

Committee Members present: Mrs M Cooper (Chairman)

Mrs A Clarey	A Cooper
S Hayes	B Saunders
J Talbot	

Also present: Councillor Dhaliwal and the Town Clerk

71/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Bundock, Collier, Mrs Hyde and Stoter.

72/15 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

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.

73/15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

No public present.

74/15 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Correspondence received

For information, correspondence has been received from a resident, previously circulated to Members, complaining about the state of the grass verges either side of footpath 11 where it passes the Pig & Whistle boundary. Work is now underway to fence off the site for the approved housing development, and the resident expresses concern about the lack of space which will result once fenced off, with overgrown verges. The correspondence has been passed on to Central Beds Council Rights of Way Officer and Planning Department for their attention. The Rights of Way Officer advises that he has spoken with the Planning Officer and left a message for the applicant's agent to ensure that the footpath edges that are overgrown are cut back prior to the fencing and the obvious encroachment onto the footpath. He will be visiting the site on 11th June. The resident has written again and advises that following his previous letter the fencing is now installed.

Matters Arising

Minute 57/15 – as reported to full Council at their meeting on 3rd June, the following update has been received from Amey's new Client Liaison Manager, Keeley Russell, regarding the town improvements walkabout and Road Safety Audit. Email correspondence from her advises that "the Road Safety Audit report is now with Central Beds Council and they are reviewing the information. They are aware that there are snagging issues that need to be rectified and these will be rectified along with the recommendations from the Road Safety Audit. There have been suggestions that Central Beds Council, Amey and the Area Steward will be doing a walk around with the Town Council to look at a more extensive snagging list and all the recommendations will be rectified at the same time as the Road Safety Audit. There has also been a recommendation to complete any outstanding works in the school summer holidays to minimise disruption".

Minute 68/15 – Liz Anderson, Central Beds Council Ecologist has visited the Hitchin Road underpass following our request and advises that there are several species of wildflower growing there, including bee orchids. She has asked for the grass cutting contractor to not cut the area any more this year and not to cut a 1m area beside the path as she previously suggested. She has also highlighted a local authority's duty to 'have regard to biodiversity' under the NERC Act. A copy of the Government's guidance on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act was circulated to Members for information. A lengthy discussion took place regarding the wish to maintain this area as it is one of the main entrances into the

town and should be kept tidy. The wish to preserve biodiversity is also acknowledged. Members were reminded that we have a contract with Central Beds Highways for a minimum of 4 cuts of the underpass (Stotfold side) and that we receive a contribution towards our costs for doing so. Our grass cutting contractor is contracted to cut the underpass 8 times per year. The Clerk will contact Highways, who originally asked the Town Council to maintain the area following complaints, and will ask if cutting 1m either side of the path and leaving the rest wild would be agreeable to them, explaining that we have been warned by the Ecologist in relation to the NERC Act. As the grass cutting contractor has been asked to hold off this week's scheduled cut, he will be asked to trial a 1m wide stripe either side of the path.

75/15 INCLUSIVE PLAY EQUIPMENT

At the March meeting of this Committee, Members considered provision of inclusive play equipment, examples of types of equipment available, together with possible funding sources. More detailed information was circulated to Members for this meeting to enable Committee to consider areas to site inclusive play equipment, how to plan inclusive play areas, investigations made to determine the need for such equipment and funding sources and amounts available (report available on file).

After a lengthy discussion regarding the need for such equipment, pros and cons of each of our play and recreation areas, the acknowledgement that much of our current play equipment is old and uninteresting to children, and the desire to see future projects to replace equipment to enable all children to use and enjoy it, it was:

RESOLVED that the current available section 106 money for children's play equipment in the sum of £23,539 as a maximum budget is allocated to fund a project for inclusive play equipment. Should additional funds be required, these can be sought through external grants. The site will be at Hitchin Road Recreation Ground and further quotes are to be sought for the following pieces of inclusive play equipment (to include required amount of wet pour surfacing): wheelchair use roundabout (2.4m and 1.8m), springer seats with back rests, 'Flint unit' as provided by GL Jones Playgrounds – low level, wide slide with steps and half pipe climb. Quotes to be considered at the July meeting.

76/15 GENERAL WORK

Resolved that the following is actioned as appropriate:

Highways

- Column 1 Pix Road is not working

Handyman

- A bolt/nut on the back slat of the bench on High Street is missing and needs replacing

Lighting contractor

- Column S17 Hitchin Road (near Pix Road junction) is not working

77/15 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Councillors Mrs Cooper and Hayes, have carried out an inspection of our play areas using the ROSPA report produced in May. The handyman had already started work on some of the items, additional work items have been highlighted to him.

The Clerk advised that she had received information that a person had recently been seen on The Green using a metal detector and had dug between 20 to 30 small holes. Where they had replaced the turf it has now died. Metal detecting on land without the owner's consent is illegal and so a watch is being put on the area.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.34pm

CHAIRMAN

DATED