

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PUBLIC LAND & OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 JUNE 2013
AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, SAFFRON ROAD,
BIGGLESWADE**

Present: Cllr Mrs W Smith (Chair), Cllr B Briars, Cllr Mrs J Lawrence, Cllr G Wilson, Cllr S Watkins,
Cllr Mrs H Ramsay
Louise Wilcox – Deputy Town Clerk
Jan Durn- Administrative Assistant

Members of Public - 10

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr R Skinner, Cllr I Bond

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

(a) interests in any agenda item - there were no interests declared

3a. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no items discussed.

3b. INVITED SPEAKER

Nick Gurney, Cub Scout Leader, Martin Williamson, Chairman of Committee and Beaver Scout Leader, Biggleswade Scout Group, and Peter Smethurst, Scout Media representative for the county, gave the following presentation:

“Thank you for giving us the opportunity to present to you today a proposal that can bring enormous benefit to the growing Scout Movement in the area and to the wider community in the town.

Projected 50 year increases in Scout membership

Based on figures for the last 13 years over the next 50 years, Scout membership in Biggleswade is projected to rise 60% from the present level of 218 to around 350. Of these 75 will be trained leaders and helpers and 275 will be young people aged from 6 to 18. By 2063 we expect to have 13 sections of Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers up from eight today. It is against this background of rising demand that we are planning for the future.

Present facilities

Biggleswade Scout Group currently operates from its headquarters in London Road and has done so since the early 1960's. Both now and more so in the coming years the headquarters will require costly structural repairs. The current building has only one hall which means we can only operate one section at a time. This limits the numbers we can handle. The site is already operating at capacity and there is no room for any new sections. One of our Cub Packs already has to meet at Trinity Church. The current site is also “land locked” and access is only via a narrow lane which makes moving equipment for camps etc. very difficult. There is also no parking which can create congestion on London Road when the Scout Hut is in use. The building is also very expensive to run as it is not insulated and is not eco efficient.

Proposed development

We are proposing a new building with one large hall with a retractable dividing wall. This will allow the main hall to be divided into two smaller halls each twice the size of our existing hall giving the group the capacity to double the number of sections operating in the town. The new building will also house a meeting room and office, a large storage area the size of our current entire building and toilet and kitchen facilities. The proposed building will benefit from its own parking, easy vehicle access, disabled facilities and high level security by design. The proposed new building will be constructed using state of the art composite materials which are manufactured from 100% recycled materials and require no maintenance and are aesthetically pleasing.

The building will take advantage of the latest eco technology, insulation, ground and air source heat recovery systems, solar panels and passive building design which together will ensure that the new premises are very cheap to run. This innovative building will be an asset for the town helping to give Biggleswade a head start in promising new construction techniques.

As well as using the building for the benefit of Scout Group members the new facility would be available to the entire community of Biggleswade. We aim to involve the Biggleswade Girl Guides in our plans and hope that they too could make use of the new facilities. We plan to involve the other local groups in the same way.

Land required

To make this project a reality we need a site of up to an acre in size which would allow us to expand. This would also give us the potential to provide greater outside facilities for camping, pioneering and outdoor adventure which is what young peoples in Biggleswade expect from their Scouting.

Expected costs and funding plans

The expected value of the new headquarters will be around £200,000. For that we get a state of the art building designed with the future in mind. It will be a net contributor to the National Grid and will therefore benefit from revenue to meet maintenance costs.

In order to make our vision become a reality we will need to raise funds to meet the cost and, more important, secure land for the project. We plan to raise the required funds through grant applications and fund raising events which we hope the town council will support.

The next stage

We hope the council will support us in the search for land suitable for our new headquarters and that they will be prepared to recommend our proposal to the next stage in the process.”

Cllr Mrs W Smith thanked the Scout Group members for their presentation and their very valuable contribution to Community events.

Members asked if any potential locations had been identified and were advised that two locations were being considered. These locations being the open space at Furzenhall and Land at Baden Powell Way near to the allotment site.

Cllr Mrs W Smith stated that the land at Furzenhall is maintained by the Town Council under a lease arrangement from CBC, although the land is under-utilised. Members advised that the Scout Group should make contact with CBC planning department to discuss there ambitions.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Town Council support the principle of the project and have no objection to the Furzenhall land being relinquished.

4. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

- a. Members received and approved minutes of the Public Land and Open Spaces committee held on 12 March 2013.

5 MATTERS ARISING

- a. Members discussed the status of the memorial safety policy which the Deputy Town Clerk advised continues to be developed.

6. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- a. **Footpath Mill Lane to Ivel Bridge running adjacent to River**

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence explained the current position regarding the two areas of collapsed river bank. The Environment Agency has refused permission for the chosen contractor to carry out remedial works. Negotiations are now underway in order that the specification will gain consent.

The members asked that CBC be contacted to request signs be placed at each end of the path saying that it is unsafe to use this area and that there is no throughway.

b. Biggleswade Bowls Club- Maintenance of Bowling Green Edges

Correspondence has been received from Biggleswade Bowls Club regarding maintenance of bowling green edges.

Three sides have been identified as rotten and are therefore potentially dangerous. It is proposed that 2 sides are replaced this winter (2013) with concrete edges at a cost of £2460 +VAT in line with the quotation received from TurfCare Leisure Services dated 18 July 2012.

They are requesting financial support for this essential work to be carried out under general maintenance and to keep the green edges in line with the Bowls England Statement.

The cost of previous work in 2010 was shared 50/50 between the Town Council and the Bowls Club and they are requesting similar consideration on this occasion.

Members **RECOMMENDED** a contribution of 25% of the total cost be offered to the Bowls Club.

c. Grasmere Correspondence

Correspondence has been received from 2 residents voicing concerns about the flooding and removal of play equipment at Grasmere play area.

The Chairman combined agenda items c and d at this point.

d. Network Rail Grasmere

Cllr Mrs W Smith reported on the meeting with Network Rail held on 31st May 2013, with the planned power supply upgrade project still at an early stage. Cllr Mrs W Smith highlighted that Network Rail were considering alternative routes due to the presence of the flood basin.

Louise Wilcox advised that final works to remove the play equipment and reinstate have been delayed due to prolonged adverse ground conditions, this has also made the area difficult for maintenance work to take place safely and in line with health and safety regulations. Drainage problems are currently being looked into, with overgrown ditches and hedgerows to be investigated.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Louise Wilcox, Deputy Town Clerk, progress the issues with Anglian Water and Twigden Homes.

e. Biggleswade Town Cricket Club

Materials including plaster boards, plaster, paint and light fittings have been provided to the cricket club. Cricket club members have used these materials to enhance the pavilion and these works have been completed to the satisfaction of the Council.

Members considered the need for new flooring surfaces to be provided and a quotation that had been obtained.

It was **RECOMMENDED** an additional quotation for carpet tiles be obtained.

f. **Fairfield Sports Ground**

Cliff Andrews, BRCC, has supplied Town Council with a revised proposal for Fairfield Sports Ground Access Enhancements for the Biggleswade Green Wheel.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that this is approved.

g. **Quotations for works at Eagle Farm Road Pavilion**

Members considered the two quotations attached for works at Eagle Farm Road Pavilion.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to proceed with Quote B at the following costs:

Tamper proof room stat	£192.93
Trace heating to pipework	£708.60
Install timeclock configuration	£554.85

h. **The Outdoor Access Improvement Plan for Central Bedfordshire 2013 to 2023**

Members are asked to consider the above Consultation Draft document which is available to view at Town Council office or online at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/environment/countryside/oaip.aspx

It was **RECOMMENDED** that this be noted.

i. **Cemetery Maintenance**

Cllr B Briars outlined a series of concerns with maintenance operations being undertaken in both Council Cemeteries.

The Deputy Town Clerk, reported that a new and improved maintenance programme has been put in place to deal with ongoing maintenance concerns, with fortnightly grass cutting regimes and increased cylinder mowing. This will be monitored closely and increased attention paid to edging up and clearing of footpaths and gullies.

j. **New play equipment items – Kitelands Recreation Ground**

Members considered the S106 funding in hand and available to spend on new play equipment items at Kitelands Recreation Ground.

Members agreed that Kitelands would benefit from new and more challenging items of equipment.

Members **RECOMMENDED** that the following items be purchased

4m climb net - £7500.00
Freeride - £1412.00
Aeroskate - £5477.00

Members **RECOMMENDED** that two quotations be taken to council showing the installation and safety surfacing costs for both items.

k. **New play equipment items**

Members considered the need for replacement items at Foxglove and Heather Drive and the concerns with the deteriorating surfacing at Franklins Recreation Ground.

Members **RECOMMENDED** that S106 funding be obtained for all these work items.

Members **RECOMMENDED** subject to funding being transferred, proceeding with ordering the following items.

Heather Drive

a2) Elephant springy £355.00

a4) Parrott see saw £1560.00

Foxglove

b3) Octopus Springy £546

Franklins Recreation Ground

2) Combined 2 bay/basket net frame £3375.00

Installation and wetpour surfacing to swings, plus replacement wetpour surfacing to overhead rotator, cradle swings, toddlers multiplay £10,777.00

l. Maintenance and repairs to the Buildings and Boundary Walls – Stratton Way cemetery

Members considered the tender document detailing recommendations for the buildings and boundary walls at Stratton Way Cemetery.

Members considered the tender submissions and **RECOMMENDED** to proceed with Quote C at a cost of £12,016.00

m. Replacement roofing works Drove Road workshop

Members considered quotations for the replacement roofing works and **RECOMMENDED** to proceed with Quote A at a cost of £3917.00

n. Change of Committee name

Members considered the possibility of re-naming the Public Land and Open Spaces Committee. Following discussion of possible alternative names members **RECOMMENDED** continuing with the name Public Land and Open Spaces.

o. English Heritage Open Days – Drove Road Chapel

Members considered the possibility of opening up the Drove Road Cemetery Chapel on Saturday 14th September, to highlight the restoration work that has recently taken place.

Members **RECOMMENDED** approaching the Biggleswade History Society with a view to opening the chapel on this date and to register the event with English Heritage accordingly.

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Stratton Way- demolition of garages

Members are advised that Aragon Housing have instructed a contractor to demolish the redundant garage block at Stratton Way adjacent to the recreation ground. A site meeting has been held to discuss the works and agree the boundary treatment. New palisade fencing is to be provided to continue the existing fence line and to ensure the boundary is secured. This work is expected to commence in July.

Members **RECOMMENDED** this information be noted.

b. Watercourse Maintenance Programme for 2013/14 in Biggleswade

Bedfordshire and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board have finalised their maintenance programme for the coming year 2013/14 and have identified watercourses where they propose to carry out maintenance works to that they are kept in serviceable condition to manage surface water and help reduce flood risk.

Members **RECOMMENDED** this information be noted and asked if they could be notified when works will be taking place.

c. **New play area- Land East of Biggleswade**

A drawing showing a new play area to be provided in Phase One of the land East of Biggleswade development was reviewed.

Members **RECOMMENDED** this information be noted.

8. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

A member of the public raised concerns about the Grasmere open space.

Members listened to these concerns and re-iterated the recommendations that were discussed earlier in the meeting for contact to be made with both Anglian Water and Twigden Homes and for the Deputy Town Clerk to investigate the possible clearance of the overgrown areas of vegetation.

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(s) is discussed.

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.