

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18TH MAY 2016 AT 7.24PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SIMPSON CENTRE, STOTFOLD

Committee Members present:

Mrs A Clarey	B Collier
A Cooper	Mrs M Cooper (elected Chairman)
S Hayes	Mrs J Hyde
S Jackson	C Phelps
B Saunders	J Talbot

Also present: the Town Clerk

190/16 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Nominations were called for; Councillor Mrs Cooper was proposed and seconded. There being no further nominations it was:

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs Cooper is elected Chairman of the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee for 2016/2017.

191/16 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Nominations were called for; Councillor Hayes was proposed and seconded. There being no further nominations it was:

RESOLVED that Councillor Hayes is elected Vice-Chairman of the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee for 2016/2017.

192/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

193/16 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS ON MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE AGENDA

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.

194/16 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

There were none.

195/16 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Clerk's Report

The half pipe skate ramp at Riverside Playing Field has recently been vandalised, with two wheelie bins being set alight in the middle of the ramp. The Handyman has been able to remove most of the melted plastic, but the heat from the fire has warped the ramp surface material. It appears that the ramp can still be used and we have not received any complaints to date, however this is not ideal.

Matters Arising

Minute 133/15 – With regard to the new planters on the parade of shops and at the top of Brook Street, the Stotfold Explorer Scouts Leader has advised that they have planted seeds and these are starting to grow. They plan to plant them either Thursday 19th or Thursday 26th, weather depending. Once they are in, a rota will be set up so that an Explorer checks them on their way to Explorers every

week to see if they need extra water/weeding. The leaders will also keep an eye on them between the Explorer checks.

Minute 178/16 – requests for bins made at the last meeting have been forwarded to Central Beds Council. With regard to provision of a new Town Council bin at The Green (Common Road entrance), we had a bin in stock, however its ground fixings are currently being altered by Mr Clark to ensure that it stays in the ground securely. With regard to the bin at the children’s play area on The Green, reported to be a metal dustbin with a wooden surround, this hasn’t been in situ for over a year and was replaced.

Minute 179/16 – with regard to the removal of a limb of a tree adjacent to 9 Hitchin Road and the area of property they have recently purchased from the Town Council, A1 Tree Surgery, and our Solicitor, advise that they are unable to carry out this work until the end of the nesting season as the overgrown ivy area of the tree is likely to have birds nesting at this time. The area is being marked out again and a quote will be obtained for consideration later in the year. The legal transfer document required that the owners of 9 Hitchin Road undertake to fence their new area within 3 months of purchase, however this has been extended until October to allow for the end of the nesting season and work to be carried out.

Minute 180/16 – x3 signs have been purchased and will be erected on the fence at The Green regarding unauthorised notices/banners. Cost £26 each plus vat.

Minute 184/16 – unfortunately, a second comparison quote for the alternative rubber fibre surfacing has not yet been obtained. This will be available for the June meeting. Councillor Hayes confirmed that he had clarified with one of the previous quote providers that the rubber surfacing is laid on top of the existing surface.

Minute 133/15 – with regard to previous discussions on Section 106 monies available and following discussions at the May Council meeting, Councillor Saunders provided confirmation on Section 106 monies available that might be useful for this Committee:

Figures provided by Lisa White, Section 106 Officer, February 2016

Recreational Open Space, Children’s Play £33,388.55 (can be used to provide children’s play equipment)

Informal Open Space £4,148.09 (can be used for improvement of green spaces – BBQs, seats, fencing)

Outdoor Sport £13,536.12 (can be used for creation of new outdoor sports space)

In November 2015, following investigations and recommendations from the Arlesey Road Working Party, £39,000 from Section 106 monies was identified to be used for provision of outdoor gym equipment and play equipment, with monies from this Committee’s earmarked reserves being used to provide picnic benches, gate, etc.

Councillor Saunders advised that with regard to requests from the football club for the Arlesey Road site, floodlights for general public use could be funded by Section 106 monies for Outdoor Sport.

As we need to demonstrate that we are providing a community facility on the site, over and above the football facility, we need to consider how any Section 106 monies could better benefit the wider general public using the site, such as providing fencing around the car park to prevent unauthorised access and damage to the site. This matter will be considered by the Arlesey Road Working Party in September, and any report or recommendations to come back to this Committee.

196/16 PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION ORDER 2016 & PUBLIC PATH CREATION ORDER 2016 – PART OF FOOTPATH NO. 7

Members were previously provided with a copy of a Notice making the above Order, an explanatory statement and a copy of the Order itself relating to footpath no. 7. A copy of correspondence from a resident giving their supporting view was also provided to Members for information.

RESOLVED that we have no objections to the Order diverting and creating a new section of footpath no. 7, subject to the Rights of Way Officer ensuring that the footpath is better signed.

197/16 A507 ROUNDABOUTS – TRAFFIC SPEEDS

Concern has been raised by a resident about the speed of vehicles using the A507 roundabouts, particularly the Norton Road roundabout now that an additional arm has been added serving the Land South of Stotfold development. The resident has suggested that roundabout traffic lights are installed to ease traffic congestion and reduce the risk of accidents. Members were reminded that all roundabouts on the A507 from Norton Road roundabout to the Shefford roundabout.

RESOLVED that with regard to the speed of traffic using the Norton Road roundabout, and others along the A507, this is to be referred to the Police to ask them to monitor. With regard to volume of traffic using the roundabouts, Highways is to be asked to conduct a traffic count to identify potential control systems, particularly with the increase in traffic from Stotfold's recent and upcoming developments.

Councillor Cooper advised that he had been approached by a resident who has a list of 10 people willing to start up Speed Watch in Stotfold. They have been asked to visit the office to provide their details and the Clerk will set up the Speed Watch training with the Police.

198/16 REPLACEMENT BENCH AT TAYLORS MILL

Following notification from Central Beds Councillor J Saunders on the condition of the bench opposite Taylors Mill, Members considered replacement of the bench. The bench has concrete ends and wooden seating slats. The concrete ends are breaking up due to age and there is a risk that the bench will collapse.

RESOLVED that a recycled plastic 'wooden' effect bench is purchased to replace the broken bench opposite Taylor's Mill. The cost is to be reported to the next available Committee meeting.

199/16 LITTER DISPOSAL FOLLOWING CIRCUS/FAIR VISIT

A query has been raised as to who should remove litter (from visiting caravans rather than visiting public) from a circus/fair visit to The Green. Guidance is required to clarify whether the litter can be left for the Town Council to dispose of, or to be taken away with the circus/fair.

RESOLVED that as visiting fairs and circuses pay for their period of stay at The Green, we will dispose of their domestic and visitor litter during that stay.

200/16 TRIANGLE AT WATERS END

Members considered actions to be taken following damage to the fence line between the triangular piece of open space in Waters End and the adjacent field. The Handyman and Grass Cutting Contractor recommend two options – repair wooden uprights with plastic coated chain-link fence or replace with wooden post and rail fencing. The repair is the cheaper option, however as children use the fence as a goal and climb over to retrieve their footballs, this is unlikely to last, and has already had previous repairs. Replacement post and rail fencing, although the more costly option, will last longer and be easier to maintain and repair in the future.

As the damage appears to have been caused by children using the fence as a football goal, it has been suggested that a goal post is installed. Members were concerned that this would make the

small grassed area more attractive to use for football and did not want to further encourage such use.

RESOLVED that post and rail fencing is installed to replace the fence line between the triangular piece of open space in Waters End and the adjacent field. Costs to be provided to the next meeting for consideration. The suggestion of installation of a goal post is not accepted.

201/16 USE OF THE GREEN – CLASSIC CAR & HOT ROD SHOW

Members considered a request to hold the annual Classic Car & Hot Rod Show on Saturday 6th August 2016 on The Green. Cars arrive from 12pm, although generally from 3pm and will have left by 9pm.

Concern was expressed about vehicle movements during the event and a potential clash with pedestrians visiting the show.

RESOLVED that The Green may be used for the annual Classic Car & Hot Rod Show on 6th August. Organisers are asked to ensure that vehicle entrants to the show please observe all regulations regarding speed restrictions and parking regulations and that there are no unnecessary vehicle movements during the event, in the interests of pedestrian safety.

202/16 TESCO BAGS OF HELP FUNDING – OUTDOOR GYM EQUIPMENT FOR ARLESEY ROAD

Members considered options and costs for outdoor gym equipment, in relation to a funding application for the Tesco Bags of Help funding. The deadline for funding applications in this round is Friday 3rd June at 12noon.

Due to the current staffing shortages, the Arlesey Road Working Party will assist the Clerk in putting together the funding application for outdoor gym equipment.

RESOLVED that a funding application is submitted to the Tesco Bags of Help grant scheme, using the quotes for outdoor gym provided. The Arlesey Road Working Party members will assist the Clerk in producing and submitting the application.

203/16 MUGA – STAFFING & CONDITION OF FACILITY

Staffing

One of our MUGA caretakers is currently very unwell. The second caretaker is providing short-term cover (length of time to be negotiated), to be taken over by our Handyman who will carry out basic checks and surface cleaning when required (this will be chargeable at his hourly rate). An advert has been placed in the Stotfold News.

Condition of facility

The MUGA has been subject to considerable vandalism over the last few months, with the chain-link fence to the rear, running alongside the 'little London' footpath repeatedly being cut up to gain unauthorised access. Recent vandalism has seen the wooden panels surrounding the court areas being broken, some have been removed for safety reasons but there are about 7 which need replacing.

Members considered the future of the MUGA, in terms of expenditure against the income received from regular hirers, current condition of the facility and future maintenance/replacement requirements, staffing requirements and continuous vandalism issues – with associated costs.

Councillor Collier advised that the MUGA structure was in fact provided by the former Mid Beds District Council (and therefore now owned by Central Beds Council) and they lease the piece of Town

Council owned land on which it sits (at a peppercorn rate – not claimed). The Town Council carries out maintenance and management of the facility, with associated costs.

After due consideration it was:

RESOLVED that the MUGA facility is no longer hireable from 1st July. The entrance gate is to be removed to allow free access at all times, the floodlights are to be turned off, repairs are to be made to the fencing. Existing hirers are to be given a minimum of one month's notice that they will no longer have guaranteed hireable time, but may use the facility for free should it be vacant. The Clerk is to discuss new working arrangements with the current caretaker to ensure that the surface of the two courts are kept clean, but may require less hours. In the new financial year, maintenance and basic caretaking duties for the MUGA will fall under the responsibility of the Handyman contract.

204/16 HIGHWAYS ISSUES

As referred from the May Council meeting, Members considered comments from Gary Baldwin, Principal Traffic Manager regarding The Green possible one-way traffic, non-compliance with 20mph speed limit and additional traffic calming, Brook Street (west end) signing deficiencies and parking, Brook Street (east end) abuse of one-way. Members also considered a suggestion that a mini-roundabout on The Crown public house corner of Astwick Road/Regent Street/The Green is installed.

The Green – possible one-way traffic

Members felt that they would be more in favour of a roundabout at the Astwick Road/Regent Street/The Green junction rather than a one-way system for The Green. This could be provided by way of a Section 106 agreement; if the Taylor Wimpey application for the rear of Silver Birch Avenue/Aspen Gardens is approved, this should be pushed for. Ward Member Councillor B Saunders will support this request should the Taylor Wimpey application be approved.

Non-compliance of 20mph speed limit

As referred previously in these minutes, there is a possibility of a local Speed Watch group being set up who will monitor speed limits around the town and will provide reports and registration numbers to the Police.

Brook Street (east end) – abuse of one-way

Gary Baldwin had suggested removal of the 'access only' signs at the junction, however Members requested that these are left in place and the Access Only Order is not rescinded.

With regard to cyclists being permitted to travel the 'wrong' way up the one-way system and entering the High Street from Brook Street, Members expressed concern that there are no road markings in place, as at the Hitchin Road/Brook Street junction to show that cyclists may be travelling in your direction if you enter Brook Street from High Street. Members requested the same road markings and posts at this junction. This will also reduce the width of that entrance, lessening the likelihood of people trying to exit Brook Street illegally whilst others are entering.

A request was also made for two repeater 'one way' signs to be installed – one opposite the Pharmacy (a Town Council black column at the edge of the car park can be used to fix on to), second to be fixed to lighting column S2 opposite Melbourn Close junction.

Brook Street (west end)

Gary Baldwin had suggested that signage is added at the Brook Street/Hitchin Road junction to indicate that there is no turning for large vehicles. Members supported this suggestion, and also

requested that the same is provided for Pix Road as there is a similar issue with drivers with large vehicles not realising that it is not a through road and having difficulty turning around.

RESOLVED that the comments and requests made above are forwarded to Gary Baldwin, Principal Traffic Manager.

205/16 HIGHWAYS WARDEN

Following the withdrawal of membership of this Committee by Councillor Mrs Bundock, Members considered retaining her expertise and knowledge of highway matters (as this Committee's previous Highways Representative), by appointing her as Highways Warden, to act as a liaison between Highways and this Committee, although no longer a Member.

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs Bundock is appointed as Highways Warden, to act as a liaison between Highways and this Committee.

206/16 GENERAL WORK

RESOLVED that the following is actioned as appropriate:

Central Beds Council

- Ask Highways to cut the area at the stub end of Baldock Road as this is becoming very unkempt and is part of the Kingfisher Way.
- The roundabouts on the A507 are not being cut (particularly Norton Road and Hitchin Road). Ward Member Councillor Saunders will check the situation regarding sponsorship and cutting routine.

Vine Technical Services – for developers of Land South of Stotfold

- The verge at the edge of Valerian Way/Hitchin Road has not been cut this year at all and is very overgrown.
- Grass verges at Sorrel Drive are overgrown and need cutting.

Town Council

- Write to the owner of the property on the corner of The Green and Rook Tree Lane, opposite the Baptist Church, to respectfully request that they cut back their overgrown hedge as it is over the footway and results in pedestrians having to walk in the road to avoid it.
- Handyman to cut back the brambles at the corner of Littlebury Close.
- Establish ownership of the former BT unit on Regent Street, opposite the Church Road junction, and request that they cut back their trees as it is blocking the directional sign to the Church.

207/16 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY

The Chairman referred to the underpass survey, on the table for Members. This particularly assists the Grass Cutting Contractor with regard to his cutting schedule for the Hitchin Road underpass (Stotfold side). Councillor Mrs Clarey, as member of the Green Wheel group referred to Green Wheel minutes of 15th April 2016, also on the table for Members which advise that funding is available for suitable planting for the underpasses.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.04pm

CHAIRMAN

DATED