

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24th MAY 2023, AT 7.15PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE.

Committee Members present:

Mrs M Cooper (Chairman), L Anderson, S Buck, A Hall, S Hayes, J Hyde, B Saunders, J Smith, J Talbot

Also present:

Ms C Jenkins – Assistant Clerk and 2 Members of the public

56/23 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Members were asked to nominate a Vice-Chairman for the committee. Councillor Anderson was nominated and seconded.

RESOLVED that Councillor Liz Anderson is the Vice-Chairman of the Recreation Grounds, public Lands and Lighting Committee.

57/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All members were present.

58/23 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.

59/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

This enquiry was originally raised with Stotfold Town Council in December 2021. The resident raised his concerns about the use of plastic tree guards, especially on the new estates and areas of Tansy Avenue 507 roundabout, Roecroft Lower School, Sorrell drive, Etonbury Academy and Pix Brook Academy. It was noted that the trees at Jubilee Meadow also had plastic guards.

Stotfold Town Council raised the concern to Central Bedfordshire Council, but at the time there was no viable alternative to plastic guards. It was agreed that if any planting was undertaken by the Town Council, plastic tree guards would not be used. The Town Council would also ask organisations to refrain from using plastic guards but could not insist on this.

The hedging around the play area at Arlesey Road has recently had most of the guards removed as the area establishes itself. It was noted that planting at Pix Brook academy inside the perimeter of the school is the schools responsibility. Outside the perimeter would fall under Central Bedfordshire Council.

The resident was asked if the plastic tree guards are recyclable? It was thought yes, if they are returned to the manufacturer. They are not permitted to be placed in your own household recycling.

Members stated that tree guards should not be removed from trees just because they are plastic. Guards are used to protect trees when they are developing. The resident would like to see no more use of plastic for this reason.

It was also noted that the National Trust, Woodland Trust and all National Parks do not use plastic for their tree guards.

60/23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee meeting held on 12th April 2023 are confirmed as a correct record.

61/23 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Matters Arising – councillors asked for an update on the funding available for the upkeep of our football pitches. A report was being put together regarding the condition of all our football pitches. This will then be used to apply for the funding. It was also noted that this funding was agreed should be concentrated at Arlesey Road. The junior football club will be asked to confirm how many pitches it marks out on the site, and what size.

It was asked about the new sign for Little London footpath which was asked to be purchased. Quotes have been received for this, but it was felt a nicer design could be sourced for the sign. This is ongoing at present.

It was also discussed whether the previous landscape contractor would consider a monthly or periodic walkabout of the football pitches. It was considered but felt that the previous contractor would not be interested in this task.

It was discussed whether a 2nd vehicle will be purchased soon for the Town Rangers. The 2nd Town Ranger begins work on 19th June 2023. There will be a period of time when both rangers will work together, so a 2nd vehicle is not needed immediately. It was also noted to make secure provision for and new vehicle to be stored.

62/23 CPM PLAYGROUNDS QUOTES

Members were given a quotation from CPM Playgrounds for items to be replaced and repaired. Items were as follows:

- Riverside Playing fields – new cable, stop, trolley and seat - £1100.00+ VAT
- Greenacre Park – remove and dispose of gates, install 5 new gates, reinstate tarmac – £ 11460.00+ VAT
- The Green – remove and install new gate £1850.00

Members felt that item 10 of this agenda, s106 money could be used for maintenance and repairs. There was also s106 money from the Greenacre area. It was noted that the S106 money stated in item 10 needs to be allocated to projects, not necessarily spent.

It was requested that the zip wire at Riverside be replaced with a spring stop, rather than a tyre stop. It was felt that spring stop are far more resilient and environmentally friendly.

Members also raised the installation of the bridge from Riverside playing fields to Jubilee meadow. If there is s106 money remaining, this is to be used to fund the bridge and installation at Riverside Playing fields.

RESOLVED that s106 money will be used to fund the repairs at The Green and Riverside Playing fields at a total cost of £2950.00. should any funds remain they should be used towards the installation of the bridge between Riverside Playing field and Jubilee Meadow.

Greenacre S106 money will be used to fund the repairs at Greenacre Park at a cost of £11460.00.

63/23 JUBILEE MEADOW, STOTFOLD

Members discussed the adoption of this area, as it is now in a good condition from the developer.

It was suggested during future grass maintenance, to follow paths mown where it has already been cut for people to walk. Area will need to be cut this year, consisting of a haycut and raking of debris. This is to be monitored over 2 years.

A quote is now needed for a vehicle bridge to be installed over the ditch, from Riverside playing field to Jubilee meadow. The location has already been marked. It will need to be a wider bridge, manufactured with more steel. Once constructed this will enable a full circular walk of the area.

Following sightings of horses being led around Riverside playing fields and across the football pitch area, members asked for a notice to be erected to state horses should be kept to the bridleways and not the Playing field area.

RESOLVED

- to contact developer with a view to adopt green areas at Jubilee meadow.
- to maintain mown paths at Jubilee meadow.
- Quote needed for wider vehicle bridge between Riverside and Jubilee meadow
- Sign to be displayed in Riverside Car park for no horses and ownership details of land.

64/23 GRAFFITI PLAN – HITCHIN ROAD CONTAINER

Members discussed the offer from Grand Union housing to fund a new graffiti project for the Hitchin Road container. Members were very pleased at the results from last years project at the youth shelter on Riverside playing fields. The same artist will be asked to redo the shelter at Riverside, as some tags in his work have appeared. He will consult with the local youth as to a theme for the graffiti.

RESOLVED: that the graffiti artist would be given go ahead to consult with the local youth on a theme for the Hitchin Road container. To let the Town Council know of the theme, followed by carrying out the work on the container, plus additional work needed at Riverside Playing fields on the Youth Shelter.

65/23 SECTION 106 UPDATE OF FUNDS

Members had already discussed this subject during item 62/23 earlier in the meeting.

RESOLVED: note 62/23 where s106 money has already been allocated for use.

66/23 NORTON ROAD ALLOTMENT FENCING

Members discussed quotations received for sections of fencing at Norton Road allotments

Green fencing has been installed by the farmer along the left and front area of the allotment site. Part of this has been knocked over and people are gaining access here for their own private path. Allotments holders are seeing people walking through their plots.

Small trees have already been planted to fill the gaps, but fencing will allow security whilst the new trees grow.

RESOLVED:

- Fencing will be installed at Norton Road allotments at the front left side to enable security of the site. Costs £667.38 inc VAT

The right side of the allotment site also needs gaps in the hedge to be filled to enable security of the site. It has been noted that part of the hedge and fencing will need to be removed to enable a new straight fence to be installed, costs £10,388.08 inc VAT.

Both Teasel and allotment holders have expressed their desire to lay and install a new hedge on this side. This cannot be done this year, due to funds and avoiding the nesting season. This should be planned for next year.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

- To write to Teasel to ask if they would be willing to attend the next committee meeting to discuss if they would help with the hedge laying, Town Council to cover reasonable costs.
- To write to all allotment holders on the right side of the allotment site, to let them know of the future decision to relay the boundary hedge along the right side of the site.
- To reconsider this project in September/October 2023.

67/23 REQUEST FROM STOTFOLD LADIES

28 Stotfold ladies would like to start playing netball at the Riverside Muga. Members expressed that this should be encouraged to use the facility, provided that the users know there are no other facilities there, ie toilets.

Members then discussed the purchasing netball hoops and storage of these. They would need to be portable, as the MUGA will be used for Netball and Tennis, so safe storage for the nets and hoops would be required.

Members discussed the possibility of a compound on site, large enough to house both portable hoops and tennis nets, with a coded padlock access. Access can be given to users by the office. An area was suggested which would need to be deemed suitable. It was noted that another container would attract individuals to climb on the container, so a compound was thought to be the better option.

The contractor is returning to mark out the tennis court, they will be asked to mark out a netball court aswell.

It was also noted that the basketball hoop and backboard on the MUGA still needs to be replaced.

RESOLVED: that the Stotfold Ladies be given permission to use the area for netball. Once the area has been cleaned and the area has been marked up for netball and tennis, they will be notified. Quotations for 2 portable netball hoops will be sourced. Dimensions for the compound will be checked against the size of the hoops and quotations will be sourced for this to be constructed.

68/23 UPDATE ON RIVERSIDE SURFACE TREATMENT

Members noted that the extra treatment requested for the re-sanding of the Muga at Riverside playing fields has been quoted at £95.00.

RESOLVED that the re-sanding of the Riverside MUGA be added to the existing work to be carried out.

69/23 HIGHWAYS REPORT

A report received from Councillor Smith, Highways Representative:

- Noted that staffing is down at CBC Highways, many people have left to join Highways England, there is currently no highways improvement team.
- Central Bedfordshire council will be monitoring the top of Church Road for flooding.
- Various potholes are being mended.
- A bench will be installed outside the doctors surgery for people who are waiting.
- There will be a consultation organised by Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the A507 and Tansy Avenue parking, but no date has been set for this.

70/23 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.

- Sink hole appearing outside 30 Coppice Mead.
- Hedge overhanging footway at 41 coppice mead – request resident to trim back hedge.
- Tubs in High Street were flooded for several weeks – Town Ranger to investigate
- Dog bin – requested for Brook street was completed quickly.
- New inclusive swing seat Hitchin road Rec – sun damaged and cracking and needs replacing.
- £800 has been spent from Teasel grant for memorial trees to be planted at the nature reserve. The supplier will be paid out of Teasel grant money.

- Arlesey Road Car Park surface – potholes need to be filled in, Town Ranger could do this? As site has been used as a temporary car park by builders on Arlesey Road, a request for scalpings to fill the holes will be made .
- Next committee meeting – extension to Arlesey Road car park. This has been suggested but never discussed by committee regarding costings etc – prices to be requested for grasscrete.
- July 2022 – 106/22 – a report was produced regarding grounds maintenance, mowing and spraying. This has never been produced before the committee. This will be discussed at the next committee meeting.
- Fix my street – councillors stated there are around 52,000 insurance claims to the AA for damages to cars from potholes nationally. To fix them is not a responsibility of the Town Council. Fix my Street app being the correct avenue to report potholes.

71/23 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY

Councillors received complaints that grass for dog walking on millennium green had not been cut. Millennium green is not part of the grass cutting contract and is cut by the local farmer, free of charge, twice a year. He then takes a hay crop from the cut. This is usually completed before the May or October mill events.

The grass cutting at Brook street was noted to be messy and grass not collected after the cut. It was stated that grass clippings have never been collected up. This years growth has been exceptional and possibly the same for next year. Common Road allotments have some areas of grass that are at shoulder height.

It was discussed whether the Central Bedfordshire Councils Flood Gauge had been installed yet. It has not been installed as it is not able to be sited on Anglian water land, and there is no access to Valerian Way. It was noted there is also no suitable flat area.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.45pm

MINUTES APPROVED (date):

SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN: