

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11TH MARCH 2015 AT 7.15PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SIMPSON CENTRE, STOTFOLD

Committee Members present: Mrs M Cooper (Chairman)

Mrs S Bundock	Mrs A Clarey
B Collier	A Cooper
S Hayes	Mrs J Hyde
B Saunders	L Stoter
J Talbot	

Also present: 2 members of the public and the Town Clerk

22/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received, as all Members were present.

23/15 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Councillor Mrs Hyde declared an interest in the item regarding Mill Weekend parking on Millennium Green as it refers to the ploughed field, which is in the tenancy of the Manor Farm Cooperative, and she is a tenant.

24/15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

Not at this point in the meeting.

25/16 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Matters Arising

Minute 9/15 – the Town Improvements Walkabout has been postponed again until the completion of the Road Safety Audit, which is now not anticipated until the end of March/beginning of April.

Minute 13/14– a meeting has been set up with Andrew Gwillam, Central Beds Council Public Rights of Way Officer to discuss the public footpath access into Riverside Playing Field following this Council's installation of a new entrance gate. Meeting will be Tuesday 17th March, 9.30am on site. Councillor Mrs Cooper will be attending, and will also highlight the incomplete work in reinstating the bank adjacent to the Kingfisher Way footpath following recent bridge works.

The Chairman proposed that the following two agenda items are brought forward to allow members of the public to speak and leave. This was agreed by Members.

25/16 PIX BROOK WEIR AND CHANNEL SITE MEETING

Councillor Cooper outlined the history, site meeting and communications with the River Ivel Drainage Board regarding the Pix Brook on the Land South of Stotfold development. Copies of correspondence between residents, the Drainage Board and Councillor Cooper were provided for Members.

Further to extensive works carried out by the developers to the Pix Brook area to give both flood relief to the area and create a new 'linear park', we have received various reports and concerns from Stotfold residents, generally in the Hazel Grove and Hyde Avenue areas where gardens back onto (to the east) the original course of the Brook.

It has been reported and observed by visiting this area that this original course does contain considerable amounts of weed and reed growth, plus debris and fallen tree parts. Hazel Grove

residents in particular have been concerned by the lack of water along the original course and the effect this is having on the natural life both in and near the water. The new 'main course' takes the vast majority of total flow. A site meeting took place on 12th February.

- Concerns were raised regarding the lack of flow of water in the old channel.
- The Land South of Stotfold 2006 Design Guide shows plans for the Brook and an overflow plain, however it seems that in 2004/5 work was agreed by Central Beds Council, the developers and the River Ivel Drainage Board for a new main channel with the old Brook being subservient.
- It was noted that the old channel virtually dries up in summer months, which affects wildlife in this area.
- The weir under the Valerian Way road bridge controls water flow using a 'v-drop' weir. There is now also a stone weir in place as the v-drop weir was positioned in the wrong angle. Councillor Cooper feels that the stones may have sunk slightly, affecting the water flow. He feels that more water is needed in the old channel to keep it from silting up and to support wildlife.
- Councillor Cooper has suggested that whilst the Drainage Board was carrying out work installing the debris gantry near Brook Street, they should take the opportunity to put in sandbags to test waterflow on the stone weir, however their response was that they would be talking to the developers about putting in a flow controller.
- The Drainage Board's brief was to only to ensure that the Pix Brook area does flood.

After discussion it was:

Resolved that a meeting is held for urgent discussions with the River Ivel Drainage Board and the developers to make them aware of the problems so that we can come to an amicable solution. Adjacent residents are to be made aware of the meeting. A request is to be made to the Drainage Board for confirmation that the weir under the bridge has been constructed as per agreed drawings, and request again that the Drainage Board undertakes a sandbag test on the stone weir.

26/15 PIX BROOK – CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW GANTRY AND NEW DEBRIS PREVENTION GRID

Copies of plans for the gantry were circulated to Members, together with a copy of correspondence from a Central Beds Council Planning Enforcement Officer, following concerns by Members and residents of the newly constructed metal gantry to house a debris prevention grid. This grid will prevent debris from getting stuck under the bridge in Brook Street.

The Planning Enforcement Officer has made a site visit and advises the following:

"I am now able to confirm that it is the Drainage Body that is carrying out the works by erecting a 'trash screen' as part of their health and safety improvement works. Under Part 14 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) they are permitted to carry out these works without the need for planning permission. Unfortunately there is no further action that we are able to take and so the enforcement case will now be closed".

The two residents present were permitted to speak for 3 minutes each to outline their concerns:

Mr Simeone, Coppice Mead

- Feels that the construction is an eyesore
- The debris gantry highlights that this is a problem area for flooding
- Concerns that children will use the gantry as a piece of play equipment
- Protection to prevent unauthorised access to the gantry is very poor
- The gantry forms a bridge to the rear garden wall of his property, and has concerns that his privacy will be affected, and will leave him vulnerable in terms of property security
- Residents did not receive any notification that this work was going to take place, particularly as the gantry abuts his rear garden wall

Mr Deiseroth, Coppice Mead

- Pleased that something has been provided to catch debris in the Brook
- This is a quiet location with easy unauthorised access – safety and security concerns
- He and other residents have installed high water flood sensors, and have cleared collected debris themselves in the past when the sensor has been alerted
- Queried who would be clearing the debris grid

Residents were advised that the River Ivel Drainage Board advertise dates of their meetings on their website, and it might be worth them attending a meeting to voice their concerns as residents.

Members agreed with the concerns expressed by the residents in attendance, and reiterated the security concerns not only for properties in Coppice Mead, but also the flats on the opposite bank. The construction contractor has advised that the debris grid will be cleared every 3 weeks, although the gantry does have a solar powered sensor which should notify the River Ivel Drainage Board when clearance is required.

After discussion it was:

Resolved that a letter is sent to the River Ivel Drainage Board to advise that we understand the reasons for a grid and need for access to this site, however we are disappointed that there was no notification to adjacent residents. Also advise that this Council is unhappy with the design of the gantry within the street scene, pointing out the concerns raised above by residents. We also make a Freedom of Information request for a copy of the Health & Safety Audit showing the basis on which they decided to construct the gantry. Advise the Drainage Board that the site currently has very poor security and does not prevent unauthorised access, this could be dangerous if unauthorised access was gained to the Brook – it needs securing as a matter of urgency. Whilst they are still working on the gantry, we ask that the Drainage Board considers a more secure site which is less visually upsetting – consider moving the gantry back along the Brook towards the Land South of Stotfold development. This provides easier access from an existing road, it is easier to make secure and is less visually intrusive to Brook Street, and will still clear debris from the Brook. We also request that the gantry is painted green to be sympathetic with its location.

The residents were thanked for their comments, they then left the meeting.

27/15 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AND MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

This item was continued from earlier in the meeting.

Correspondence

Available for Members

Copy of latest edition of Open space is available for Members.

Mr Hicks, High Street

Letter from a resident of High Street was read to Members, which outlined concerns regarding speeds along the High Street and danger to cyclists, and cars parking illegally on the road.

Councillor Mrs Hyde declared an interest in the following item of correspondence as it is from a relative.

St Mary's Academy, Co-Chair of Governors

Letter from St Mary's Academy regarding their concerns and those of parents of children attending the school regarding safety of children on Rook Tree Lane. They advise that a Facebook page has

been set up, collating information in particular parking issues, and a parent's work in setting up a Speedwatch Scheme. The Academy has requested this Council's support in 'lobbying Central Beds Council for possible safety/traffic calming measures along Rook Tree Lane'.

Members were reminded that when the office receives complaints about traffic problems they notify the Police, and for problem areas for yellow line offences Central Beds Council's CCTV van is asked to make a visit. The Council is also in favour of, and is willing to help facilitate setting up Speedwatch Schemes where required.

Resolved that with regard to parking on double yellow lines, Central Beds Council is asked what their intentions are now that Eric Pickles MP will be stopping the use of CCTV yellow line vans from the new financial year.

In response to the letter from St Mary's Academy and request for this Council's support:

Resolved that a copy of the St Mary's Academy letter is sent to Central Beds Council parking officers, and a copy to the Police with a request for them to make a visit to the area outside the school with regard to illegal and dangerous parking. St Mary's Academy are to be advised of this action. They are also to be advised that as there is no 'easy fix' for parking and speeding problems, they are asked to come to a future meeting of this Committee to put forward their suggestions, and we will support them where we can.

28/15 USE OF THE GREEN – FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S CHURCH

To consider a request to use The Green by the Friends of St Mary's Church to hold a car boot sale on Saturday 12th September 2015, noon to 3.30pm. Proceeds will be used for restoration work on the Church.

Resolved that approval is given for the Friends of St Mary's Church to use The Green for a car boot sale on 12th September, subject to usual conditions of use and safety.

29/15 USE OF MILLENNIUM GREEN AND THE GREEN – STOTFOLD MILL PRESERVATION TRUST

Councillor Mrs Hyde left the meeting during voting on the following item as she is a tenant of the Manor Farm Cooperative who tenant land adjacent to Millennium Green, and returned at the end of the item.

To consider the following requests from Stotfold Mill Preservation Trust:

- To use Millennium Green for parking during the May Mill weekend (9th & 10th May).

Resolved that approval is given for Millennium Green to be used for parking during the May Mill weekend, subject to the usual use conditions regarding safety.

- To permit the use of The Green for additional parking for the event should it be required, as part of their usual parking area behind St Mary's Academy has been ploughed. All parking will be marshalled and free of charge.

Resolved that The Green may be used for additional parking, should it be required, subject to the usual use conditions regarding safety.

- To install the temporary footbridge across the river from Millennium Green to Bury Meadow. A full risk assessment will be carried out prior to the event.

Resolved that permission is given to install the temporary footbridge for the May Mill event.

- Request the Town Council to contact the Police to express concerns regarding likely traffic congestion and request a Police presence.

The contact details for the Police has been forwarded to the event organisers as it is more appropriate for them to request presence of the Police at the event.

Copies of risk assessments for parking and use of the temporary footbridge will be required prior to the event.

30/15 GREEN WHEEL UPDATE

Copies of minutes of Green Wheel meetings held on 5th December 2014 and 13th February 2015 were provided for Members.

Councillor Collier outlined their content:

- There were originally two meetings, the Stakeholders Green Wheel meeting followed by the Stotfold Green Wheel meeting, however content was being repeated and so there is now only one Stakeholders meeting comprising representatives of Stotfold Town Council, Arlesey Town Council, Fairfield Parish Council, Astwick Parish Meeting and Letchworth Garden City.
- The minutes of 5th December 2014 note that Cliff Andrews of BRCC is the main contact for the project and projects will be funded by Central Beds Council Access money.
- The suggested A507 crossing was put forward by Stotfold Town Council and agreed by Arlesey Town Council, to link the proposed 1000 dwelling development in Arlesey with Stotfold in the area of Etonbury Wood. The original suggestion of a green bridge is now unlikely to happen, and provision of an underpass is also unlikely. The crossing will be for pedestrians and cyclists, but it is unknown if it will include use by horses as a bridleway. The chosen position for the bridge is to support children crossing from Arlesey to Etonbury Academy, rather than having to walk north and use the Arlesey Road underpass. The footpath from the bridge will go through Etonbury Wood, which will be lit for safety.
- The bridge over Pix Brook to the left of Etonbury Academy needs a lot of work which may not be addressed, although fencing will be put in across the bridge.
- Ecological studies have been carried out at Etonbury Wood as Ash die-back disease has been discovered. Notices are in place asking for walkers to clean their boots to prevent spread of the disease.
- Discussions have taken place regarding a new cycle access off Arlesey Road towards Arlesey Station, by Old Oak Close.
- After writing to the Letchworth Heritage Foundation for financial support, a positive response has been received. The Green Wheel scheme will need to put forward a project proposal.
- Minute of the 13th February 2015 meeting refer to a draft masterplan. Cliff Andrews has not yet completed this, however once complete this Town Council will need to discuss the content, with input also from Astwick, Fairfield, Arlesey and Letchworth.
- £140,000 has been secured to be spent over the next two years on 'easy gain' projects.
- Once a masterplan is in place and approved by all stakeholders, this will go to public consultation and will have an amount of money attached to it.
- A cycleway on Hitchin Road from the A507 to Fairfield Park will now be sited behind the current hedgeline, which will increase cyclist safety. Lighting will also be improved. A suggestion has been made for a cycle/walking crossing to link the proposed development of the former Pig Testing Station to the new cyclepath.
- Bridleways 17 and 18 will be gated to prevent unauthorised vehicle access.

Councillor Mrs Hyde declared an interest at this point as she is a tenant of the Manor Farm Cooperative who have right of way over the bridleways.

- There will be an extension of the bridleway to Etonbury Wood and when the Academy is extended the eastern edge will have a path and bridleway constructed alongside.

- A donation of land is to be made to Astwick Parish Meeting as a bequeath. Although not reported at the Green Wheel meeting, Councillor Collier advised that a Parish Meeting cannot own anything as they are not a corporate body. To own assets they require 2 Trustees who will be the Chairman of the Parish Meeting and a Senior Officer of the Principal Authority (Central Beds Council), or their nominee. A member of the Astwick Conservation Group believes that this should be the Chairman/Mayor of Stotfold Town Council. This is being queried with Central Beds Council's legal team.
- A suggestion has been made that following recent clearance of old unused plots at Common Road Allotments, fruit trees could be planted. This has not yet been put to the owners of the allotment land, the Eleemosynary Charity of William Field.

Councillors Mrs Hyde and Hayes declared an interest at this point as they are both Trustees of the Charity, and Councillor Talbot declared an interest as he is a plot holder at the site.

Councillor Talbot left the meeting at this point (8.50pm).

31/15 TREE INSPECTIONS

Members considered instructing Bob Morwood Tree Consultant to undertake an inspection of trees on land within this Committee's remit. Surveys to be carried out on Riverside Playing Field, The Green and Hitchin Road Recreation Ground. Total £540

Resolved that the quote from Bob Morwood Tree Consultant of £540 is accepted to carry out a survey of trees within this Committee's remit. Funds from next financial year Open Spaces Maintenance & Repairs budget.

32/15 ARLESEY ROAD COMMUNITY USE WORKING GROUP

Members were asked to determine Councillors to sit on the Working Group set up to investigate possible additional community uses for the Arlesey Road site and report back to this Committee. Membership to be up to 4 Members of this Committee, plus the Clerk.

Resolved that the Arlesey Road Community Use Working Group will be Councillors Saunders, Collier, Hayes and Stoter.

33/15 INCLUSIVE PLAY EQUIPMENT

Members were asked to consider provision of inclusive play equipment, examples of types of equipment available were circulated, together with possible funding sources.

A discussion took place regarding possible types of equipment that would include all children, giving best play value, and sources and amounts of funding available.

The next meeting will consider detailed availability of funds for provision of inclusive play equipment in an area to be determined within our three Town Council owned open space sites.

The Local Health Authority/Social Services will be asked to provide numbers to establish need for such equipment.

According to Standing Order 1.31, as the meeting was about to reach its maximum permitted time of 2 hours, it was

Resolved that the meeting is extended beyond the 2 hour permitted period with an additional 15 minutes given to complete the agenda. Any business not completed after this time shall be deferred until the next meeting.

34/15 FORD BRIDGE SIGN

Members considered erecting a wall-mounted sign to the newly constructed replacement Ford Bridge to advise of its recent construction date. Options for types of signage material were considered.

Resolved that prices for an A4 size resign sign are provided for consideration at the next meeting. The wording is to state when the bridge was re-constructed, and one sign only is to be erected on a chosen side of the bridge.

35/15 STREET LIGHTING COLUMN INSPECTION

Our Lighting Contractor, Terry Seymour advises that he has completed the inspection of 29 Town Council owned aluminium street lighting columns for signs of corrosion and possible structural failure, as per his quote approved in September 2014 at £1,740 plus vat.

Although 4 of the columns have slight impact damage caused over the years, this has not affected their soundness, with the exception of the column situated opposite the Baptist Church by The Green.

This column is showing some signs of corrosion, but not so significantly as to cause a failure at the present time. He suggests a further check of the column be carried out in 12 months.

Resolved that the Lighting Contractor's inspection report is noted, and a further check of the column referred to above will be carried out in 12 months. He is also to be asked how much it would cost to replace heads on Town Council columns with ones to match the newly replaced Central Beds Council heads.

36/15 BUDGET & RESERVES UPDATE

Members considered the budget update and reserves status and it was:

Resolved that that the unused funds in the Lighting – Electricity budget are vired to the Street Lighting Earmarked Reserves with a view to upgrading lighting columns in the future, and any other remaining funds available in the Committee budget at the end of the financial year are to be vired to Earmarked Reserves Rolling Improvement Fund, with a view to upgrading or providing new play equipment.

37/15 GENERAL WORK

Resolved that the following is actioned as appropriate:

Highways

- Vaughan Road – hole in road at junction with Trinity Road, opposite no. 103
- Trinity Road – footway trip on footway leading to Regent Street beside fence to no. 46. Grass area in front of bungalows also has a number of trees which hang too low over the roadway
- Regent Street – footway very uneven from no. 60 to no. 24
- High Street – two road holes at no. 120
- Corner of Rook Tree Lane/Queen Street – road hole in centre of road, on the corner

Street lighting (CBC/STC)

- Lighting columns S2, S3 and S4 in Hazel Grove are not working and have not been working for some time.

Handyman

- Replace missing end-caps for wooden trim-trail at Hitchin Road Recreation Ground.

A resident has also forwarded a list of areas with litter, and asked for it to be referred to this Committee:

Kingfisher Way from Taylors Road to Silver Birch Avenue – mainly polystyrene from contractors

Malthouse Lane to the Mill – a large number of drinks cans which appear to have been thrown from passing cars

Silver Birch Avenue – path near MUGA

38/15 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY

A Member advised that the bridge from Howard Close into the Land South of Stotfold development is wide enough for a vehicle to cross, and suggests that a removable bollard is installed at each end of the bridge.

Aragon Youth Worker, Nicola King has recently been given an award by the High Sheriff for her work with young people of Bedfordshire.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.24pm

CHAIRMAN

DATED