



MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC LAND AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 10 DECEMBER 2019 AT 7.00 PM
AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE

PRESENT:

Cllr F Foster (Chairman)
Cllr K Brown
Cllr L Fage
Cllr M Knight
Cllr R Pullinger
Cllr M North
Cllr M Foster
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr C Thomas

Councillors also present – Cllr I Bond, BTC

Mr R McGregor, Town Clerk
Miss H Calvert, Meeting Administrator

Members of public – 3 members of the public, including Matt Burgess, BUFC

17/09/01 1. APOLOGIES

Cllr M Russell, Mr Bob Catchpole, Works Manager

ABSENT:

None

17/09/02 2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 17/09/02.1 a. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item – None
17/09/02.2 b. Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item – None

17/09/03 3. 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, pertaining to matters listed on the Agenda.

Carole Birtwhistle raised the following issues:

- Concerns over noise, littering and vandalism at Maythorns Park. This is being produced by Edward Peake school children and is causing problems for residents of Salcombe Close. The Park is also being used by youths for drink, drugs and loud music late into the night which is causing further disturbance for neighbouring homes. Ms Birtwhistle arranged for the management company, who deal with the upkeep and

repairs of vandalism, to get the two entrances to Maythorns Park blocked off in hopes that this would discourage the youths. This has prompted complaints from town residents who can no longer access the park. Furthermore, Edward Peake encourages its school pupils to use the park as a place to wait before entering the school, however it takes no responsibility for their behaviour. The play area is owned by the developer David Wilson Homes who employs a management company to deal with the upkeep. This upkeep is paid for by the residents. It seems unfair that residents should be paying for vandalism twice - in council tax and in the annual management fees charged of £163 per home per year. The play area is to be adopted, but the grassland part would continue to be owned by the developer. Ms Birtwhistle asked whether the council can seek to adopt the park.

- The Green Wheel Path has had both of its entrances blocked off by developers.
- There have been several thefts and vandalism incidents at the Kennel Farm Road Allotment site. It was questioned what measures can be taken by the Town Council to make the allotments safer.

Carole Birtwhistle welcomed the plans of future tree planting as detailed in the Public Realm Update Report.

17/09/04 **4. MINUTES OF MEETING**

- 17/09/04.1 **a.** Members received and approved the Minutes of the Public Lands and Open Spaces Committee Meeting held on 18 June 2019.

17/09/05 **5. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the Public Lands and Open Spaces meeting held on 18 June 2019.

17/09/06 **6. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

17/09/06.1 **a.** **Biggleswade United FC**

Members are asked to consider a proposal to erect portable flood lights at Stratton Way Recreation Ground.

Matt Burgess, Head of Youth at Biggleswade United Football Club explained further the proposal for the floodlights.

Currently, Biggleswade United Football Club train out of town during the autumn and winter months as a result of not having floodlights. Purchasing the floodlights would reduce the cost in having to use alternative training grounds.

The cost of the floodlights would be funded partly by Biggleswade United Football Club and by grant monies. The floodlights are portable which would help reduce the possibility of wear on the pitch. Members were reassured that the floodlights would have no impact on residents in terms of lighting or noise pollution.

Members were asked to also consider the installation of an additional storage cupboard at the Stratton Way changing rooms. This cupboard would be used for storing additional training equipment.

Matt Burgess requested that the Town Council approves the proposal and asked for Council assistance on completing the grant application.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve both the proposal to erect portable flood lights and to build an additional storage cupboard in the changing rooms.

17/09/06.2 **b. Pitch Improvement Plan**

Members are asked to consider a request from Biggleswade United asking if the Town Council will complete a pitch improvement plan.

It was **RESOLVED** to support the request and to ensure that we get a pitch assessment undertaken.

17/09/06.3 **c. Biggleswade Allotments – Additional Parking**

To consider a proposal for additional car parking at the allotment site, Kennel Farm Road.

Cllr Pullinger informed members that he has spoken to an allotment holder at Kennel Farm Road who is in favour of the proposal.

Members were informed of the numbers of vacant plot and the number of people currently on the allotment waiting list. Members thanked the Town Clerk for providing these figures.

Concerns were raised over the demand for allotment plots which we expect to increase with the expansion of the town. It was felt that we should consider further allotment provision in the long-term with the potential to take on an additional allotment site.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the proposal.

17/09/07 7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

17/09/07.1 **a. Rialtas Allotment Software update**

All tenants have now been uploaded on to the new software. The Admin Team are in the process of uploading the standard letters, including overgrown letters and notices to quit, to reflect the Allotment Terms and Conditions. We are currently allocating vacant plots to new tenants and will process those on the new software. The Admin staff will be receiving training from Rialtas on invoicing for 2019/2020 invoices.

Members were informed that the 2019/2020 invoices have been successfully produced using the Rialtas Software and have been posted out to all allotment holders today.

17/09/07.2 **b. Public Realm update**

To receive report from Works Manager, Bob Catchpole.

Cllr Strachan raised concerns that it has taken a long time for the water safety equipment to be repaired. It was confirmed that the equipment is now back up and running.

Members thanked Bob Catchpole for producing the informative report.

17/09/07.3 **c. Drove Road Workshop Update**

The Town Clerk informed members that a draft document has been completed. Members agreed that we will need to draft a specification before this can be taken to the relevant committee.

It was agreed that the specification would need to be taken to either F&GP or Council for approval. Members noted that the next F&GP meeting is 19th November 2019. It was agreed that the specification should be taken to the next possible Council meeting so a decision can be made at an earlier date.

It was noted that work to the workshop would not be starting until September 2020, however it was preferred that we get the necessary documentation completed in due time.

It was **AGREED** to present the draft document and specification at the next possible Council meeting.

17/09/07.4 **d. Play Area Update**

To receive a report from Works Manager, Bob Catchpole.

Members thanked Bob Catchpole for the detailed report and the useful walkabout. It was proposed that Play Areas are included on the next agenda for discussion. Members raised concerns that we need to address the current issues and present at a future Council meeting.

Cllr F Foster proposed the following dates for the next walkabout: the morning of 5th October, 19th October, or 26th October.

It was **AGREED** for the Town Clerk to arrange the date for the next walkabout.

17/09/07.5 **e. Town Entrance Signs**

The Town Clerk informed members that the Deputy Clerk had previously been dealing with producing more effective signs.

It was suggested that we re-site the current signage so that the signs are higher up and therefore more likely to be noticed and read. It was agreed to initially get the signs refurbished, and then look into re-siting the signs. It was noted that as the town has developed we will need to review the most prominent places to put these signs.

It was suggested that a sign for Biggleswade as a Historic Market Town is erected.

It was **AGREED** to review the signage and for members to email the Town Clerk with any ideas.

17/09/07.6 **f. Adoption of Play areas**

To receive a verbal report.

The Town Clerk informed members that Town Council Policy is to adopt play areas from developers. However, Land East of Biggleswade play areas are tied

up with the plans that the Bedfordshire Football Association have for a proposed 3G pitch. Land North of Potton Road play areas have not been offered for adoption at this time.

Cllr Knight suggested that an inventory of Town Council play areas is produced.

Concerns were raised over residents paying a service charge to developers for the upkeep of play areas. It was felt that developers should pay this charge.

Members **NOTED** this information.

17/09/08 **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 public comments.

17/09/09 **9. EXEMPT ITEMS**

There were no exempt items.

Date of next Meeting: 17 December 2019