

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 730PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SIMPSON CENTRE, STOTFOLD**

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Committee Members present: Mrs M Cooper (Chairman)

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| Mrs S Bundock | B Collier  |
| S Hayes       | Mrs J Hyde |
| B Saunders    | L Stoter   |
| J Talbot      |            |

Also present: The Town Clerk

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**99/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Clarey and Cooper.

**100/15 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS ON MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE AGENDA**

Councillors Mrs Hyde and Hayes declared an interest in the agenda item relating to allotment fees as they are Trustees of the Eleemosynary Charity of William Field which owns the Common Road Allotments. Councillor Talbot declared an interest in the same item as he is a plot holder at the Common Road Allotments. Members were reminded that if any time during the meeting they feel they have an interest in an item being discussed, they should declare it at that point.

**101/15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES**

There were no members of the public present.

**102/15 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION**

**Matters Arising**

Minute 83/15 – the S106 application for funding to provide the inclusive play equipment for Hitchin Road Recreation Ground has been approved and an order raised for the equipment. Sutcliffe Play anticipates installation will take place during September.

Minute 87/15 – highway works to improve safety around the St Mary's Academy area of Rook Tree Lane have been completed.

Minute 90/15 – an open day has been arranged for Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September, 10am to 4pm at the Arlesey Road site to highlight the types of community uses that could be accommodated. Those attending include Play Innovation with their Street Snooker games wall, DRN Power Kites (weather permitting), Bedfordshire County Archery Association (weather permitting), Wicksteed Playgrounds will be bringing a selection of outdoor gym equipment, Pure Light Holistic Yoga for children, Regiment Fitness 'bootcamp' and refreshments. Volunteers are being sought to help out with marshalling the parking, manning a Town Council stand, and obtaining views of those attending as to the sorts of things they would like to see at the site.

**103/15 ALLOTMENT FEES**

Members were asked to consider the current allotment plot tenancy rates, and whether to apply an increase for the allotment year commencing 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016, giving the required one year's notice. Current rates are £40 full plot, £20 half plot. No change was made to charges last year, applying to this September. Any increase applied to Norton Road Allotments will also apply to Common Road Allotments being managed by the Town Council on behalf of the Eleemosynary Charity of William Field.

Having previously declared an interest, Councillor Talbot left the meeting during voting on this item. Councillors Mrs Hyde and Hayes remained in the room and took part in the voting as they are Town Council appointed Trustees on the Charity.

**RESOLVED** that no increase is made to the allotment fees for Norton Road and Common Road Allotments for year commencing 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016, and that they remain at £40 full plot and £20 half plot.

#### **104/15 TREE SURVEY REPORTS**

Members considered the tree survey reports compiled by Bob Morwood Tree Consultant and any works required for Riverside Playing Field, The Green and Hitchin Road Recreation Ground.

**RESOLVED** that the Chairman, Clerk and one other Committee Member undertake a walkabout using the tree survey report to identify required works, to be reported to a future Committee together with quotes for such work.

#### **105/15 PIX BROOK UPDATE**

Members were previously provided with a copy of an update from Councillor Talbot, together with correspondence from a resident, at the last Council meeting following a meeting held with Alistair Burt MP and the River Ivel Drainage Board regarding recent flooding events at Pix Brook and future flood prevention work. A copy of Councillor Talbot's update report is available on file. The Clerk advised that she had spoken with Iain Finnigan, Senior Engineer, Flood Risk Management team at Central Beds Council regarding reports on the flooding from the River Ivel Drainage Board and Central Beds Council, together with recommendations for solutions. He advises that the River Ivel Drainage Board report will not be made public as they are currently subject to several litigation processes, however the Central Beds Council report is due to be completed in about 2 weeks, and then once approved, will be made public via the Central Beds Council website. Iain Finnigan has advised that their investigation is not a quick process and there is no quick fix to the problem.

A copy extract of a report from the River Ivel Drainage Board produced in 2004 regarding the balancing reservoir expansion at Standalone Farm was circulated to Members for information. At a River Ivel Drainage Board meeting in 2012 the Board was asked about the reservoir flood gates and whether there was a risk of flooding to Stotfold and Pix Brook. The Director of Operations for the Board had stated that there was always a risk of flooding. One of the 3 gates had a fault but work was carried out and the reservoir was inspected. He advised that it was working as designed but was not as effective as it could be. Members queried whether this design issue was now resolved.

#### **106/15 TOWN IMPROVEMENT WORKS & ROOK TREE LANE HIGHWAY WORKS**

Councillor B Saunders (Ward Member) advised that although previously advised that the road safety works outside St Mary's Academy were complete, they are not yet finished. A delay had occurred in putting down the red imprint surface; however he has been advised that this will be carried out shortly. He was asked to query with Highways: the promise by Nick Carofalo, Highways Area Steward, that the footway on the corner by the Chequers pub would be resurfaced at the same time, as it has not been done.

With regard to snagging work following the town improvement works, the Brook Street/Hitchin Road roundabout realignment work has been completed together with associated road marking, however as the weather turned bad the roundabout took priority and there has been no time to programme in other remedial works.

The Arlesey Road/High Street junction verges have been raked and reinstated.

The contractor for the lighting columns has not been available and so the old Baldock Road lighting columns have not yet been removed.

Keeley Russell, Client Liaison Manager for Amey advises that she will make a new snagging list, which will include items such as vegetation growing through newly laid tarmac.

The Town Council has been asked if they would take ownership and maintenance responsibility for flower tubs if Highways/Amey replace the old ones removed and damaged during the improvement works. The Committee agreed to take ownership and maintenance responsibility for replaced flower tubs, which are to be the style of the new tubs on the Brook Street/High Street junction. Locations to be determined.

Comments made by the Committee to feedback to the Amey Client Liaison Manager

- Query when the electrical work on the Brook Street/Hitchin Road roundabout is to be completed.
- Suggest that the roundabout triangle marking on Hitchin Road (nearest traffic lights) is raised as a hump to encourage drivers to go around the roundabout and not over it, as when doing so, vehicles are on the wrong side of the roundabout.
- Generally the Brook Street/Hitchin Road roundabout is very much improved.
- At the Brook Street/High Street junction, road markings are required to indicate that cyclists may be coming out onto High Street, as marked at the bottom end of Brook Street. The signage, mounted high up, is not sufficient for cyclist safety.
- The disabled parking space marked outside the parade of shops is not as per the required minimum size.
- Query what is being programmed to cure the High Street drainage problems that Highways have been aware of for many years. Also query where the £50k allocated for High Street drainage works has gone.
- One of the 3 Silver Birch trees planted in the verge on Hitchin Road after cycle/pedestrian track work is now dead and requires replacing.

#### **107/15 TREES ON HIGH STREET**

For information, following notification from David Alderman, Central Beds Council Arboricultural Officer, about planned tree work for the High Street, one of the trees has since been felled as part of it had collapsed. Following a query from a High Street resident as to whether the felled tree and the second one proposed to be felled would be replaced by two trees or one, Mr Alderman has confirmed that ideally they would like to replace tree for tree but practically this may not be possible. They should be able to plant outside no. 33 but the area of verge outside no. 35, if that tree is removed, is too small, without major excavation of the old stump. They are not certain if any underground services might be affected by new tree planting, once they have received plans of the service routes they will be better placed to answer the question.

A query was raised as to whether the remaining tree stump outside no. 33 has been treated to prevent new growth. This will be passed to Mr Alderman for a response.

#### **108/15 GENERAL WORK**

**Resolved** that the following is actioned as appropriate:

Highways

- The drain at the Rook Tree Lane/Regent Street junction is still suffering with subsidence and the hole is continuing to get deeper.
- The drain opposite no. 78 Regent Street is blocked, despite two either side being cleared.

Office

- Letter to owner of the Pig & Whistle Public House development site to request that they cut back the very overgrown hedge alongside the Brook Street cycle path, as a matter of urgency as it is compromising the safety of cyclists.

Landscape Contractor

- Cut back the overhanging branches of the trees and shrubs by the footway on Oliver's Lane – whole of section from the entrance to Home Close through to Church Road.
- Requested at the July Town Enhancement meeting - as it will ultimately be the responsibility of this Committee, ask our Landscape Contractor for advice and costings on required hard maintenance of the shrub area either side of The Avenue/High Street junction. Where this hard maintenance leaves spaces, could we take the opportunity to plant bulbs until the shrubs grow back.

Handyman Contractor

- Request a price to remove old peeling paint and re-paint the end façade of the Hitchin Road Recreation Ground (end nearest swings).
- Investigate possibility of repairs to the Festival of Britain Stotfold sign on the cross-roads traffic lights as it is looking shabby and worn, and provide advice/costings to the Committee.

**109/15 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY**

Nothing to report.

There being no further relevant business the meeting was closed at 8.30pm

**CHAIRMAN**

**DATED**