

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2016, 7.30PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE, STOTFOLD**

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Committee Members present: Mrs M Cooper (Chairman)

Mrs A Clarey	B Collier
A Cooper	S Hayes
Mrs J Hyde	S Jackson
C Phelps	B Saunders
J Talbot	

Also present: Councillor Mrs S Bundock and the Town Clerk

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**257/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

**258/16 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS 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.

**259/16 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES**

None present.

**260/16 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION**

Nothing to report.

**261/16 FOOTWAY ACCESS/OBSTRUCTIONS**

Following receipt from resident, Mr Osborn, to the Town Council and his letter to the Town Plan Implementation Group, this Committee requests that the Town Plan Implementation Group along with the Highways Representative Councillor Mrs Bundock, produce a comprehensive list of all such problems identified around the town for a future action list to be drawn up. Mr Osborn has already attended a meeting of the Town Plan Implementation Group and Councillor Mrs Bundock has produced a list of 41 properties with overgrown trees or shrubs which affect use of adjacent footways. Councillor Mrs Bundock has discussed this issue with our Highways Area Steward at Central Beds Council, who advises that we could write to those households, advising of their duty to keep footways clear. If there is no response, then Highways can deal with the problem. Matters affecting footpaths, rather than footways, are the responsibility of the Public Rights of Way team.

Councillor Cooper has included the following in the forthcoming edition of the Stotfold News:

***FOOTPATHS AROUND THE TOWN***

*We receive numerous complaints concerning difficulty in being able to use the footpaths around the town both conveniently and safely and ask all residents to give due consideration to this issue near to their own properties.*

*Car owners have developed a tendency to park outside their property with the vehicle mounting the pavement (and verges) thereby narrowing the width available to pedestrians, particularly affecting those using mobility buggies or mothers with pushchairs. This not only causes damage to these relatively weak surfaces we all have to pay for through our Council Tax but also causes inconvenience*

*and danger for those having to take to the road to get around the offending vehicle – it is an offence to park a vehicle so as to cause obstruction or danger!*

*In addition, it should be considered that parking properly on the road can also have a natural traffic calming effect by narrowing the roadway thereby helping reduce the other problem we have of drivers travelling at excessive speeds around our town.*

**Property occupiers** are requested to take a few moments to walk by their own property and note how easy or difficult it would be for those already mentioned to do the same?

*Overgrown hedges, shrubs and flowers commonly severely reduce the width of footpath left for pedestrians to use. With Autumn approaching it is time to consider cutting growth back enough to give clear access across the full width of the hard surface which may require more than just a light trim if several years of growth have already gone by without sufficient attention.*

## **262/16 HIGHWAYS REPRESENTATIVE UPDATE**

Highways Representative, Councillor Mrs Bundock, gave the following report following her recent meeting with the Highways Area Steward and Councillor Saunders:

- Councillors Mrs Bundock and Saunders made it clear that they were not impressed with the new Highways contractor's work (Ringway).
- They were told that new material is being used to repair potholes, whereby once filled, the material 'self-seals'.
- The overgrown condition of land at the former Roecroft Lower School was discussed, and the following day the area was cut and overgrowth trimmed, and loose bits of tarmac were removed.
- Central Beds Council work at The Haven has now also been completed.
- Budgets for road works are now split three ways – main roads - i.e. the A507, general roads – i.e. High Street, and country roads. Mill Lane and Malthouse Lane are to be closed for patch work, and although not necessarily requiring the work, this is being done as there are funds available in that particular budget, which must be used as such.
- Councillor Mrs Bundock requested a copy of the Highways Forward Plan as we have not received one for some time.
- Money has been allocated for footway repair work, which will include Meadow Way and The Gardens. Councillor Mrs Bundock was asked to provide a suggested list of up to 10 roads with footways requiring repair work: The Gardens, Meadow Way, Brayes Manor, Home Close, The Mixies, Queen Anne's Close, Alexander Road, The Crofts, Whitecrofts, Queen Street.

## **263/16 TEASEL UPDATE**

A copy of a report from Paul Redwood of Teasel was previously circulated to Members (available on file), and included updates on Centenary Wood maintenance and planting of bulbs using Green Wheel money, Millennium Green, Kingfisher Way and the Nature Reserve. A request was included for permission to plant daffodils at Centenary Wood and for Teasel to replace a broken bench.

A list of equipment required by Teasel to enable them to continue to maintain Town Council owned areas was circulated to Members, with a request for funding for these items to come from the Teasel/Centenary Wood budget. Total £522.28 (plus vat).

A request was also made for the Council to again contribute towards 50% of Teasel's insurance costs. The current premium is £464.98, however the addition of a new ride on mower will result in an increase in the cost, estimated to be an additional £150. Therefore, this Committee is requested to contribute approximately £300, with The Mill Trust contributing the remaining 50%.

Current available funds in the Teasel/Centenary Wood budget: £1,390.

**RESOLVED** that:

- Permission is granted for Teasel to plant daffodil bulbs in Centenary Wood and to replace a broken bench.
- This Committee will purchase the requested pieces of equipment at a total of £522.28 (plus vat) with funds from the Teasel/Centenary Wood budget.
- This Committee contributes 50% of Teasel's insurance, at approximately £300 (to be confirmed), from the Teasel/Centenary Wood budget.

#### **264/16 REQUEST FOR HITCHIN ROAD RECREATION GROUND PLAY AREAS TO BE FENCED**

Members considered a request from a resident for the children's play areas on the Hitchin Road Recreation Ground to be fenced off to prevent dogs from entering the area, reducing risk of dog fouling and nuisance/danger to children playing.

After a lengthy discussion, which included potential costs, the fact that there are four separate play areas and possible future use of the recreation ground, in terms of football use and creation of a larger play area, it was:

**RESOLVED** that quotations are obtained for dog proof fencing for the area on the front boundary by the bus shelter, which includes the inclusive play equipment. An item is to be included in the Stotfold News regarding use of recreation areas for dog walking and risks of dog fouling.

#### **265/16 QUOTATION – GRASS CUTTING OF ROADSIDE VERGES ON MILL LANE, WRAYFIELDS AND MALTHOUSE LANE**

Following the extension of the 30mph speed limit boundary to now include Mill Lane, Malthouse Lane and Wrayfields, under the contract with Central Beds Highways, we are now obliged to include these areas in our verge cutting regime. Members considered a quote from our grass cutting contractor, Rik Golder, at £165 plus vat per cut. He recommends a minimum of 4 cuts per year, but ideally 6. Central Beds Highways will be notified of the area measurements being cut in order that a claim can be made for their verge cutting contribution.

**RESOLVED** that the quotation from Rik Golder to cut the verges in Mill Lane, Malthouse Lane and Wrayfields at £165 plus vat per cut, for x4 cuts per year – to be monitored. An appropriate claim is to be made to Central Beds Highways for the verges contribution.

#### **266/16 EXECUTIVE ACTION – GRASS CUTTING OF ROADSIDE VERGES ON MILL LANE, WRAYFIELDS AND MALTHOUSE LANE TO FACILITATE SAFER USE OF THESE ROADS DURING OCTOBER MILL STEAM EVENT**

Members were asked to approve executive action taken by the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, to instruct our grass cutting contractor to cut verges on Mill Lane, Wrayfields and Malthouse Lane prior to the October Mill event (8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>) at £165 plus vat.

**RESOLVED** that the executive action taken by the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, to instruct our grass cutting contractor to cut verges as noted above, at £165 plus vat, is approved.

#### **267/16 NORTON ROAD ALLOTMENTS**

Members considered a request from a Norton Road Allotment tenant for the front boundary hedge to be cut and also to consider re-siting the notice board to enable ease of access for hedgerow maintenance. Copy of correspondence from tenant was previously provided to Members. Mr Mick Dilley has provided a quote of £100, but advises that he can only cut the front boundary, the top of

the hedge and part of the inside boundary as his machinery will not reach over completely and will not fit between plots and the hedge. A separate quote to manually cut back the hedge and clear brambles will be obtained for the next meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the quote from Mr Dilley of £100 to cut the front boundary, top and part of the inside of the hedge at Norton Road Allotments is accepted. A further quote for the manual cut of the inside of the hedge and clearance of brambles along the inside hedge line is to be obtained. The Handyman is to remove the noticeboard, thereby allowing better access to the inside of the hedge, to refurbish it and to re-site it on the opposite side of the track in a more suitable position so as to allow future maintenance access to the hedge.

#### **268/16 ETONBURY GREEN WHEEL**

A copy of the minutes of the last Etonbury Green Wheel meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016 was circulated to Members (available on file). The minutes outline project progress overall, and for each of the stakeholder Parishes involved – Stotfold, Astwick, Arlesey, Fairfield. With regard to the Stotfold section, the Clerk is arranging a site meeting with key people within the group to look at the underpasses and suggestions for planting of seeds/bulbs. It is hoped that the Chairman of this Committee might also be able to attend.

#### **269/16 GENERAL WORK**

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

##### Central Beds Highways

- Request a site meeting with the new contractors, Ringway, to discuss required ditch clearance work along Malthouse Lane, Wrayfields and Mill Lane. Councillor Cooper to attend the site meeting.
- Mrs B's pothole list

##### Handyman

- The Handyman is to repair the snapped post and rail fencing in Heron Way.

#### **270/16 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE**

A Member has observed that the footbridge used by the Mill for their twice yearly events, and for which they obtain temporary permission from the Town Council, has remained in situ for several years now, without being removed in the interim periods. It has also been noted that the hard-core placed at the pedestrian entrance on Millennium Green before crossing the footbridge does not have grass growing through, as the Mill suggested would happen, but now has large amounts of weeds and looks very untidy. Consideration of these matters are to be included on a future agenda.

A Member noted that more and more dropped kerbs around the town now seem to be the width of the whole property, not just the width of the drive. This leaves less space for on-street parking for those without driveways. Central Beds Council will be asked what their standard approach is regarding width of dropped kerbs.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.29pm

**CHAIRMAN**

**DATED**