

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS, PUBLIC LANDS & LIGHTING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11TH DECEMBER 2019 AT 7.30PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE, STOTFOLD

Committee members present: Mrs M Cooper (Chairman)

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

Also present: the Town Clerk – Mrs K Elliott-Turner

118/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

119/19 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS ON MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE AGENDA

There were none. Members were reminded that if at any point during the meeting they feel they have an interest in an item being discussed, they should declare it at that point.

120/19 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

None present.

121/19 CLERK’S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Matters Arising

Minute 116/19:

Central Beds Council – Highways

- Drainage clearance and footway surface sweeping is required at the Brook Street/Coppice Mead junction. *Reported to CBC ref. 333287 04/12/19 Progress chased: They have stated it will be dealt with on their next gully clearance in the area. A timetable has been requested*
- Rook Tree Lane (particularly by the school) and The Green – there is a large amount of fallen leaf debris causing drain blockage and slippery surface hazards. *Reported to CBC ref. 333287 04/12/19- Chased- they have checked the drain and the leaf clearance has been passed to Waste Services ref. 19-067081*

122/19 USE OF THE GREEN – KINGS BAPTIST CHURCH

Members considered a request from King’s Baptist Church to use The Green on Sunday 31st May 2020 for their free Birthday Party for the community, which would take the following format:

- free attractions such as bouncy castle, face painting and balloons
- in a small marquee, a short service with singing to a live band, very much the same as their weekly church service
- a baptism as part of this service, using a portable baptism pool
- host a birthday party BBQ lunch to anyone wanting to be there. All the food would be prepared with food hygiene regulations in mind and they would not be charging for anything they provide. Soft drinks only.

- start around 10.30am and finish by 4pm
- The church has public liability insurance

It was confirmed that they would be required to read the conditions of hire, complete a hiring form and event risk assessment, submit a copy of their public liability insurance and any relevant licences.

RESOLVED that permission to use The Green, free of charge, on Sunday 31st May 2020 is given to King's Baptist Church. They are required to submit the usual hiring form, copy of public liability form, any relevant licences and an event risk assessment. The BBQ must be kept off the ground, and any ashes disposed of properly, off site.

123/19 AMENDMENT TO BUDGET 2020/2021

Members were asked to approve an amendment to the draft budget figures for 2020/2021. The Clerk proposed an amendment to budget line 27/207 Landscape/Grass Cutting Contract – Open Spaces to take into account the increase in maintenance work required at the Arlesey Road site. This includes clearance of leaves in the car park, maintaining newly planted shrubs, weed spraying of car park. Figures already include the general cutting of the public open space, with a separate budget for maintenance of the drained pitch area, which requires a higher maintenance regime. Proposed new figure £27,000.

RESOLVED that the draft committee budget figures for 2020/2021, budget line 27/207 Landscape/Grass Cutting Contract – Open Spaces, is increased to £27,000.

The current Landscape/Grass Cutting Contract allows for grass cutting of the whole of the Arlesey Road site, however the area to be cut has now been reduced considerably due to the new build football facility, plus the separate works on the drained pitch areas in the public open space. The Contractor is asked to provide a revised figure going forward from current, for the grass cutting aspect of his contract to take these points into account.

124/19 NORTON ROAD ALLOTMENTS – PEST CONTROL

Complaints have been received regarding an apparent increase in the number of rats at Norton Road Allotments. The number of rats is likely due to its location – the allotment sits adjacent to farmland and a farm grain store. An extra bait box has been added under our contract with Bugs N Things, with no extra charge. This doesn't increase the annual cost. They attend site every six weeks (8 weeks per year).

Extra inspections and baiting of boxes to try and reduce the apparent rat problem would be £30 plus vat per visit. Bugs N Things recommend weekly visits for the next 3 to 4 weeks to get on top of rat numbers.

Another tenant has queried the use of bait boxes and whether there is a more humane way of dealing with a rat problem. Investigations into possible options include encouraging natural predators, by erecting owl nest boxes in the vicinity, although baiting would have to cease. Also, be tolerant of foxes as they also eat rats. Live traps are an option, although time-consuming as they should be checked daily. Electrocution devices are, compared to poisoning, a humane and

safe way of killing. Battery powered devices are available, although again this is time consuming as they should be checked daily.

Members considered whether to instruct Bugs N Things to increase their visits as suggested above for a short period, or to consider alternative methods. We are currently signed up to an annual contract with Bugs N Things, and so any alternative method would have to wait until that period has ended.

RESOLVED that although we do give due consideration to wildlife, and appreciate that there may be alternative methods of eradicating rats from the allotment site, taking into account practicalities, timing and economics, we accept the quote from Bugs N Things to increase (inspection and bait box) visits to the Norton Road Allotments to a weekly frequency, for the next 3 to 4 weeks. Total £120 (max) plus vat.

125/19 NORTON ROAD – PROPOSED TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

As part of our recently approved LTP application for (matched) funding for traffic calming measures on Norton Road, Central Beds Council is consulting with the public on part of the proposed measures – installation of a raised table. Comments on the proposals are invited. A copy of the proposal was circulated. Other proposed measures, not currently being consulted on, include installation of a Speed Indicator Device (SID) and possibly reducing the speed on the Hertfordshire boundary coming up to the Stotfold/Bedfordshire border to gradually reduce the speed, rather than the current national speed limit (60mph) down to 30mph.

RESOLVED that the proposed raised table, as part of the LTP funding application for traffic calming measures on Norton Road, is supported with no objections. We also support the proposals (not currently being consulted on) for the installation of a Speed Indicator Device and reduction of speed limit on the Hertfordshire boundary coming into Stotfold.

126/19 HITCHIN ROAD RECREATION GROUND – TREES OVERHANGING PITCH

Members considered a request from Stotfold Junior Football Club for trees overhanging the pitch area to be cut back. Our Landscape Contractor has inspected the trees and they could be cut back, but the amount to be removed would leave them lop-sided, so would need cutting to even up on all sides. It is also not clear if the pitch has been moved, or expanded in size, resulting in the edge of the pitch now being under the trees. Members will inspect the site and measure up the pitch to re-consider in the new year. In the meantime, quotes will be obtained to cut back trees overhanging the pitch edge.

127/19 PLAY EQUIPMENT CONSULTATION

At the request of the Clerk, members agreed to defer this item to a future meeting, to allow the completion of the consultation report.

128/19 GENERAL WORK

RESOLVED that the following is actioned:

Central Beds Council – Highways/Public Rights of Way

- X3 drains on the High Street, outside Peking House Chinese takeaway are full of silt
- X2 drains in Howard Close, which should drain into Pix Brook, are not on the Highways Area Steward's map of drains. Some months ago, he confirmed they would be added and then cleared; however they still remain blocked
- Footpath from High Street to The Crofts and Alexander Road – green bollard has been knocked over, and is now nearly out of the ground

Town Council office

- The taps at the Common Road Allotments were turned off 4th December and plot holders have been advised that they will be turned on again 2nd March. This is different to our policy of all site taps (including the Cemetery) being turned off 31st October and turned on again 31st March. There are concerns that the taps will be on during likely periods of frost, resulting in potential burst pipes

Town Council Lighting Contractor

- Two lanterns on the columns running from Riverside Playing Field car park towards the MUGA are not working (first two). A request is also made to turn the heads of the row of lanterns around so they shine on the playing field, rather than the area where the bark path used to be

129/19 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY

Members were advised that we have been under-declaring the number of Town Council owned streetlights by about 25%. Although this would usually result in higher electricity costs, this may even out due to the list currently held by UK Power Networks detailing old style, inefficient lanterns.

Councillor Mrs Clarey advised that at a recent Councillors Surgery session, she had dealt with a query relating to this committee. Members were reminded that notes from Surgeries are kept in the office, and when actioned, either by the member or the office, updates should be added to the folder.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.14pm

CHAIRMAN

DATED