



Ref: Agenda/PLOS-08/06/2021

3rd June 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

All Members of the Public Land and Open Spaces Committee are hereby summoned to the **Public Land and Open Spaces Meeting** that will take place on **Tuesday 8th June 2021** at the **Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade** commencing at **7:00pm**, for the purpose of considering and recommending the business to be transacted as specified below.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Tarrant', written over a horizontal line.

Peter Tarrant
Town Clerk & Chief Executive

Distribution: Committee Members Press
 Notice Boards

Committee Members: Cllr F Foster (Chairman)
 Cllr C Thomas (Vice Chairman)
 Cllr K Brown
 Cllr G Fage
 Cllr M Foster
 Cllr M Knight
 Cllr M North
 Cllr M Russell
 Cllr D Strachan
 Cllr R Pullinger

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

- (a) Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item
- (b) Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item

3. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

A period of up to 15 minutes is permitted to allow members of the public to ask questions that are pertaining to matters listed on this Agenda. (Members of the public will be allowed one three-minute slot).

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XxrB40ysT1OkIDBJ0EOPYA

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman, prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **(one) three-minute slot**.

4. **MINUTES OF MEETING**

- a. For Members to receive the approved minutes of the Public Land and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on **Tuesday 16th March 2021**.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

- a. Minutes of the Public Land and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on **Tuesday 16th March 2021**.

6. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- a. **Jubilee Recreation Area**

A written report from Cllr F Foster.

- b. **Deputy Public Realm Manager Report**

An oral update from the Deputy Public Realm Manager on the latest progress to published updates. Member's comms update 14th May 2021 is attached for reference.

- c. **Public Realm Depot Equipment**

An oral update from the Deputy Public Realm Manager and the Town Clerk & Chief Executive on the Depot and equipment.

- d. **Allotments**

An oral update from the Deputy Public Realm Manager and Town Clerk & Chief Executive on the following:

- i. Signage.
- ii. On-site storage bins for Recycling, Compositing and Waste Material. Representatives of the Allotment Association have indicated that they are willing to work with the council to manage the storage bins on site.
- iii. Biggleswade Town Council's commitment to maintaining the allotment tracks to a higher and constant standing using a cost efficient and appropriate surfacing.

e. **Play and Recreation Areas**

An oral update from the Deputy Public Realm Manager.

f. **Tree Survey**

An oral update from the Deputy Public Realm Manager.

g. **Drove Road Cemetery and Chapel**

An oral update from the Deputy Public Realm Manager and Town Clerk & Chief Executive.

h. **Stratton Way Cemetery**

An oral update from the Deputy Public Realm Manager on the following matters:

- i. Update on recent progress.
- ii. Review of Cemetery policy.
- iii. Notice Boards for main (South) entrance and also for the smaller North entrance.
- iv. Review of benches and actions required.
- v. Replacement of waste bins.

i. **Biggleswade Town Council Owned Sports Areas**

An oral update from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive.

7. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

None.

8. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

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9. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

The following resolution will be **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

(None)

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.



**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC LAND AND OPEN SPACES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY
16th MARCH 2021 AT 7PM VIA ZOOM WEBINAR FUNCTION**



PRESENT:

Cllr F Foster (Chairman)
Cllr L Fage (Vice Chairman)
Cllr K Brown
Cllr G Fage
Cllr M Foster
Cllr M Knight
Cllr M North
Cllr M Russell
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr C Thomas
Cllr H Ramsay, Cllr R Pullinger (non-Committee Members)

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive, Biggleswade Town Council
Mr P Truppin – Assistant Town Clerk, Biggleswade Town Council
Mrs S van der Merwe – Professional Assistant, Biggleswade Town Council

Members of Public – 2 Cllr R Pullinger (non-Committee Member)

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 the individual. The Chairman asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

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:

None.

3. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

The Chairman advised Members of the public wishing to speak to use the “raise hand” function on screen.

None.

4. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

Members received and **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Public Lands & Open Spaces Meeting held on Tuesday 24th November 2020.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

Matters arising from the Minutes of the Public Lands & Opens Spaces Committee Meeting of 24th November 2020.

Cllr Strachan – Item 5b/Item 6a: Great Outdoor Gym Company: Cllr Strachan asked for an update on this item. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised Members quotes were not available but that one of the priorities for the new Public Realm Manager (once recruited) will be to conduct a full audit of all play and leisure equipment as there is opportunity to modernise these. This will be returned to the agenda at the first available opportunity after the Public Realm Manager takes up the position.

6. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **New Public Realm Depot and Equipment**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive apologised for the number of oral updates on this agenda as a result of staff absences.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised Members that the initial Agreement to Lease for the new depot was signed in February. The Assistant Town Clerk clarified that the lease document will be completed when the dividing wall between Units 10 and 11 has been completed. The landlord has applied for planning permission for the wall. Dates agreed with the landlord for possession of the new depot would be a minimum of one month from Agreement to Lease and a maximum of up to three months. The two major items of change to be effected are 1) agents to build separating wall, 2) utilities to be separated, 3) electrical quotations agreed and works scheduled.

The Public Realm Equipment previously approved for purchase by the Council has been ordered and once the Town Council is in possession of the new depot, the equipment will be delivered.

b. **Old Public Realm Depot**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive stated that the Public Realm Team have been clearing out and cleaning up the current depot building and redundant equipment has been sold off. Cllr Bond suggested use of the old depot for a local church food bank, however, this did not move forward. Officers are investigating creative ideas for use of the Public Realm depot going forward, with those tenants to take possession of the depot shortly after the Public Realm team has moved to the new depot.

Cllr Knight added that it would be sensible to ensure monetisation of the old depot to offset some of the costs of the new depot and suggested getting a valuation or appraisal to establish market rental values. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive stated that the Council is already seeking to undertake a global chartered surveyor valuation project to review all assets for insurance purposes and this building will be included. Cllr F Foster asked if a specification and list of services at the current depot is available for future tenants. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive will share this information to Members as soon as he is able to.

c. **Flower Beds/Hanging Baskets**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive and Cllr F Foster conducted site visits to the North and South entrance roundabouts into Biggleswade with members of the Public Realm team. The Town Council's aim is to have these adopted in order to make those entrances more attractive to visitors and residents. Other plans include having more planters, raising the Biggleswade name signs to make them more visible, sloping the planters to give a better visual impact to drivers and maintaining the roundabouts to a higher standard than is currently the case. Central Bedfordshire Council Highways to request adoption of these roundabouts so that the Town Council is able to manage them.

Three quotations were received for flower bed stock and hanging baskets and planting of the hanging baskets is now underway. Flower planting is scheduled to begin in the second week of May 2021. The Public Realm Team has a schedule of works covering planting of beds, baskets and planters, with a number of additional planters being manufactured by the Public Realm operatives.

In the long term, the Town Clerk & Chief Executive would like to invest money in maintaining those flowers in a better way to make the annual seasonal planting and growing costs go further through purchase of greenhouses and self-cultivation materials.

d. **Saxon Gate Pocket Park and Biggleswade Linear Wood**

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive toured these sites with Cllr F Foster and he had approached Lindsey Bignell at Central Bedfordshire Council with a view to taking on a partnership agreement for maintenance of these areas, subject to terms agreement and payment of a maintenance fee for a 25-year period.

Both sites are attractive and pose a positive addition to the Town Council's offer for its residents. Where there is a commercial agreement with another Council or a private contractor, the Town Clerk & Chief Executive recommended it should be considered to extend the Public Realm team proportionate to that income.

e. **Tree Inventory**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive confirmed this project remains a priority for the Public Realm Team but is not yet complete. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive has been conducting site visits to assets across Biggleswade to see what needs to be done and three tree surgeons were recently invited to quote on maintenance of the trees at Drove Road Cemetery.

The Tree Inventory will help build a picture of what work needs to be done in a season, which would then easily translate into budget requirement going forward.

f. **The Spinney**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive is aware of a misunderstanding within the Community that an oak tree was felled in the Spinney by the Town Council. This was done by an unknown person and not the Town Council. Cllr Russell had received a complaint from a member of the public and has sent a holding reply. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive will discuss the information he has on this matter with Cllr Russell.

The new Public Realm Manager will be tasked with examining The Spinney and to recommend what should be done to provide the Community with a space that is more user friendly.

Cllr M Foster asked if the Town Council has a list of the Town Council assets, along with a map of the relevant sites. He added this would be useful information for Councillors and would clearly list the assets. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive added he was happy to share the Asset Register with Members.

Cllr Knight suggested the cutting down of the tree is an act of vandalism and should be reported to the police.

g. **Allotments Notice Board/Map and Bay/Internal Road Repair**

The Professional Assistant advised Members that she and Karen Saunders of the Administration team had met with Cllrs F and M Foster at the end of January at the allotments to inspect the access road from the Taylor Wimpey development site up to the allotment gates. Lorraine Howitt from Central Bedfordshire Council had been instrumental in getting Taylor Wimpey on board to carry out repairs to the road, but there was still a section that had not been repaired. Central Bedfordshire Council had been contacted to update them on the current situation and a response from CBC is pending.

There was significant degradation in the road between sites 1 and 2 of the allotment, and this would require some repair.

h. **Buttercup Mead Fencing, Fairfield Play Area and Maintenance of all play areas**

The Professional Assistant advised Members the fencing at Buttercup Mead has been completed.

Cllr F Foster had visited the play area at Buttercup Mead and the site is very small and the equipment is in poor condition. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive reiterated that all play areas need to be audited, with recommendations on what investments should be made to modernise or repair those and the future of certain play areas. However, this project should be done by the Public Realm Manager once that position is filled.

i. **Biggleswade 3g pitch**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised he had written a letter to Mr Young from the Football Association on 17th February 2021 asking for information on what criteria had been used for choosing the site and suggesting other sites that could be suitable. He recommended a feasibility study be conducted and the Town Council is awaiting Mr Young's response.

Cllr Strachan advised the Committee that there had recently been an article in the Biggleswade Chronicle representing the three town Football clubs, and he recommended inviting those football clubs and Stratton School to discuss this matter collectively.

Cllr Madeline Russell reminded the Committee that the funds for the football pitch will come from the Football Foundation, with a contribution from S106, so it is necessary to work with the FA to progress this.

Cllr G Fage recommended sending Mr Young a gentle reminder to help progress the matter. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive stated that conversations with wider stakeholders would be beneficial in the long run.

j. **Magnolia Place**

The Professional Assistant updated the Members on progress on this matter. The trees around 7 Magnolia Place identified in a report have been felled and the tree surgeon confirmed the homeowner was happy with the result.

k. **Drove Road Cemetery Update**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive confirmed there is an ongoing schedule of works around maintaining the graves and trees on site. This is a cemetery with a number of very old graves and where some graves have gone into disrepair, the Town Council will, over a period of time, write to the families asking them if they would like to assist with maintaining those graves. The Town Clerk has visited the site and spoken with homeowners nearby and there are tree surgeons visiting with a view to providing quotations for trees overhanging the wall and larger older trees that need to be reduced.

Cllr Knight asked for a specification of these works to be supplied to the Committee.

7. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

None.

8. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Mr John Ingrey

Mr Ingrey raised the issue of the roads on the allotments and asked what the final decision is regarding the road maintenance. Cllr F Foster confirmed the Town Council accepts the responsibility as a Council to maintain the access road and internal road between the two allotment sites. Mr Ingrey added there are some allotment tenants who are disabled and safe access to the second site via the internal road is vital.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive added that Members may be aware that a concrete mixer truck almost tipped over on the access road, which has caused quite significant damage to the road and Taylor Wimpey should be encouraged to put this right. The Professional Assistant confirmed this has been raised with Central Bedfordshire Council and we are awaiting a response.

9. EXEMPT

The following resolution will be moved that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

(10a Public Realm Recruitment)

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.

10. EXEMPT

a. Public Realm Recruitment

Jonathan Wooley joins Biggleswade Town Council on 29th March 2021 as the Deputy Public Realm Manager on a temporary contract for two months.

There have been very few applications for the Public Realm Manager position and as a result the Town Clerk & Chief Executive is meeting with two Recruitment Companies who may help with the recruitment.

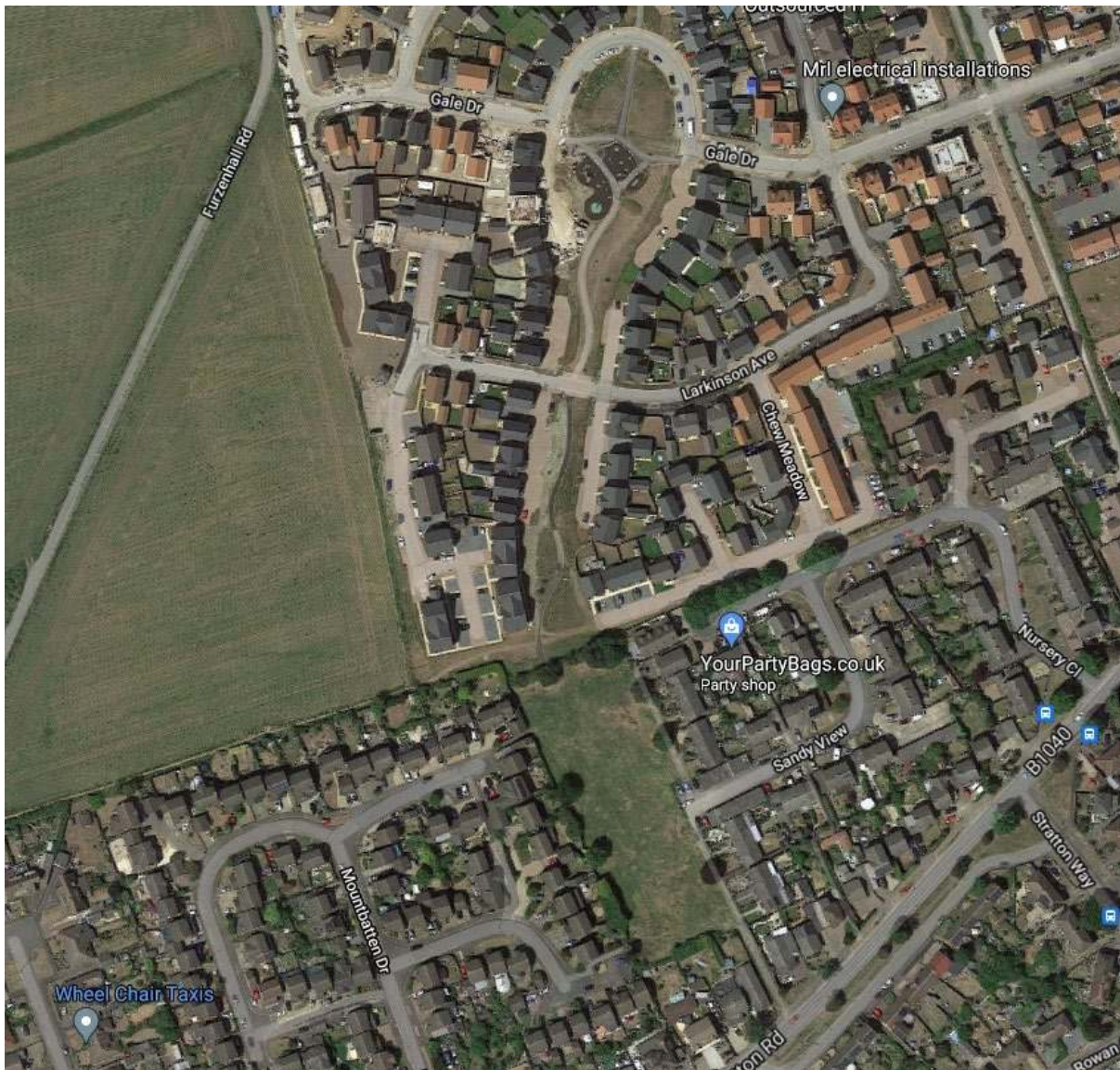
Although this item was on the agenda under Items for Consideration, 6f The Spinney, it was moved to exempt following a request by the Town Clerk & Chief Executive.

6f. The Spinney

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive will contact the Police to report the cutting down of the Oak tree on The Spinney.

JUBILEE RECREATION AREA (JRA) AND THE LAND NORTH OF POTTON ROAD (LNPR) DEVELOPMENT

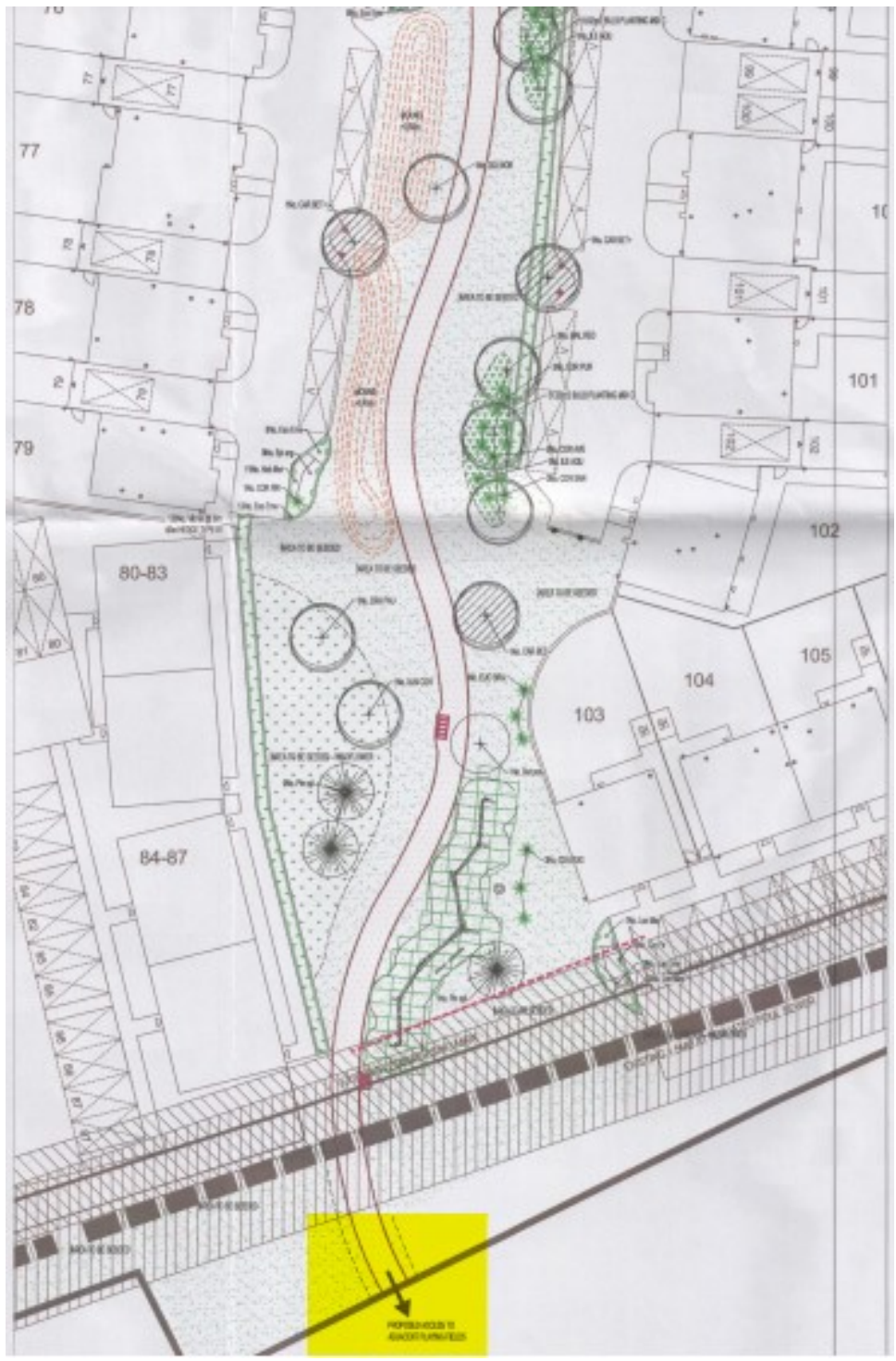
In 2019 the PLOS Committee discussed the Jubilee Recreation Area (JRA) off Potton Road and its relationship to the “Land North of Potton Road” (LNPR) development.



The intention and reason for the planning/design/location of the green space on LNPR was that the two green spaces would be open/linked allowing free access between and through the two spaces and beyond.

The Outdoor Realm Manager (Bob Catchpole) was tasked with establishing ownership of the metal fence and hedgerow. He reported that BTC has ownership. For various reasons there seems to have been no further

communication with the developer of LNPR or progress on BTC side to realise the aspiration of the site.



The note on the detailed plans the plans “PROPOSED ACCESS TO ADJACENT PLAYING FIELDS” (highlighted in yellow) demonstrates that access through the barrier was intended.

VIEWS FROM THE LNPR SIDE OF THE FENCE

Now that most parts the LNPR development are virtually complete, it seems certain that the spaces are intended to be and should be linked.



The pathway on the LNPR side of the fence, which runs through the central green area of Larkinson Drive, Binder Place etc reaches a dead end at the fence.



The picture above shows the winding nature of the pathway and one of the benches which are situated at intervals along it.



The picture above shows posts which possibly indicate what the developer believes marks the boundary.

VIEWS OF THE JUBILEE RECREATION AREA (JRA)



The pedestrian access to JRA from Potton Road.



The above picture, looking north from the Potton Road towards the LNPR development shows that currently no access to LNPR is possible. The barrier (which was presumably put in place before the land was sold for development) consists of a substantial metal fence right across the width of the area with a hedgerow in front of it.



Walkway to Jubilee Gardens (south end). The picture shows four recently planted trees which have not survived.



Walkway to Ashley Gardens (north end).



Four recently planted trees (one dead) at the north end, close to the barrier.



Some mature trees surround the area and the picture shows on the left the access to Nursery Close through the garages. The picture also shows the undulating nature of the ground (previously a rubbish tip).

AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENHANCE THE JUBILEE RECREATION AREA AND ESTABLISH THE LINK BETWEEN THE TWO SPACES AND BEYOND.

Currently the JRA is a wide open space with a few mature trees around the perimeter. An attempt to add more trees in clumps of four has not gone well as the pictures show, with five of the eight trees planted not surviving. The grass is mown regularly and the area is used by dog walkers and for children's ball games. Some years ago BTC decided to remove all play equipment from the site. The primary reason for this related to the site's history as rubbish tip and the concern that sharp objects were working their way to the surface.

The Council has the opportunity to enhance the amenity both for nearby residents and for those from LNPR.

Consideration should be given to the following and how we would like to proceed, to include:

- a. Confirm the ownership of the fence and commence a dialogue with the developer.
- b. Make JRA a small attractive park.
- c. Remove and replant existing dead trees. Plant many more trees and flowering bushes.
- d. Maintain open grass area for dog-walkers picnics and children's ball games etc.
- e. Remove the fence/hedgerow barrier or a section of it to allow access to and from both areas.
- f. Continue the winding pathway from LNPR to join up with the pedestrian access to Potton Road
- g. Install matching benches at intervals along the pathway and elsewhere on the site.
- h. Check out what 106 monies could be available to support a project in this area.
- i. Consider consultation with local residents.

Report by:
Councillor Frank Foster
Chairman BTC PLOS Committee
20th May 2021

On 14 May 2021, at 10:44, Peter Tarrant <Peter.Tarrant@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk> wrote:

Members,

Just a brief comms update.

- The electrical work has begun at the new depot and will be completed in 10 days from now. The renaming adaptations should be completed by early September.
- Our big equipment is being transferred to the new depot week commencing 17th pending the alarm being fitted this week.
- The hanging baskets are going up next Thursday.
- The remainder of the bedding plants are being planted week commencing 7th June supported by the Rotary Club.
- The new three tier planters will be in place week commencing 7th June and will be positioned near to the Sainsburys roundabout.
- We have a new angled purpose-built planter as you enter Biggleswade past the Retail Park. This is being planted week commencing 7th June and will be flower representation of the Town Council emblem. Public Realm staff have also cleared away the brambles that overhung the fence. This now looks tidier.
- We are planning on developing four small beds around the war memorial subject to CBC agreement.
- Tree works to the perimeter of Drove Rd Cemetery have been completed.
- The new equipment that you sanctioned has begun to arrive and is being distributed to staff.
- Quotations for renewal of some of our vehicles have now been received and this is being considered today. We are looking to lease two new vehicles to replace other vehicles that have come to the end of their useful life and are replacing a Kubota.
- A site meeting is taking place next week to look at the possibility of creating a further 30/40 allotment plots.
- Negotiations are ongoing with CBC ref the adoption of Linear Wood and Pocket Park.
- A paper will be presented to Personnel written by Jonathan that recommends an increase in the Public Realm establishment after a thorough review of their workload.
- A further paper will be presented to PLOS that incorporates a thorough review of all of our play areas. I anticipate that investment will be required as some of these areas are looking tired and outdated.
- We are having a site visit next week at Jubilee Recreation Area and a paper from Frank will follow shortly thereafter.
- We are replanting trees at the Spinney with the support of the community and the Scouts.

Peter Tarrant, Town Clerk & Chief Executive