

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9TH MAY 2018, AT 7.15PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE,
STOTFOLD**

Committee Members present:

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

Also present: Councillor B Sowinska and the Town Clerk – Mrs K Elliott-Turner

46/18 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 2018/2019.

47/18 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 2018/2019.

48/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none, as all Committee Members were present.

49/18 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS ON MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE AGENDA

Councillor Mrs Hyde declared an interest in a Matters Arising item, minute 39/18 as she tenants the land referred to. 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.

50/18 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

None present.

51/18 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Correspondence

A copy of the CPRE Countryside Voice Magazine Spring 2018 is available for Members.

Matters Arising

Minute 39/18 – Following agreement by this Committee to lay chippings in the cross-over point on Millennium Green, at a recent Teasel AGM, the Chairman was advised that putting down

chippings during the hay cutting season may cause problems with the machinery. It is suggested that this matter is put on hold until a suitable time is established, and that contact details are obtained for the hay farmer, and work will be co-ordinated with them, Teasel and the tenant of the land.

Minute 58/17 – Following a request for a safety assessment of the Brook Street/Hitchin Road roundabout, Central Beds Highways advise that an order is being raised with Ringway Jacobs to move toward detailed design and then construction to revert the junction back to a T junction. A road safety audit is to be undertaken, and timescales will be advised.

52/18 MEETING WITH HIGHWAYS AREA STEWARD

A meeting was held with Nick Carafola, Highways Area Steward, and Councillors Cooper, Mrs Cooper, Mrs Clarey and Talbot on 13th April, as follows:

- Nick outlined the roles and persons who work as part of his team. These include; James Coggins (trees), Ric Thompson, John Chandler, Drew Gwillam (Rights of Way Officer). Ric and John job-share a role, plus job-share other roles with other personnel. Drew is leaving Central Beds Council on June 20th. The post will be advertised internally first for suitable candidates to apply. Drew has extensive knowledge of landowners and Rights of Ways, so will be a difficult pair of shoes to fill.
- The list of complaints supplied by a resident had been investigated by Nick and Ward Member Steve Dixon. Nick has suggested we forward the list to Steve Lakin, Principal Highways Officer, who deals with safety schemes, to consider some of the areas and issues.
- Suggestion of a safety camera at the top of Brook Street to discourage people from turning or reversing back out onto the High Street could go to Steve Lakin.
- Ditches in Malthouse Lane are still a problem, they are not taking water off the road. Nick to investigate.
- Mill Lane area from Queen Street to Watermill to be resurfaced imminently. Asked for it to be done after the Mill Weekend.
- Norton Road roundabout to be resurfaced.
- Hitchin Road roundabout area – out to outside company for design work for remedial action.
- Rook Tree Lane from Olivers Lane to Brayes Manor needs substantial resurfacing, so “repairs” will be done this year. New surfacing for next years’ programme of work.
- The Green to Astwick Road – resurfacing this year (from Regent Street end)
- The order is out for pot-hole repairs in Hitchin Road and 87 The Green.
- If we are concerned about the quality of repairs we need to take photos of the work as it proceeds: - holes should be cleared out, bonder applied to the bottom and sides, before filling with tarmac. Email pictures to Nick if necessary, so poor work can be tackled. But remember, some holes are given a temporary fill for Health and Safety reasons, prior to a more permanent and robust repair takes place.
- When roads are resurfaced in 30mph areas, the centre white line is only put in on curves now.
- H-bar marking at residents’ driveways on the road costs the householder £140-ish initially. Thereafter it is maintained by Central Beds Council.
- Dropped curb requests result in three droppers and two tapers, not the whole frontage of a property. A dedicated VXO (vehicle cross-over) team deal with these.

- The problem of bollards from the Town Centre Improvements programme not having a strong anchor to put in the ground: Nick examined two we had at the Greenacre Centre and then suggested stainless steel ones, like the ones at Greenacre Centre entry area. Could we find where they came from?
- If we request a “white-line” refresh for Stotfold Nick feels he has sufficient funds to do most of Stotfold.
- Nick has secured funding for quite extensive footway resurfacing and road resurfacing in the northern part of the town. This work is most likely to be carried out in the second half of the financial year.

Members discussed the excessive timescales between category 1 defect potholes being reported and work completed – often, a temporary fill is put in. There should be a 48-hour response for category 1 defects. Some time ago we were advised that Malthouse Lane and Mill Lane were to be resurfaced. Extensive patching was carried out, but the resurfacing never happened, and now the patching is crumbling away.

With regard to the resident’s list of complaints, these have been considered by Central Beds Council, who feel that most do not warrant work, however it was:

RESOLVED that the list is forwarded to Steve Lakin, Principal Highways Officer, together with photographs, asking if he would like to discuss with Town Council representatives or whether these works would be scheduled.

With regard to the suggestion of a safety camera at the Brook Street/High Street junction, it was:

RESOLVED that a meeting is requested with Steve Lakin to discuss, as drivers ignoring the one-way system at this busy junction is considered a safety issue.

With regard to the fading white line road markings around the town, it was:

RESOLVED that a request is put to Nick Carafola, copied to Steve Lakin, for a white-line refresh for the whole of Stotfold.

As the meeting was advised that Highways will not be changing the lane markings on Hitchin Road/A507 roundabout, it was:

RESOLVED that together with a request for re-marking of the lines, signage is also included to assist drivers further back in the queue who cannot see the road markings. The Bedfordshire Police Traffic Division is to be asked for their opinion on the current road markings on both Hitchin Road and Baldock Road A507 roundabouts, as they are not those normally expected.

53/18 HIGHWAYS ANNUAL PROGRAMME 2018

As Highways Representative, Councillor Mrs Bundock advised that she was in receipt of the Highways Annual Plan 2018-2019.

She highlighted works indicated for Stotfold:

- Norton Road roundabout and spurs – resurfacing
- Astwick Road/The Green/Regent Street to Mowbray Crescent – resurfacing

- HGV signage to be installed on Norton Road
- One-way signage to be installed in Buttercup Road
- Rook Tree Lane (outside St Mary's Academy) – consider petition for enhanced crossing
- Footway resurfacing for the following roads:
 - The Gardens
 - Saxon Avenue
 - Dane Close
 - Common Road
 - Whitecrofts
 - Meadow Way
 - Coppice Mead
 - Hazel Grove
 - Roe Close
- Road Microasphalt for the following roads:
 - Castles Close
 - Murrell Lane
- Bypass and Hitchin Road roundabouts – surface dressing
- Pix Brook Bridge works

54/18 TEASEL AGM – REPORT FROM CHAIRMAN

The Chairman attended the Teasel AGM held on 21st April and a report was given at that meeting by Paul Redwood of Teasel:

1. Insurance money has been claimed now. New tools were purchased to carry out work whilst claim was in process, courtesy of an “interest free loan” from the Town Council. Their current premium is lower than last year, despite the claim. £540 is to be paid to Data-Tag, major items for them to be traced back to owner if stolen. Some money spent on training by BRCC.
2. Teasel have worked with Central Beds Academy to help install a herb garden. Central Beds Academy pupils have sent time cleaning some graffiti from items on the reserve.
3. Work by Teasel this year includes:
 - Thinning of Centenary Wood, re-planting of uprooted snowdrops, some trees pollarded, willow withies used for basket making.
 - 20 fruit trees planted at Etonbury School, with pupils, plus re-built bug hotel.
 - New artwork on Meadow 2 re: tree identification, has been installed.
 - New bird hide planned, but swan has nested so this is on hold until birds are fledged, etc. boardwalks all have new netting on them.
 - Pile of logs donated to Teasel left by seats for children to play on. Bulrush removal on hold as too many other things on the go at present.
 - Madeline Struthers cut and cleared Meadow 2 of grass, more wild flowers to be planted there.
 - Hornbeam hedge has been laid.
 - Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust are to visit the reserve (Val Balderstone is in charge of this).
 - Val Balderstone organised badger watching sessions again this year.
 - Val Balderstone organised toad lift this spring – 50 toads lifted and crossed, 12 toads found dead. In past years often 50 toads per night were being crossed safely. This

year's figures may well reflect increased heron activity locally, and loss of suitable habitats to sustain life.

- A new member volunteered to go on the steering committee.
- Jean Hill, valued member of Teasel work parties was presented with a brand new "Teasel" fleece jacket. Apparently, Jean has been in charge of the bonfire at work-parties, and her current fleece is full of holes from sparks from the fire. Jean is shortly to leave Stotfold to re-locate to Hereford and will be sorely missed by Teasel.
- Marianne's family (former Teasel member and secretary) will donate a tree in her memory, to be planted at the reserve.

55/18 IVY STUMP ON THE GREEN

Following a request by this Committee to remove the stump left after the removal of the ivy/hawthorn shrub on the corner of The Green, the Landscape Contractor advises that the remaining stump also includes two metal posts which are concreted into the ground and the ivy has now grown around one of the posts. Members considered a quote from the Landscape Contractor: to remove metal post and ivy stump on the boundary of The Green £200 plus vat.

RESOLVED that the quote from the Landscape Contractor of £200 plus vat to remove the metal post and ivy stump on the boundary of The Green is accepted, and he is requested to replace with two wooden bollards to prevent unauthorised access.

56/18 ARLESEY ROAD STADIUM PITCH

Following an inspection by the Bedfordshire Football Association into the poor condition of the Stadium Land pitch at Arlesey Road (to be transferred to the Football Club following completion of stadium build), a significant amount of work has been identified to bring the pitch back to condition. It has been agreed through the Arlesey Road Project Working Party that the pitch works will be completed during Spring/Summer 2018 and will include aeration and fertilisation as recommended by the F.A. For information, agreement has also been given that the perimeter fence of the Arlesey Road site will be handed over in a good condition. Members considered quotes obtained and the variances in opinion between the companies as to what is required.

The First Service Company Ltd	£7,935 plus vat
Agripower Ltd	£6,395 plus vat

RESOLVED that the quote from Agripower Ltd is accepted, at £6,395 plus vat.

With regard to ongoing maintenance after the rectification work, but before handover to the Football Club, it was

RESOLVED that the Landscape Contractor is asked to provide a quote for ongoing maintenance and ask for his advice re the acidity referred to in the Agripower quote.

57/18 ARLESEY ROAD GENERAL PITCHES

Following an inspection of the Stadium pitch, an inspection has been carried out of the two drained pitches put in as part of the S106 set-up of the site. These are also in poor condition.

Committee is asked to consider their future maintenance in relation to use of the site, and charges for pitch use.

Whilst the Arlesey Road site remains in Central Beds Council ownership/responsibility, the Junior Football Club have been given a licence to use the two pitch areas, free of charge. The Club has been advised that once the Town Council takes the lease on the land, the Club will be charged for use in the same manner as use of other pitches around the town. There are currently approximately 600 children in Stotfold Junior Football Club, although it was noted that many of these are not from Stotfold. It was felt that discussions were needed with the Club to ascertain their pitch use requirements, as we cannot provide an endless supply of pitches for a growing club. It is also to be ascertained as to the type of pitch they require, as meadow-grass cuts are considerably cheaper to maintain, and drained pitches require significant maintenance to keep them to standard – at a higher cost.

RESOLVED that Councillor Cooper and the Clerk meet with the Junior Football Club Chairman to discuss their pitch requirements, size of club, charges and pitches available for their use.

In regard to ongoing maintenance of the drained pitches:

RESOLVED that the Landscape Contractor is asked for advice on current maintenance of the pitches and to provide a long-term maintenance plan, in order for Committee to consider whether to continue with a drained pitch standard and associated budget and review of charges, or to revert to a meadow-grass cut, as with other pitches in the town.

58/18 GENERAL WORK

RESOLVED that the following is actioned as appropriate:

Public Rights of Way

- Footpath through the Churchyard requires resurfacing as its condition is considered unsafe

Persimmon Homes & Taylor Wimpey

- Land South of Stotfold – when surfacing the roads, it has been observed that the road drains are not being covered. This is resulting in a significant amount of rubble accumulating in the drains. Please inspect, clear the drains, and ensure that they are covered during surfacing works.

59/18 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY

A Member has been approached by residents of Drovers Lane regarding a footpath link through from the development to Riverside Playing Field. The Clerk advised that she had also received the same query and had taken the matter up with the Public Rights of Way Officer. It appears that the developers, although included a footpath in their planning application, did not apply for it to be linked to the public right of way in Riverside Playing Field. Therefore, Central Beds Council cannot permit this to be linked. There is also a query over the maintenance of the path and shrubs, etc along it through to the public right of way. The Clerk is pursuing this matter and will report back to Committee with an update.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.47pm

CHAIRMAN

DATED