

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

Present: Cllr M North (Chair), Cllr S Watkins, Cllr I Bond, Cllr Mrs H Ramsay, Cllr Mrs W Smith,
Cllr B Briars.

Mike Thorn – Deputy Town Clerk
Angela Thomas – Administrator
Members of Public – 4

Also Present: Cllr Mrs M Russell

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr P Biernis and Cllr G Wilson. Cllr B Briars sent his apologies as he would be late.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item - None declared.

(b) Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item - Cllr Mrs H Ramsay declared an interest in Item 6 b ii, and both Cllr Mrs H Ramsay and Cllr I Bond declared an interest in Item 6 a.

3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no items discussed during the Public Open Session.

4. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

a. For Members to receive minutes of Public Lands and Open Spaces meeting held on 16 September 2014.

Members received and approved the Minutes of the Public Land and Open Spaces held on the 16th September 2014 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

5. MATTERS ARISING

a. From the Public Land and Open Spaces meeting held on the 16th September 2014, Cllr M North confirmed the following:-

g) The replacement boundary fencing at Buttercup Mead is now complete.

h) The replacement Play Equipment at Fairfield Recreation Ground is now complete.

6. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Request to install a bench at Eagle Farm Road recreation ground

Town Council has received correspondence requesting permission to install a bench at Eagle Farm Road recreation ground in memory of the applicant's father, who was a former teacher at Stratton Upper School.

He passed away in August this year, and former students, colleagues and friends have raised over £900 for the bench.

The Members considered the request to install the bench.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay suggested that a bench of an equivalent style and standard in keeping with others within the town would cost £750.

Cllr I Bond suggested that the balance of £150 could be passed on to the Town Council as a lump sum to offset future maintenance costs.

Cllr S Watkins stated that any decision would not set a precedent for the installation of benches and that each case would need to be considered individually.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to accept the proposal to install a bench at Eagle Farm Road Recreation Ground on the basis that it is of equivalent style and standard to existing benches within the town and that the balance of £150 should be accepted as a contribution to offset future maintenance costs.

Following the Recommendation, Cllr M North invited Cllr Mrs M Russell to speak. Cllr Mrs M Russell read out a Statement regarding her concerns over the potential misrepresentation of Stratton Upper School in communications regarding the bench.

b. Quotations for works to Play Areas

Further to the Public Lands and Open Spaces site visit held on 17 September 2014 to Franklin Recreation Ground and Kitelands Recreation Ground, Members were asked to consider the quotations for new safety surfaces, installation of Super Nova and the installation of half MUGA. Where quotations included the cost of installing bins and benches, these have since been installed from stock items.

Cllr M North asked for any comments on the quotations for works to be carried out to Play Areas.

- i) Members considered the attached quotations for New Surfaces for Senior Swings and Hang Glider at Franklin Recreation Ground.

| Quote A | Quote B | Quote C |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| £8,135.00 | £7,712.50 | £12,408.00 |

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Quote B should be accepted (funded from 321 EMR Dev Contributions).

- ii) Members considered the attached quotations for New Surfaces for Senior Swings, Roundabout and Super Nova Installation at Kitelands Recreation Ground.

| Quote A | Quote B | Quote C |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| £10,604.00 | £9,112.00 | £10,401.00 |

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Quote B should be accepted (funded from 321 EMR Dev Contributions).

- iii) Members considered the attached quotation for the Installation of half MUGA to be placed at Kitelands Recreation Ground.

| Quote A |
|-----------|
| £1,825.00 |

Cllr M North asked the Deputy Town Clerk why we had only one quote for Item 6 b iii)? The Deputy Town Clerk stated it had been difficult getting further quotes from contractors as we were requesting quotes for installation only, not supply and installation, and that we had already asked companies to provide a number of different quotes for the same site this year.

Cllr Mrs W Smith stated that this has been going on for months and please could the Council agree to have this put in place. With the experience that both the Town Clerk and Deputy

Town Clerk have, do we need to have further quotations?

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked whether we should have 3 quotations. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that we should.

Cllr Mrs W Smith said that she was fully aware of this, however we should go through with it as it will take a lot of time, administration and effort to both the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk to get the quotes together, which may not yield additional savings.

Cllr M North proposed that the Members should accept this quotation of £1,825.00 subject to the Town Clerk confirming financial arrangements.

Cllr I Bond stated the Council will be meeting in 2 weeks and asked that Deputy Town Clerk try to get further quotes in the meantime.

Cllr M North agreed, and Cllr Mrs W Smith stated that this has been going on for a very long time.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Quotation A (£1,825) should be accepted (funded from 321 EMR Dev Contributions) subject to confirming financial arrangements and further quotes being provided in time for the next Council meeting.

c. Maintenance costs for Play Areas

- i) Members considered the estimates for replacing the Springer Toys at Play Areas. The estimate for replacing Springer Toys was approximately £800 each. Six replacements are required - one at Stratton Way, two at Foxglove Drive, one at Poppyfields, and a further two for stock.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Springer Toys should be replaced at approximately £800 each (funded from 321 EMR Dev Contributions).

- ii) For Members to consider estimates for removal of swings, slide and safety surfaces at Jubilee Recreation Ground.

Quote A

£2,820.00

Cllr M North stated that again we only have one quote - have we tried to get any more as this is a particular issue for me and we need to get it right. If we go ahead then it does not set a precedence to something further on.

The Deputy Town Clerk stated that the equipment was in a very poor condition, with damage to the swings and slide and that the safety surfaces were a hazard. By clearing the site and returning it to turf would not prevent installing play equipment at a later stage if it was required.

Cllr Mrs W Smith stated that she had visited the areas about two years ago, and it was very unsafe then. We have to get rid of it first and need to go ahead with Quotation A of £2,820.00.

Cllr S Watkins stated that he was concerned about recommendations for two items on the same agenda that each had one quote only.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the play area should be closed off immediately and that the Deputy Town Clerk continue to seek comparative quotes for the removal of the equipment in time for the next Council meeting (to be funded from 321 EMR Dev Contributions).

d. Play Area Site Visits

Members are asked to consider arranging a further two site visits to review Play Areas, in the Spring and Summer of 2015.

Cllr M North stated that two site visits were made in September this year. Cllr I Bond found these to be very useful and suggested arranging the next visits to be scheduled for when current works are due to be completed.

Cllr M North suggested early Spring next year as it is getting too dark early now. He suggested site visits on a Saturday morning.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay agreed it is getting too dark to do site visits now, so need to do it as early as we can.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay suggested that as the Deputy Town Clerk is still getting quotations, late January/early February next year would be appropriate. Cllr Mrs W Smith agreed.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Deputy Town Clerk arrange a date for the next site visit on a Saturday morning once existing works were completed.

e. Adoption - Brunel Drive

At a Public Land and Open Spaces meeting 29th July 2014 the Committee made the following recommendation;

It was **RECOMMENDED** that as stated previously, the Town Council do not accept responsibility for some of the grass area (as adopted by Town Council on 24 April 2012). Also the Play Area has not been brought up to the required Health and Safety standards.

The recommendation was approved at the Town Council meeting 12th August 2014.

Under standing order 33a, (six month rule), a notice has been received requesting the adoption of Brunel Drive be reconsidered, which bears the name of the following five Councillors: Michael North, Wendy Smith, Hazel Ramsay, Ian Bond and Steven Watkins.

Correspondence has been received from TDS who are acting on behalf of the developer. (All correspondence attached to the agenda).

Cllr Mrs Wendy Smith suggested increasing the commuted sum if the area was not brought up to an acceptable standard prior to adoption. She recalled there being some safety issues with equipment at the site. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that he was concerned about the condition of the swings amongst other items.

Cllr M North pointed out that TDS have had a recent RoSPA report and that we should request to see this. He proposed that we continue with arrangements to adopt, assess whether any safety issues remain and deal with improvements as required.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to continue with arrangements to adopt, assess whether any safety issues remain and deal with improvements as required.

f. Allotment Security

Cllr Peter Biernis had requested an agenda item to discuss recent break-ins at the Kennel Farm Road allotments. The concerns of some of the allotment holders is about the lack of security at the site. It has been suggested to have a combination lock fitted to secure the site as well as reduce fly tipping.

Cllr B Briars arrived at the meeting at 7:45pm during discussions on allotment security.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay confirmed that a lock has been fitted to the gate before but that it had been abused and discarded.

Clr Mrs W Smith stated that quotes for fencing were sought some years ago. Costs for fencing then were £30,000 and would expect it to be considerably more now.

Clr M North stated that it is impossible to make the site fully secure because of the nature of the site and public rights of way.

Clr I Bond suggested fitting a combination lock to the gate that could not be removed, possibly welding it in place.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to fit a combination lock to the gate that could not be removed.

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Dog Fouling signs

Members noted a list of areas where Town Council has requested that Dog Fouling signs are installed. Total number = 35.

8. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

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

Mr Foster made an observation with regards to how the quotations are summarised. Is there any way this could be in a format that is more understandable and easier to follow?

Clr M North asked that both the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk discuss the way forward on how to summarise quotations.

There were no other questions from members of public.