

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2017 AT 7.47PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE, STOTFOLD**

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Committee Members present: Mrs M Cooper (Chairman)

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

Also present: one member of the public and the Town Clerk – Mrs K Elliott-Turner

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**142/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs Hyde.

**143/17 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.

**144/17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES**

Not at this point.

**145/17 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AND MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION**

Clerk's Report

**Grass cutting contribution**

We have been advised that the Rural Grass Cutting Contribution for 2017/2018 will be released to the Town Council in the coming days, and will be £4,013.86. This is for a total of 50,299.63 m2. They have also provided a list of roads we cut on behalf of Central Beds Council, together with the m2 cut for each road. This list will now assist a review into the areas we cut, as there may be additional areas not on the list. A request has been made for copies of plans used to calculate these areas, to determine potential missing areas.

**Business rates on public toilets**

The Clerk has recently completed a questionnaire on behalf of the Town Council, produced by Falmouth Town Council regarding business rates on public toilets.

Falmouth Town Council, supported by NALC, would like to submit a proposal under the Sustainable Communities Act for legislative change to grant parish and town councils mandatory 100% business rates relief on public toilets that they own or manage. This follows the passing of a motion from the Norfolk Association of Local Councils at NALC Annual Conference on 30 October 2017 formally endorsing this position and supporting the Falmouth proposal.

It is NALC's belief that such a removal of business rates would improve economic, social and environmental wellbeing as they are an unwanted price tag around many assets and liabilities transferred to parishes by principal local authorities unable to run them any longer.

The Government have asked that NALC supports that request with evidence that the change is required.

The Clerk therefore completed the short survey on the Town Council's public toilets and value of that facility to the town, and the rates it pays on the facility. The responses to the survey will help support the proposal to be submitted to DCLG by Falmouth Town Council which it aims to do by Christmas 2017.

Members formally supported the proposal by Falmouth Town Council for 100% business rates relief on public toilets, and thanked the Clerk for completing the questionnaire on behalf of the Council.

#### Matters Arising

Minute 133/17 – Councillors Mrs Clarey and Mrs Hyde and the Clerk have met with Senior Definitive Maps Officer, Adam Maciejewski, and have been collecting evidence forms to support use of the footpath adjacent to former Roecroft Lower School Playing Field and an application to include it on the Definitive Map as an official public right of way.

#### **146/17 HITCHIN ROAD RECREATION GROUND – BENCH IN MEMORY OF NATALIE SEYMOUR**

Members considered a request to site a bench in memory of Natalie Seymour at Hitchin Road Recreation Ground. The request is for the bench to be sited outside the Recreation Ground, however as this area of land is not Town Council owned, any bench approved may have to be sited within the fenced boundary which is in the ownership of the Town Council. The request is for a 'park bench'. A copy of the request together with a photograph showing the tributes to Natalie who recently passed away, were provided for Members. The Mayor advised that at Natalie's funeral, which he attended, collections were taken to help fund a memorial bench.

**RESOLVED** that the request for a park bench in memory of Natalie Seymour, to be sited at the Hitchin Road Recreation Ground, is approved in principle. The bench will need to be sited within the boundaries. The Clerk is to provide the family/friends with details of types of benches we usually install in our recreation grounds, and will provide costings for such benches. The Council's Handyman will install the bench.

#### **147/17 NORTON ROAD – ROAD HUMP**

At a previous meeting a request was made for clarification as to the purpose of the recently installed road hump in Norton Road, as it is unclear whether this is a pedestrian crossing or traffic speed reducing measure. It has been confirmed by Ward Member Councillor B Saunders that the road hump was installed to reduce speed of vehicles entering or leaving the 20mph speed limit, but that if this Council wishes, a request could be made for it to be painted as a pedestrian crossing.

#### Emily Wearmouth, Baldock Road

Resident, Emily Wearmouth had provided a copy of photographs showing the hump and road markings already in place, but explained that these were confusing for pedestrians, as it was not clear whether this was a designated crossing place, particularly with the blister surface on either side of the road, indicating that it could be used as a crossing place.

Members discussed the pros and cons of this particular area as a crossing point, whether there would be sufficient visibility and the type of crossing which might be accommodated.

**RESOLVED** that Highways are asked to consider formally designating the road hump in Norton Road as a pedestrian crossing place, and mark it as such. It is also requested that the cycle crossing point on Norton Road is designated as a joint cycle and pedestrian crossing and is marked as such.

The resident left the meeting at this point.

#### **148/17 PROHIBITION OF WAITING AND LOADING ON VERGES AND FOOTWAYS**

At the July meeting, information was circulated regarding the Central Beds Council Prohibition of Waiting and Loading on Verges and Footways and the stages required in order for an area to be considered for the Order to be implemented. Residents have been asked to submit areas they consider to have a problem with verge and footway parking causing a danger to pedestrians, and to supply evidence where possible. Supporting papers giving examples of problem areas were circulated to Members.

##### Stage 1 criteria

In order for verge and footway enforcement, at least one of the following criteria must be met (streets meeting more than one criterion will be given a higher priority):

1. The Central Beds Ward Councillor(s) support(s) the introduction of verge and footway enforcement at this location.
2. The Police, Fire Service, Ambulance Service or local Town/Parish Council have requested a prohibition.
3. Where the Council has clear evidence that verge or footway parking is affecting the safety of pedestrians.

Members discussed the example problem areas put forward by residents, and although these were useful as an indication to the Town Council, we need to be able to prove that these are current and persistent problem areas. Residents will be asked again to provide photographic evidence, but pictures must be dated, and if possible, multiple photographs to show persistent problems rather than one-off incidences.

#### **149/17 REPLACEMENT BRIDGE OVER PIX BROOK IN BROOK STREET**

Members were asked to:

- a) Consider preferred style of replacement bridge following a recent survey of the area and consult with Central Bedfordshire Highways Department on their current proposals
- b) Discuss potential ways of enforcing the one-way traffic system in Brook Street

##### A – replacement bridge

Councillor Cooper advised that recent surveys had been carried out on Pix Brook and bridges in Brook Street and Hitchin Road. The report on Pix Brook flood alleviation will be coming out in February, and although nothing has been finalised, there are current rumours that the bridge in Brook Street will be knocked down and replaced with a pedestrian/cycle only bridge. The Flood Risk Management team and Highways at Central Beds Council, together with the River Ivel Drainage Board are currently costing up replacement bridges, but whichever type is decided, the cost will be several millions of pounds.

**RESOLVED** that Highways and the Flood Risk Management team are asked what their outline plans are for a replacement bridge on Brook Street, should it be

decided that one is required to enable flood alleviation. We are aware that they are going through a possible design and cost stage, however we request involvement in the planning and decision stages.

B – enforcing one-way system in Brook Street

Councillor Talbot circulated examples of ‘alligator teeth’ traffic enforcement, however it was felt that Central Beds Highways would be unlikely to install such equipment due to the potential liability against damage to vehicles. This sort of traffic enforcement is usually only used on private roads, not public highway. Members also discussed the use of a camera placed opposite the junction of Brook Street with High Street to capture offenders driving up the one-way system.

**RESOLVED** that the suggestions of ‘alligator teeth’ traffic enforcement or enforcement camera is put to Highways as potential solutions to the abuse of the one-way system in Brook Street. If these are not suitable solutions, could they please advise what they would approve.

**150/17 GENERAL WORK**

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

Highways

- Complaint – there is a large road hole outside 106 High Street. Highways came out a few weeks ago to repair it, however within a day one side of the filling was coming out, now it is completely out and needs an urgent repair. This is not down to frost/snow damage, but poor workmanship.

Town Council Lighting Contractor

- Lighting column on Rook Tree Lane, between Home Close and Brayes Manor is out (may be a Central Beds Council column)
- Lighting column on Hitchin Road, opposite Pix Road is out (may be a Central Beds Council column)

**151/17 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY**

Councillor Hayes advised that during his recent attempts to find the best deal with our electricity/gas suppliers, he had discovered two accounts for electricity which were for unmetered supplies. His investigations have concluded that these may be for street lighting. British Gas has outstanding invoices from the end of 2014 of approximately £18,000, which means we will need to budget £6,000 a year from next financial year. The street lighting electricity budget for next year has subsequently been increased accordingly.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.46pm

**CHAIRMAN**

**DATED**