. These have now rotted, and the bridge has become very unstable. Members considered a quote to dismantle and dispose of the existing bridge, set two concrete bases either side of the ditch, and supply and install 3m long x 1.5m wide pedestrian bridge manufactured from galvanised steel with aluminium checker plate walking platform and two rail handrail. Cost £5,379.63 plus vat.

**RESOLVED** that the quote from Gilks Fencing at £5,379.63 to supply and install a replacement footbridge and disposal of the current bridge, is accepted.

### 9/23 DRAFT LIGHTING POLICY

Members considered a draft Lighting Policy for adoption. This document outlines the background, i.e. we own some of the lights in the town, how they are currently maintained, how this is funded, possible aims and objectives we might have for their existence, maintenance, etc, our policy for repairs (which feeds into the street light contract), clarifying reporting of faults, and adoption of new areas of street lighting. This document will support the contract tender and will highlight our policy to developers.

**RESOLVED** that the draft Lighting Policy is adopted, with the option of bi-annual inspections, rather than weekly scouting.

### 10/23 THE HAVEN

Members considered proposals for the land in front of The Haven to create a public space, and actions required to enable this regarding land ownership.

Investigations have been made into applying for a Stopping Up Order for the area in front of The Haven, which falls within the highway boundary.

Land falling within the highway boundary gives people the right of passage across that land, with rights managed and administered by Central Beds Council as the local highway authority. The term “stopping up” means that highway land ceases to be a highway and the public rights of way are extinguished in law. If an order is

successfully made on the public highway, then the land is free of any highway authority control, and control then reverts to the original land owner who would be free to enforce access or sell or dispose of land as they saw fit.

Following a Land Registry search, the title deeds and plan indicate that although the land is shown as being transferred from Central Bedfordshire Council to Grand Union Housing, this specific area plus others, are excluded from the title, as it comprises highway maintained at the public expense.

As we would wish to keep it as a public space, and for ease, Central Beds Council has suggested that we could investigate a licence to enable the Town Council to carry out work within the highway extent.

## Aims

- To create a welcoming space for the public, removing all previous trip hazards and unsightly construction.
- To provide a 'community garden', by way of raised planters with herbs, etc, encouraging the community to plant, weed and help themselves to herbs, etc
- To provide a central focal point for the town's Christmas tree, by installing a purpose-built socket and sourcing appropriate power supply for lighting.

## Proposals

### New surfacing – resin bound gravel

The current paving slabs would be taken up, and the shrubs/plants in the beds would be removed. The surface would be levelled, and resin bound gravel (similar to around Greenacre Centre and Cemetery Walled Garden of Rest) would be laid to ensure a flat, safe surface.

### Raised beds – community garden

Construct raised beds, from brick, to match (if possible) those of the adjoining bungalow. This ensures good aesthetics, longevity, and accessibility to the 'community garden'. It is felt that brick would last longer and be easier to maintain than wooden sleeper construction. Raised beds will allow the elderly to make use of them, and will remove the risk of dog fouling in them. The raised beds would follow the boundary wall with the bungalows and the boundary with the adjacent access to Olympic Court, to the side of Satchells Estate Agents. Plants such as popular herbs (no mint, as spreads too readily), tomatoes, flowers, etc to be planted in the beds – suggest a working group of volunteers - residents, councillors, etc organise a 'planting up day'. The community will be encouraged to make use of the 'community garden', to water and weed it.

### Christmas tree socket

A purpose-built tree socket will be installed in the resin gravel surface, towards the front and centre of the site, to house the town's annual Christmas tree. This is a more central location than outside the Greenacre Centre and can be seen by all who travel along the High Street, our main thoroughfare. It will ensure that correct construction has been followed and allows for a variety of sized tree trunks to be slotted in and fixed securely.

**RESOLVED** that a licence to carry out the above proposal is pursued from Central Bedfordshire Council, and that a further proposal is to establish a water supply to enable planters to be watered as required.

#### **11/23 NAMING OF OPEN SPACE TO REAR OF ASPEN GARDENS**

**RESOLVED** that once adopted by the Town Council, the land to the rear of Aspen Gardens is to be named Jubilee Meadow. This is because the original intention was for the transfer to be completed during the Jubilee year of the late Queen Elizabeth II.

#### **12/23 BRIDGE LINK FROM RIVERSIDE PLAYING FIELD TO LAND REAR OF ASPEN GARDENS**

Members noted that although the Master Plan for the development shows points where pedestrian bridge access would link the 'Jubilee Meadow' land to Riverside Playing Field, this is not an obligation on the developers to provide the bridges.

Once the land is adopted, it would be for the council to put in one or more bridges, as appropriate.

**RESOLVED** that once the land is adopted by the council, a single tractor bridge, which can also be used by pedestrians, is installed to link Riverside Playing Field with the land to be adopted – in the area where people already cross through, roughly in the centre of the boundary of the section being adopted. This will involve removal of a few small trees.

#### **13/23 ADOPTION OF LAND REAR OF ASPEN GARDENS**

Members considered whether they were in a position to adopt the land to the rear of Aspen Gardens 'Jubilee Meadow'.

Previous discussions felt that the land was not yet in a suitable condition for us to adopt, and that matters such as tree planting had not yet been completed. The land doesn't come with a commuted sum.

**RESOLVED** that once the planned trees are planted, we will then adopt the land.

#### **14/23 ARLESEY ROAD – OVERFLOW CAR PARK**

Members considered a request to provide surfacing to the current grass overflow parking area at Arlesey Road. A member explained the reasoning for the request is that the plans for the football facility included overflow parking for 39 cars on the grass playing field.

To correct a misunderstanding, it was explained that it was never planned to be created as a hard surface car park, only that it was space to be used as grass overflow parking, and we could choose to hard surface or grass-crete it at another time, after completion of the football facility, etc if felt necessary and if funds allowed. The plans for the newly installed MUGA, play, gym equipment also corroborate this, as the space which is allocated for grass parking has been left as such and is bounded by a footway leading to the equipment, deliberately so that overflow parking can continue within that space.

A cost will be sought for surfacing options for the overflow parking area for consideration by committee at a future meeting.

**15/23 HIGHWAYS REPORT**

Members considered a report from our Highways Representative, Councillor Smith:

Whilst updates are limited to the holiday season there are some updates below.

**Status Updates:**

<b>Site</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Action</b>
Silver Birch Avenue	New Pavement Overlay failures	Contractor has been chased, no date to rectify. Regularly chasing this issue. <b>No update.</b>
The Green	Blocked Drains/Gulley's	Contractor needs to revisit after initially marking as completed. Scott at CBC is chasing this for us. <b>Another revisit required.</b>
Regent Street	Blocked Drains/Gulley's	Road Closure is required so contractors can access drains and gulleys on both sides of the road. I have asked why this hasn't been planned yet. Awaiting answer. <b>No date has been given for the work.</b>
High Street, Brook Street to Crossroads	Blocked Drains/Gulley's	This was initially marked as completed in June but the contractor has since admitted that they didn't do anything. Scott has asked for this, The Green and Regents street be completed as soon as possible. <b>Nothing yet, although it has been noted that Anglian water has been looking at some of the drains separately</b>
Astwick Road Corner	Traffic Calming and Bus Stop removal	Scheduled for the end of September. This did not happen, still waiting for an answer as why this is the case and what the plan is now. <b>Planned start date of 23<sup>rd</sup> January</b>
Brayes Manor	Pavement repair	CBC have agreed that Pavements need to be resurfaced, no current date for repair. <b>No update.</b>

Regent Street	Pothole near Meadow Way	Have been promised that this is on the schedule for repair. <b>No date yet and other pot holes in this area have been reported.</b>
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Other issues being, or to be, addressed:

**Speed limit signs on the High Street:** Highways improvement are blocking any banner sign requests so this is a work in progress. They have promised to review the speed limit signage.

**High Street Potholes:** These have been ‘made safe’, although some repairs have already failed. New reports have been logged.

**School line markings near St. Mary’s:** These are on the schedule to be repainted but no date yet. **No update**

**Double Yellow Lines on the corner of St. Mary’s Avenue and Church Road:** We have been asked by a resident for Yellow lines to be added to the above junction. It can be almost impossible to see oncoming traffic in either direction when exiting St Mary’s Avenue as cars park right up to the junction. I have asked the Traffic Management Team at CBC to investigate this for us. **As of 03/01/2023 the consultation A00368 Church Road, Walnut Close, Upperstone Close, Stotfold, has been published. This closes on 13<sup>th</sup> January. The result should be the introduction of waiting restrictions on these junctions.**

**Tansy Avenue/A507 Junction:** The Highways Improvement team will be reviewing this stretch of road where both traffic flow into the estate and the view of oncoming traffic from Willowherb Way is regularly blocked by parked vehicles.

#### 16/23 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.

#### Items reported for action

- The zebra crossing outside EH Crouch – one of the poles is unlit on the Avenue side of the High Street
- There are numerous large potholes on the speed table at Norton Road by Murrell Lane junction
- 1 to 3 Hallworth Drive – a reminder letter respectfully requesting that they cut back overhanging vegetation from footpath 11, running between Brook Street and High Street

#### 17/24 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.20pm

**MINUTES APPROVED (date):**

**SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN:**