



**MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL
PUBLIC LANDS & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 1st FEBRUARY 2022
AT 7PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, THE OLD
COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL**



PRESENT:

Cllr F Foster (Chair)
Cllr C Thomas (Vice Chair)
Cllr K Brown
Cllr G Fage
Cllr M Foster
Cllr M Knight
Cllr M North
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr I Bond (Non-Committee Member)

Mr P. Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive, Biggleswade Town Council
Mr K. Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships, Biggleswade Town Council
Mr P. Truppini – Head of Place Shaping & Town Centre Management, Biggleswade Town Council
Mrs W. Solomon – Head of Finance & Planning, Biggleswade Town Council
Ms H. Calvert – Administration & HR Manager, Biggleswade Town Council (Meeting Administrator)

Members of the Public - 0

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees, both panel and public, that this is a formal meeting, the Chairman advised that members of the public will be given an opportunity to speak during public open session but not at other times. The meeting is being filmed and by being present attendees are deemed to have agreed to be filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings. The Chairman advised that attendees should not disclose any personal information of individuals as this would infringe the Data Protection Rights of that individual. The Chairman asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

The Chairman advised that the following items on the Agenda have been moved to the exempt session as a result of consideration by the Committee:

Item 7e: Wildflower Meadow

Item 7f: Apollo Gardens Play Area and Financial Settlement

Item 7g: Future adoption of Play Areas

Item 7i: Drove Road Chapel / Cemetery

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr M Russell, Cllr R Pullinger.

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

None.

b. **Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:**

Cllr D Strachan – Item 7f - Apollo Gardens Play Area and Financial Settlement.

3. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

None.

4. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. Members received the Minutes of the Public Lands & Open Spaces Committee Meeting held on **Tuesday 28th September 2021** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, 4 Saffron Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8DL.

Cllr North should be added as an attendee.

Subject to this change, the Minutes were **APPROVED.**

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

- a. From the Minutes of the Public Lands & Open Spaces Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 28th September 2021.

None.

Cllr G Fage entered the Council Chamber at this point.

6. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- a. **Play Areas Strategy:**

i. **YEAR ZERO 2021/2022**

Buttercup Mead:

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships stated that Members are asked to consider recommendations in the report set out in the Agenda for this play area following a Consultation with residents on this street, which ran between 9th November 2021 and 6th December 2021. The proposal is for the play park to either be replaced by a landscaped seating area, or with plain grass. Two responses were received from residents to the consultation, both effectively calling for some of the current play park features to be incorporated into any proposed landscaping plans. Officers would undertake to update all residents of Buttercup Mead on the outcome of this item at this Committee Meeting.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised Members that S106 funding of approximately £5k will be drawn down from Central Bedfordshire Council towards the cost of this project.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council remove all current play equipment from the site and grass over the whole area and provide a small seating area.

ii. **YEAR ONE – 2022/2023**

Updating and refurbishing of two smaller play areas

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships and the Public Realm Manager introduced their proposals relating to the playground equipment items for Poppyfields 1 and Playfield Close.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive reiterated to Members that the funding for these proposals would be drawn down from the anticipated Public Works Loan agreed in a previous Town Council Meeting.

Members requested all paperwork relating to finance for projects be included in the agenda. There was discussion around understanding the demographics of the population around those play areas to help Members understand whether these plans meet the needs of the population. Members suggested potentially reviewing demographics via a Post Office PAF File or the results of the 2021 Census which have now been published. The Public Realm Manager stated he had spoken with residents around those play areas and taken feedback on their desires for the play park. The proposal Members were being asked to consider includes the desires of those who participated in the discussions.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive confirmed that there is one quote for £14k that provides an indicative sense of the cost for Members.

Cllr Knight requested that all future proposals that form part of the Play Areas Strategy include demographics and three costings for the proposals.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** a) the recommendation that the Town Council proceed with upgrading the play areas at Poppyfield 1 and Playfield Close with an indicative sum of £14k, b) replacing two units in each playground, c) proceeding with drawing down the funds from the Public Works Loan to progress the upgrades to both parks at the appropriate time.

Cllr G Fage asked the Committee to consider making good the wooden structures being removed from play areas and including those in the Green Wheel as items of interest.

Franklins Play Area

Cllr F Foster advised Members that he had examined the plan and the related pictures/prices for the individual equipment items and had arrived at a figure of around £68k and pointed out that this figure, together with the £14k already discussed for the Playfield Close and Poppyfield 1, is considerably less than the overall £122k budget for the 2022/23 play area improvements.

The Head of Governance and Strategic Partnerships then advised the meeting that actually, the £122k figure would be almost used up on Franklins alone because of the labour costs involved.

The Town Clerk then clarified the position that the expenditure on Franklins will have to be reduced by £14k to keep the overall expenditure to the £122k budget.

Cllr M. Foster wished to record his concern about the lack of information and clarity provided by the agenda and the accompanying papers. He requested that in future, as a matter of course, all relevant information be included in a clear understandable manner bearing in mind that the information provided should be designed to be helpful to public at large as well as to

Members. Members should not have to ask for relevant information at the meeting when it could and should have been included with the agenda. Cllr M. Foster was verbally supported by Cllr Knight, Cllr Strachan, and Chairman Cllr F. Foster with visual indications of support from other Members.

Members discussed a number of issues relating to this proposal, including having colour co-ordinated play equipment which would look more professional; Officers will need to investigate disabled access to this site as there is a kissing gate allowing entrance to the park, detail to be provided relating to soft equipment costs to support the play areas; information on what will be happening with the pool area on the park; opportunities for residents to be able to purchase memorial plaques and minimum donation on benches installed in play areas.

It was **RESOLVED** that the PLOS Committee support the principle of upgrading Franklins Recreation Ground but defer the final decision for a more detailed review to be made at the next PLOS Committee meeting of 7th June 2022. The review should include:

- a clear vision for the Franklins Recreation Ground as a whole;
- with more detailed scale drawings for the whole park;
- including information on different zones for different age groups and different equipment zones;
- details on the areas where adults and carers will wait for and observe their children;
- equipment warranties and estimated longevity are clearly outlined;
- the play surfaces to be accommodated are stipulated;
- any necessary landscaping is clearly identified; and
- financials are provided to Councillors in accordance with Financial Regulations.

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Jubilee Recreation Area

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships updated Members on the current status. Officers have written to Bellway about the fence/hedge across the pathway between Jubilee Recreation Area and the Larkinson Avenue development site.

Members and Officers discussed potential ideas for the pathway, soft seating and landscaping.

Officers will provide an update at the next PLOS Committee meeting of 7th June 2022.

b. Allotment Storage Building

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive updated Members that this item has been added to the annual budget for 22/23. The Public Realm Manager is collating quotes and these will be presented to the next PLOS Committee meeting of 7th June 2022.

c. Allotment Track Improvement and Maintenance

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive updated Members on this item. The Public Realm Manager has been liaising with Central Bedfordshire Council relating to responsibility for the track and roadway on the allotments. Officers will escalate this to the appropriate CBC Director if there is no information forthcoming in the next week.

d. **Allotment Directional Signage**

The Public Realm Manager advised Members he is still awaiting a response from Central Bedfordshire Council for directional signage from Saxon Way roundabout.

Cllr F Foster asked that when an update is available on this item that an email be sent to all Committee Members to update them.

e. **Wildflower Meadow**

It was **RESOLVED** that this item would be discussed separately under the Exempt Session of this Meeting.

f. **Apollo Gardens Play Area and Financial Settlement**

It was **RESOLVED** that this item would be discussed separately under the Exempt Session of this Meeting.

g. **Future adoption of Play Areas**

It was **RESOLVED** that this item would be discussed separately under the Exempt Session of this Meeting.

h. **Tree Inventory**

The Public Realm Manager updated Members that the Tree Inventory, conducted by a professional organisation, was completed in 2021. Most of the trees are in good condition and some minor recommended arborial work will commence in April 2022.

The Public Realm Manager stated he would provide Members with a full Notice of Works for all tree works going forward. Cllr F Foster asked for all works to be advertised on the Council website going forward.

i. **Drove Road Cemetery / Chapel**

It was **RESOLVED** that this item would be discussed separately under the Exempt Session of this Meeting.

13. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

a. None.

14. EXEMPT

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council resolve to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

(15a: Wildflower Meadow)

(15b: Apollo Gardens Play Area and Financial Settlement)

(15c: Future adoption of Play Areas)

(15d: Drove Road Cemetery / Chapel)

15. **EXEMPT**

a. **Wildflower Meadow**

Members received an update from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive. Central Bedfordshire Council has confirmed it does not wish the Town Council to use any part of the Wildflower Meadow to extend the allotment offer.

Officers are continuing to search for alternative allotment sites.

b. **Apollo Gardens Play Area and Financial Settlement**

Members were given an oral update on the current status on this play area. Officers are in contact with the developer's legal representatives to progress transfer of this playground within the 21/22 financial year.

c. **Future adoption of Play Areas**

The developer has opened dialogue relating to the transfer of various play areas across Biggleswade to BTC. Officers will continue to engage with them to progress the adoption of these play areas on the Kings Reach Estate.

d. **Drove Road Cemetery / Chapel**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive updated Members on the planned Drove Road Cemetery and Chapel Works. Officers are working towards the funding strategy as agreed by the Town Council Meeting of 11th January 2022. The Intention to Offer letter has been submitted to the successful tender provider. A provisional start date will be agreed in due course.

It was noted that Financial Regulations may need to be suspended as only one quote can be sourced for the project management aspect.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 8:43pm