



**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC LAND AND OPEN SPACES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER
2021 AT 7.00 PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL,
SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE**



PRESENT:

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

Mr P Tarrant, Town Clerk & Chief Executive Mr P Truppin, Assistant Town Clerk, Mr K Hosseini, Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships, Mr J Woolley, Deputy Public Realm Manager, Ms K Saunders, Administrator, Mrs A Dennis, BTC Meeting Administrator.

Members of the public – None

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr M Russell.

ABSENT

None.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

a. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item

None.

b. Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item

None.

3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

4. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETING

- a. Members **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Public Lands and Open Spaces Committee Meeting held on the 8th June 2021 subject to the correction of the title Assistant Town Clerk for Philip Truppin.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

Members thanked the Public Realm Team for the excellent display of the flower beds and hanging baskets this year.

6. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Allotment Storage Building**

The Public Realm Manager gave Members an oral update on the allotment storage building. The Allotment Association has been consulted. Consideration is still given to a solution. This will either be a semi/permanent storage option. A further report will follow.

b. **Allotment Track Improvements & Maintenance**

The Public Realm Manager gave an oral update on the allotment track improvements and maintenance. Although the required certification to use “road planing’s” from Ringway Jacobs (RJ) has been obtained, access to the site with the normal large lorries used for this purpose is not possible. Although negotiations with Ringway Jacobs (RJ) will continue, alternative track surfacing materials from builders’ merchants and other sources including those to be suggested by Cllr I Bond will be investigated. A further report will follow.

c. **Additional Allotments and the Wildflower Meadow**

The Public Realm Manager gave Members an oral update on additional allotments and the Wildflower Meadow. The Town Council is in consultation with Central Bedfordshire in an effort to extend the current allotment offer and one possible solution is to allocate a portion of the Wildflower Meadow. There is a significant waiting list for new allotment plots. Other green spaces are also being explored. A further report will follow.

d. **Allotment Plot Maintenance Issues**

A small number of allotments are overgrown and a number of invoices remain unpaid. A final letter will be sent out to all interested parties with a clear end date. If allotment holders do not respond appropriately then their agreement will be terminated by the Council.

In addition the broader policy will be reviewed to ensure all contractual conditions are properly reflected.

e. **Allotment Directional Signage**

The Public Realm Manager gave the Members an oral update on allotment directional signage. The Town Council is in the process of providing new directional signate and will in time renumber the plots. Any new numbers will take into consideration an allowance for half plots. All signage will be branded. A further report will follow.

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

The Head of Governance and Strategic Partnerships gave Members an oral update on the Apollo Gardens play area. There has been a considerable delay in the adoption of this site. Consultations continue with a representative of Central Bedfordshire Council. Consideration will also have to be given to the S106 agreement that existed at the time. This work should be considered as a high priority. A further report will follow.

g. **Future Adoption of Play Areas**

The Head of Governance and Strategic Partnerships gave Members an oral update on the future adoption of play areas. A clear policy and process needs to be determined so as to maximise the opportunities for adoption.

There are a further nine play areas under consideration that are currently managed by developers. A further report will follow.

7. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

None.

8. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, in respect of any other business of the Town Council.

There were no members of the public present.

9. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

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

(10a. Play Area Improvements)

(10b. Tree Inventory)

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

10. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

a. **Play Area Improvements**

The Public Realm Manager is qualified to inspect the play equipment and has significant experience in regard to the design and layout of play areas. This experience is invaluable in determining whether equipment is safe and fit for purpose. Any equipment that does not pass safety tests is immediately removed and either repaired or replaced.

The Public Realm Manager and the Head of Governance and Strategic Partnerships conducted an extensive inspection of all the play areas including Berkley Square, Brunel Drive, Buttercup Mead, Fairfield Road, Foxglove Drive, Franklins Recreational ground, Lilac Grove, Playfield Close, Poppyfields 1, Poppyfields 2, Stratton Way, Watkin Walk play areas.

There is significant improvement required in a number of play areas. It is the Council's intention to create stimulating environments for children, adults, and residents with special educational needs.

Importantly all of Biggleswade Town Council owned play areas and equipment are safe from a health and safety compliance perspective.

The following items were **RESOLVED**:

1. The Public Realm team would inspect existing equipment to determine whether it can be preserved or enhanced to extend its life.
2. Officers would send a letter to consult residents at Buttercup Mead regarding potential play area closure.
3. Officers would determine priorities and potential growth areas focussing on providing a solution for at least two play areas.
4. Officers will work with Members to create a draft strategic plan setting out the vision and how this will be applied to existing play areas.

b. **Tree Inventory**

This matter was not discussed, to be carried over to the next meeting.

Meeting closed at 9:10 pm