

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PUBLIC LAND & OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE HELD ON
16 SEPTEMBER 2014 AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT
HOUSE, SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE**

Present: Cllr Mrs W Smith, Cllr G Wilson, Cllr B Briars, Cllr P Biernis, Cllr S Watkins, Cllr M North,
Cllr Mrs H Ramsay
Mr R McGregor – Town Clerk
Mr M Thorn – Deputy Town Clerk
Mrs J Durn – Administrative Assistant
Members of Public - 5

1. APOLOGIES

None received

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2014/15 TERM

For Members to elect a Chair of the Public Lands and Open Spaces Committee for the remainder of 2014/15 term

Cllr H Ramsay took the Chair to receive nominations from the Members.

Cllr M North was nominated by Cllr W Smith, there were five Members in favour, none against, and two abstentions.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Cllr M North be the elected Chair of the Public Lands and Open Spaces Committee for the remainder of the 2014/15 term.

3. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2014/15 TERM

For Members to elect a Vice Chair of the Public Lands and Open Spaces Committee for the remainder of 2014/15 term

Cllr G Wilson resigned his position as Vice Chair for personal reasons.

The Chair asked for nominations from the Members for Vice Chair.

Cllr W Smith nominated Cllr S Watkins, there were four Members in favour, none against, and two abstentions.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Cllr S Watkins be the elected Vice Chair of the Public Lands and Spaces Committee for the remainder of 2014/15 term.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- (a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item – none declared
- (b) Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item – non declared

5. 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.

There were no items discussed during the public open session.

6. **MINUTES OF MEETINGS**

- a. For Members to receive the minutes of the Public Lands and Open Spaces committee meeting held on 29 July 2014.

Members received and approved the minutes of the Public Lands and Open spaces meeting held on 29 July 2014.

7. **MATTERS ARISING**

- a. From the Public Lands and Open Spaces committee meeting held on 29 July 2014.

Cllr B Briars referred to page 2 of the minutes: The Town Clerk gave an update

g) Replacement boundary fencing at Buttercup Mead

The Town Clerk has asked the Deputy Town Clerk to instruct the Council ground staff to replace the fence posts. We will not be going out to tender for this work.

h) Replacement Play Equipment at Fairfield Recreation Ground

The Town Clerk informed Cllr Briars that, as requested by the Members at the last Public Land & Open Space Committee meeting on the 29th July, these items have been taken to the Council Meeting held on the 26th August. It was **RECOMMENDED** at the Council Meeting on 26th August to replace the equipment and orders have been placed to do so.

j) Replacement Play Equipment at Franklins Recreation Ground

The Town Clerk reported that this item has also been taken back to Council, where it was deferred again. The Deputy Town Clerk said that it was felt there were issues regarding exactly what the Town Council were being asked to provide, and as a result he will be asking the Councillors to attend a Site meeting at both Kitelands and Franklins Recreation Grounds in order to clarify these points.

This request will be covered under item 8a on the Agenda.

k) Replacement Play Equipment at Kitelands Recreation Ground

The Town Clerk reiterated that Councillors were being asked to attend a site meeting in order to clarify requirements. He also reported that a meeting had been arranged with himself, the Conservation Officer, and The Levitt Partnership to identify areas that require attention. However, the Conservation Officer did not attend and a second meeting had to be arranged. At the second meeting the Conservation Officer did identify several areas that required attention, and The Levitt Partnership are currently drawing up specifications to go out to tender for this work.

8. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- a. **Quotations for play equipment at Kitelands and Franklins Recreation Ground**

The Chair asked Members if they would agree to attend a site meeting at the Recreation Grounds in order to clarify the requirements. It was stressed that this meeting should take place as soon as possible.

The Members agreed that after the close of Public Land & Open Space Committee meeting the Councillors would stay on to agree a date in order to carry out this inspection as a matter of urgency.

9. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

There are no items for information.

10. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

A period of up to 15 minutes is permitted to allow members of the public to ask questions.

- Mr M Foster: Would the Council like to consider installing an audio visual screen in the reception area of the Council Offices. This could permanently display areas of Biggleswade, such as play areas, parks, walks, and other areas of interest to the public.
- Ms S Legate: Asked for the situation regarding dog walking in Kitelands Park to be clarified, following rumours that she had heard that dogs were being banned.

The Chairman said that Central Bedfordshire Council are responsible to the Dog Control Orders. The Town Clerk reiterated that as reported in the Minutes of the previous meeting held on the 26th August, item 7b, Central Bedfordshire Council notified the Town Council that they were proposing to implement Dog Control Orders across the whole of Central Bedfordshire, and were asking that any areas that required Dog Control Orders be identified. The Town Council identified areas in Biggleswade suitable for "Dogs on Leads by Direction Order". This Direction will not ban dogs, but will require them to be on a lead in the specified areas.

- Mr M Foster: Regarding the play equipment – Is it the responsibility of the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk to decide on what is required, ie. Do they decide themselves, or are quotations based on what the Committee requires?

The Chair said that is based on both. The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk produce a tender based on the requirements of the area. However, it has not quite worked out in this instance as there have been areas of disagreement – hence the Councillors are being asked to undertake a site visit.

- Mr M Foster: Asked what is the process of obtaining quotations, and do we have experts in that area?

The Chair assured Mr Foster that we do have this expertise, and we also have links to Central Bedfordshire that can be called on for further expertise and advice.

Cllr W Smith said that a lot of play equipment companies do not offer the same equipment, so it is quite difficult to obtain comparatives.

Mr F Foster agreed with Cllr W Smith's point about the play equipment, but referred to a previous item regarding fencing posts for the Bowling Green. Cllr W Smith said that the situation with the fencing posts has been resolved, and again stressed that the Council does have the expertise regarding play equipment, and can certainly link in to plenty of experience at both Central Bedfordshire and elsewhere, if required.

- Mr Strachan: An inspection of play equipment used to be done once a year, but it now appears that this has not been done and he felt that the Councillors are leaving it to the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk to make decisions, rather than saying what they would like. It therefore sounds as if Councillors have been failing in their duty and it has been left to the staff.

The Chair confirmed that as had already been agreed, the Councillors will be arranging a date for a site inspection immediately following this meeting.

Cllr B Briars also said that the play equipment needs to be inspected and maintained regularly by the suppliers.

11. **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.

There were no exempt items

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.