

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10TH MAY 2017 AT 7.42PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE, STOTFOLD

Committee Members present:

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

Also present: Mrs K Elliott-Turner – Town Clerk

65/17 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

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

RESOLVED that Councillor Cooper is elected Chairman of the Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting Committee for 2017/2018.

66/17 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 2017/2018.

67/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

68/17 DISCLOSURES 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.

69/17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

None present.

70/17 CLERK’S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Correspondence

Invitation to attend the CPRE talk “Standing Up for your Countryside: A talk by Tom Fyans, National Policy & Campaigns Director, CPRE”, Monday 15th May 2017, 7.30pm, Stratton Upper School, Biggleswade. Councillor Mrs Cooper will attend the talk.

For information, concerns expressed by a resident were provided to Members, regarding use of the Pix Brook (Western) Play Area by older children. The resident will be advised that the area to the rear of the Greenacre Centre is to have a similar play area installed plus open space, and so hopefully that will spread the use across both play areas. With regard to the Pix Brook Play Area, Members asked for quotes to be sought to extend the height of the MUGA fencing which bounds the Pix Brook. There are three gates accessing the play area, two singles and one double. The double gate will be used as a maintenance access, and a request was made for it to be padlocked – Councillor Cooper will make good the ground at the entrance where the bolt has scrapped the ground.

Matters Arising

Minute 51/17 – Councillor Cooper attended a site meeting at The Green on 24th April, with Nick Doolan (Senior Public Transport Officer), Paul Shinkwin (Ringway Jacobs – civil works), Ramya Kalmady and Dave Hull (Ringway Jacobs – electrical), to discuss the proposed bus shelter at the bus stop opposite the Coach & Horse public house. Work would include marking out a yellow box area within the lay-by at The Green, towards the public house end, installing the new bus shelter by removing a section of the hedge approx. 3.2 metres long, putting in a raised kerb and platform with progressive sloping ends for disabled access to the bus. The existing bus-stop post will be removed and a time-table will be installed within the new shelter. This work will enable the footpath to be brought up to the modern minimum width requirement of 1.5 metres for the majority of its length. Power for the lighting of the shelter and ‘real time’ indicator of arrival time of the next bus due will be taken from the Town Council street lamp inside The Green. An independent isolator/cut-off will be installed so any faults in the shelter will not disable our street lighting. At the same time as this work, they will intend to box mark the bus stop towards the Mill Lane junction. There is currently an identified flooding problem in this area so before commencing work on marking out the bus stop the drain gulleys are to be jet washed (at a cost of approx. £600) and possibly camera inspected to cure that problem first. Plans are drawn up and costed straight away so that work can commence as soon as funding is available, possibly July-August this year.

70/17 RUNNING FREE – CONSULTATION ON PRESERVING THE FREE USE OF PUBLIC PARKS

Members considered the Department for Communities and Local Government’s current consultation on 2nd the Government’s proposals to legislate to put it beyond doubt that local authorities, including parish councils, cannot charge Parkrun or junior Parkrun for the use of public parks”. Although Parkrun as an organisation do not use our recreation grounds, the outcome of the consultation may have implications on future use or charges for similar exercise groups using our facilities. Consultation closes 5th July 2017. Useful background information was circulated to Members from the National Association of Local Councils. Members discussed the potential wear and tear that such a regular event would cause on the grass and pathways, including potential increase in litter. It is unfair that any individual group should be exempt from potential charges from the parish councils, and we should be able to make our own decisions as we know the local impact such an event will have on our parks.

RESOLVED that this Council’s response to the consultation is that we feel it is unfair that any individual group should be exempt from potential charges deemed necessary by parish councils, as a result of increased wear and tear and litter on our public amenities.

71/17 USE OF HITCHIN ROAD RECREATION GROUND – STOTFOLD & DISTRICT CHILDREN’S CENTRE

Members considered a request from Stotfold & District Children’s Centre to use the Hitchin Road Recreation Ground for their annual play in the park events on 2nd and 23rd August. A copy of their risk assessment has been received and is on file.

RESOLVED that permission is given for Stotfold & District Children’s Centre to use Hitchin Road Recreation Ground for their play in the park events on 2nd and 23rd August.

72/17 MILLENNIUM GREEN GRASS CUTTING

The grass on Millennium Green is cut twice a year, free of charge to the Council. Members considered a request from the grass cutter to take a hay cut between the two cuts in May and October, if deemed worthwhile. Members were happy to approve this request, as it stops thatching of grass in the interim months and may encourage wildflowers to grow.

RESOLVED that the Millennium Green grass cutter is permitted to take a hay cut between the scheduled May and October cuts, if deemed worthwhile.

73/17 HITCHIN ROAD REC TRACTOR SHED – KEY HOLDERS AND IMPROVING SECURITY – EMERGENCY FLOODING TEAM

Key-holders

Following approval to use the entrance part of the Hitchin Road Rec Tractor Shed as storage for flood equipment, on behalf of the community emergency flood team, Members were asked to confirm who they wish to be authorised to hold a key to the building.

RESOLVED that the following Town Councillors are permitted to hold a key to the Tractor Shed – A Cooper (as Mayor and member of the emergency team), B Collier (as Deputy Mayor), and J Talbot (as member of the emergency team). All key holders are solely responsible for the keys and they must be kept within their own property for security purposes.

Members also considered approving a member of the public as a key holder.

RESOLVED that Mr Luigi Simeone of Coppice Mead is permitted to hold a key to the Tractor Shed (as resident local to the flooding area and member of the emergency team). All key holders are solely responsible for the keys and they must be kept within their own property for security purposes.

The Town Council also holds a set of keys, plus two sets for the Council's Contractors. Our Lighting Contractor, Terry Seymour and Councillor Pickering also currently hold a set of keys for the Tractor Shed to access Christmas Lights, but these will be returned and only issued when required.

Outer door security

To avoid potential for unauthorised keys to be cut, it has been suggested by the emergency team that the outer door lock is replaced with the type that can only have keys cut by authorisation – of the Town Council. Central Beds Council has a fund to assist emergency flooding team projects, and a request has been made for funding assistance to provide the new outer door lock and keys. Members approved this action, and await a response from Central Beds Council.

Inner door security

There are concerns about the security of Town Council and Handyman owned items within the remaining part of the Tractor Shed, and it has been suggested that the temporary lock fixed to the internally 'fenced off' entrance storage area is improved, and perhaps also the construction of the entrance storage area itself. Members considered improving the security of the remaining part of the Tractor Shed to protect its contents, particularly as it is likely that the outer door could be left unlocked during emergency flooding events to enable free access to the equipment stored inside.

RESOLVED that the Handyman is asked to provide a quote to replace the mesh walls within the inner entrance area with plywood and to replace wire at the top of the door into the Council storage area.

Notices

At the last meeting, Committee requested that a notice be fixed to the door of the Tractor Shed with details of the contact for access to the Flood equipment in an emergency. Members were asked to clarify if the Town Council is providing this notice and whether we wish to determine who the contact should be, or the emergency team.

RESOLVED that no notices are affixed to the door. With regard to the emergency flood team plan, it was noted that the contacts detailed are incorrect; the team is asked to ensure that correct contacts are given.

74/17 PLAY EQUIPMENT – HITCHIN ROAD RECREATION GROUND

At the last meeting, Members requested costings into the removal of the existing safety surfacing under the Russell Multi-Play unit at Hitchin Road Recreation Ground to enable them to be considered with the previous quote to provide a replacement unit using Awards for All grant funding. Previous quote total was £10,000 to provide a new unit, remove the old unit and lay grass matting surface. To remove the existing wet-pour surfacing and sub-base and make the ground good would be an additional £1,000 as a maximum.

The Chairman advised that she had also asked Hags to provide a quote, but this has not yet been forthcoming. This item will be left on the table until we have two quotes for the surfacing.

75/17 DAMAGED LIGHTING COLUMN – S3 HOME CLOSE

Update information from the Clerk – this item has been put back on the agenda, as the Assistant Clerk did not have the full information available to her at the last meeting regarding this lighting column. Although labelled as a Central Beds Council street light, it is in fact a Town Council owned column (our Lighting Contractor will replace with a Town Council label). Members were asked to consider again the quote: following vehicle damage to column S3 Home Close, our Lighting Contractor has made safe and cut down the damaged column, which was leaning precariously. Cost to replace the column £1,800 plus vat – to excavate and remove column stump and supply and fit x1 new 6m hexagonal column to match existing and supply, wire and fit x1 new LED Phillips lantern as required.

RESOLVED that the quote from the Lighting Contractor to replace column S3 Home Close at £1,800 plus vat is approved.

76/17 NOTICE BOARD REPAIR/REPLACEMENT

It has been noted by a Councillor that the notice boards at the Hallworth Drive entrance and on The Green are in a poor condition and are almost impossible to affix to, due to the hard nature of the wood. Members are asked to consider replacement of the boards to something easier to affix notices to.

RESOLVED that the Handyman is asked to investigate suitable replacement board material for the notice boards on Hallworth Drive and The Green, construct replacement boards, using the existing supports where possible, and then paint the boards black. In the meantime, the content on the notice boards will be updated.

77/17 GENERAL WORK

RESOLVED that the following is actioned as appropriate:

Central Beds Council - Highways

- Pothole outside 15 Rook Tree Lane

Central Beds Council – Environmental

- Fly-tipping at stub end of Baldock Road – garden waste

Landscape Contractor

- Epicormic growth at base of tree at the back of Waters End green space needs cutting back

Members asked for an update as to when the ground by the debris collection gantry in Pix Brook, at Brook Street is to be reinstated. The Clerk advised that the River Ivel Drainage Board has been chased, and will be chased again.

A query was raised regarding parking on grass verges around the town and the parking order which was supposed to stop this. The Clerk advised that she had recently met with Central Beds Council's Corporate Management Team and this topic came up in discussions. She understands that the parking order, which was originally bought in on a trial basis, is now in force Central Beds-wide. She will check this is the case and give full detail at the next meeting.

78/17 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY

Members were advised that the fence in the Waters End triangle on the field boundary has now been replaced and looks good. The Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman have met with the Handyman regarding the fence boundary with Pix Brook. The overhanging branches have now been removed, however the current fencing is not safe and cannot be 'made good'. The last 15 to 20 metres has thick, prickly hedging, and the area closest to the house also has good hedging. This will be left in place, and the Handyman will be asked to provide a price to install 'birds mouth' (low level post and rail) fencing and an alternative of ranch fencing (as with the field boundary) for the space between the two hedges. No work will be undertaken until the autumn to avoid the nesting season.

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

CHAIRMAN

DATED