

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PUBLIC LAND & OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE HELD ON
17 SEPTEMBER 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 I Bond
Louise Wilcox – Deputy Town Clerk
Jan Durn – Administrative Assistant
Members of Public - 3

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr R Skinner

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

MOP1 asked a series of questions regarding the Grasmere open space:

a) *Since the removal of the climbing frames she felt the foundations had been left in an unsafe condition.*

It was explained that all play equipment items have now been removed with posts cut off at ground level. The remaining bases are currently fenced off with orange safety fencing. Quotations are currently being obtained to dig out the foundations and reinstate.

b) *Why is it considered necessary to bury the foundations?*

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that as the area is a drainage basin the large bases for the safety surfacing cannot be left. They require digging out, back-filling with topsoil and then seeding. Quotations are currently being obtained for this work.

c) *All the other play areas have been made over – have the children of Grasmere been forgotten?*

The Chairman said that there was currently no planning permission for play equipment at this location, and that the Town Councils provision would be reviewed in the future.

d) *Is there any legislation in force?*

It was explained that Anglian Water have stated they have completed their works. However there is still a large build of silt in the ditch system and the Deputy Town Clerk is awaiting a call from the Anglian Water Area Manager, who is currently on leave, to hopefully resolve the situation. It was also highlighted that CBC do have powers to serve enforcement action on landowners and to intervene in potential flooding situations. Town council staff will continue to monitor the area.

4. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

a. For Members to receive and approve the minutes of the Public Lands and Open Spaces meeting held on 18 June 2013.

There were concerns at a previous council meeting that the chairman's and also Deputy Clerk's comments had not been clearly indicated. With this taken into account the Minutes were approved.

5. MATTERS ARISING

a. From the Public Lands and Open Spaces meeting held on 18 June 2013 – There were no matters arising.

6. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Boundary Fence, 173 Mead End**

Correspondence was received from the resident of the above address, who moved into the property in July 2012. The property is adjacent to the public alleyway leading from Mead End to Kitelands recreation ground, and a boundary fence separates the property from the alleyway. The previous owners explained that the fencing is the responsibility of Biggleswade Town Council and that BTC had recently measured up the fencing with a view to replacing it in the near future.

The title deeds clarified that the resident owns the boundary fence. During the course of enquiries with BTC (followed up by Cllr Steve Watkins, see Appendix 3) the resident was informed that due to likely wear and tear caused by the public BTC may be willing to contribute to the cost of the replacement fencing.

The resident has obtained 3 quotations for the work and is asking BTC to consider making a contribution to the cost of this replacement given the damage caused to the fence by pedestrians.

Copies of photographs supplied by the resident are on display in the Chamber for Members to view.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council do not contribute towards the cost of the replacement fence.

b. **Request for Parking**

Correspondence was received from a member of the Biggleswade Congregation of Jehovah's.

For the next 4 months they are rebuilding the Kingdom Hall in Shortmead Street and require somewhere to park the vehicles of construction personnel, from 7.30am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday.

They have also contacted the Cricket Club with same request.

Members discussed the very close proximity of the Dan Albone Car Park to the development site. Members outlined concerns with possible damage to the grass surfaces surrounding the cricket pitch. Members also suggested that car sharing could be considered to minimise disturbance.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Town Council do not accept this request and suggest that the Dan Albone car park be utilised.

c. **Draft copy of Biggleswade Town Council Memorial Safety Policy**

A copy of the draft Biggleswade Town Council Memorial Safety Policy was attached for Members consideration.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that this document be sent to the Diocese of St Albans for consultation and referred back to the next meeting of this committee for recommended adoption.

d. **Biggleswade 64th Annual Sports Meeting – 12 July 2014**

Town Council has received correspondence from Biggleswade Sports to advise that they plan to hold their 64th Annual Sports Meeting on Saturday 12 July 2014 commencing at 1.00pm, at Fairfield Sports Ground. They are requesting permission to use the Sports Ground as well as the Pavilion and Toilets.

Members were asked to consider this request.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that this request was agreed

7. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Grasmere**

Following the last meeting and works undertaken by Anglian Water the basin area has completely dried out and the Town Council have been able to resume regular grass cutting operations. Furthermore the remaining items of play equipment and street furniture have also been removed from Site. Prices are currently being obtained to excavate the safety surfacing bases and then backfill with topsoil and seed.

The Deputy Town Clerk has had communications with Twigden Homes, CBC, IDB and Anglian water regarding the area at Grasmere. Twigden Homes have been asked to confirm that the basin and also the adjacent ditch falls within their title. It is also believed that further drainage systems along to the rear of Lincoln Crescent adjacent to CBC adopted open space are also still in the hands of the developer.

Anglian Water have advised that they have no further works required in this location and are satisfied with the functioning of the basin. The Deputy Town Clerk is currently pursuing with Anglian Waters local manager an issue with the recently installed kee klamp fencing and a partially blocked outlet grille.

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

b. **Fairfield Sports Ground**

The Deputy Town Clerk attended a pre start meeting on site with Cliff Andrews (BRCC) and contractor, works are expected to commence during w/c 16th September.

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

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

Repair works commenced on Monday 9th September, with contractors expecting to complete on site on during w/c 23rd September.

It was **RECOMMENDED** this information be noted

d. **Cemetery Maintenance**

Staff have continued to undertake fortnightly grass cutting at both cemeteries, additional attention has been paid to footpath surfaces and kerb edgings and some hedgecutting has already been completed within the Drove Road Cemetery.

Cllr I Bond requested that the rendered wall at Drove Road be looked at with a view to making improvements.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that this be considered in the next Financial Year.

Cllr B Briars asked that the Minutes record that compliments from the public have been received regarding the landscape maintenance work within the cemeteries.

e. **New play equipment items Kitelands Recreation Ground**

All items of equipment are due to be delivered by 20th September and installation works are due to commence in early October.

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

f. **New play equipment items**

The new roundabout item was installed in Watkin Walk in August. The roundabout is proving popular with local youngsters.

A number of manufacturing flaws have unfortunately been identified with this product; these are not dangerous in any way to users but will affect the longevity of the product. The supplier has visited the site and raised an instruction for their technical department to investigate and rectify.

The Chairman advised members that the supplier had now confirmed that they would be manufacturing and installing a new roundabout top to rectify this matter.

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

g. **Maintenance and repairs to the Outbuildings and Boundary Walls – Stratton Way Cemetery**

Works are due to commence during w/c 23rd September.

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

h. **Replacement roofing works Drove Road workshop**

These works are due to be undertaken during October.

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

i. **Stratton Way- demolition of garages**

Members are informed that Aragon Housing has now completed the demolition of the former garages at the rear of the Stratton Way recreation ground and the boundary fencing works have been completed.

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

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

Members are informed that works to install the new Super LAP play area in Apollo Gardens commenced on 9th September and are due to complete by 9th October. The Deputy Town Clerk has been provided with opportunities to meet on site and review the installation and associated landscaping works, with the first such meeting taking place on 12th September. The site is expected to be offered to the Town Council for adoption.

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

k. **Compound at the Acorn centre**

CBC has now provided written confirmation that the compound at the Acorn Centre must be vacated by 25th December 2013. CBC has confirmed that the Town Council have permission to retain the sectional building. Quotes are currently being obtained for the dismantling of the building. The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk have discussed the possibility of an area of land being provided at the development Land East of Biggleswade where a compound could be sited and the sectional building erected, this request was met favourably with the developers and is likely to be deliverable in approximately 18 months' time.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that members continue to be kept informed

8. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

MOP2 raised concerns regarding overgrown ditches/hedgerows at Grasmere.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the ditch area is believed to be within the Twigden Homes title but at this point in time the drainage structure has not been adopted. Although CBC do have the power to intervene, it is hoped to get an answer from the developers on this shortly.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that members continue to be kept informed

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.

There are 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.