

**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE OF BUNTINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM ON 1ST OCTOBER 2020 AT 7.00PM.**

Membership: Councillors Mrs T. Bonner (Committee Chairman), S. Bull (Deputy Committee Chairman), S. Basra, B. Lemay, D. Wallace, G. Waite (Town Mayor) & S. Bowman (Deputy Town Mayor).

Present: Cllrs B. Lemay, D. Wallace, Mrs T. Bonner, S. Bowman, S. Bull and G. Waite.

Officer in attendance J. Jones (Town Clerk) A. Georgiou (Admin Officer)

73. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies from Councillor S. Basra.

74. TO RECEIVE MEMBER'S DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

S. Bull - Norfolk Road Playing Field.

75. TO RECEIVE A REPORT AND UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN.

The Chairman stated that she had nothing to report.

76. TO APPROVE AS A TRUE RECORD AND AUTHORISE THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD ON 5TH MARHC 2020.

Following a proposal, second and a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That the minutes are a true record and the Chairman was authorised to sign them.

77. NORFOLK ROAD - TO DISCUSS ISSUES RELATING TO PAVILION, SKATE RAMPS AND ALL OTHER ISSUES RELATING TO NORFOLK ROAD PLAYING FIELD INCLUDING CONSIDERATION OF REPLACING FOOTBALL WALL REMOVED DUE TO UNREPAIRABLE DAMAGE.

It was agreed that the wall was well used and should be replaced.

The Clerk was asked to investigate if any of the playground manufacturers supply football walls.

Councillor Bull referred to Footpath 36 and the need to cut back the brambles that are preventing the collection of litter. The Clerk was asked to contact the Rights of Way Officer.

78. SWCC - TO DISCUSS ISSUES RELATING TO THE SETH WARD COMMUNITY CENTRE GROUNDS, PITCHES AND PLAYGROUNDS INCLUDING CONSIDERATION OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED REGARDING ALLEGED LACK OF SOCIAL DISTANCING AMONGST SPECTATORS AT COUGARS MATCHES AND COMPLAINTS RECEIVED REGARDING THE PARKING OF VEHICLES BELONGING TO PLAYERS AND SPECTATORS ON LUYNES RISE.

It was noted that complaints have been received that spectators at Cougars matches are not social distancing. When contacted, the Cougars said that it was spectators for the away team and it was difficult to get them to socially distance from each other.

The Clerk was asked to write to the Cougars reminding them they have a duty of care for everyone present at the game and social distancing must be enforced.

It was further noted that complaints have been received regarding the volume of parked cars on Luynes Rise when a football game is in progress. The Clerk reported that it has been arranged to unlock the car park on match days. It was agreed that Councillors will monitor the car parking now that the car park is open and report back to the next Amenities meeting.

Councillors were asked to agree a policy on the number of times a pitch is played on over a weekend. The Cougars have asked if they can increase the number of times a pitch is played on. Councillors noted that during the wetter weather damage can be caused to pitches that are over played and were anxious for this not to happen in light of the expense incurred on pitch maintenance.

Following a proposal, second and a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That pitch use at the Community Centre is restricted to one game per pitch per weekend.

Alex reported that he had already agreed to extra games up to 17th/18th October. It was agreed that the resolution regarding pitch use will come into force after that time.

79. HARE STREET ROAD PLAYING FIELD - TO DISCUSS ISSUES RELATING TO FIELD, PLAYGROUND AND WILDLIFE AREA AND REQUEST FROM RESIDENTS TO REMOVE BENCH AT THE SOUTH WESTERN END OF THE FIELD DUE TO ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR.

The Clerk reported that three residents of Dray Gardens have again complained regarding anti-social behaviour around the picnic bench area in Hare Street Road Playing Field.

It was noted that the benches cannot be moved without destroying them. Councillor Bowman stated that he had reported activity in that area throughout the summer. It was agreed that we have to rely on the Police. Councillor Wallace agreed to speak with local Police with regard to patrolling the area and to gauge how many reports are made.

The Clerk was asked to respond to the residents asking them to report every incident to 101 and ask them to inform us every time they do this.

80. LAYSTON COURT GARDENS - TO DISCUSS ANY ISSUES RELATING TO LAYSTON COURT GARDENS.

It was noted that the flower beds have been cleared ready for autumn planting. Councillor Wallace referred to the compost area in the top corner of the gardens and asked if this could be cleared.

The Clerk was asked to speak with contractors regarding the logistics and cost of clearing the area and to report back to the next Amenities meeting.

81. BOVIS AMENITY LAND - CONSIDERATION OF WORK TO TREES ADJACENT TO MILL CLOSE AND DISCUSSION ON THE UNAUTHORISED CREATION OF A BMX TRACK ON LAND ADJACENT TO THE RIVER AT LUYNES RISE.

Councillor Lemay stated that he couldn't see a problem with the trees at Mill Close and the grass behind the trees close to the river has been dug up to create a BMX track, this is shielded by trees and bushes. Councillor Wallace stated that whilst the trees at Mill Close appear to be all right, they could cause a problem in the future as they are very close to a brick wall. The other side of the wall is the Mill Close parking bays.

It was agreed that when the contractor is attending to the trees at the rear of 50, Downhall Ley, we will ask for his opinion on the trees at Mill Close.

The Clerk was asked to obtain a quote to clear the vegetation from the glade side at the area which has been dug up for a track.

82. TO HIGHLIGHT ANY ISSUES OF CONCERN AROUND THE TOWN INCLUDING CONSIDERATION OF COMPLAINT REGARDING TREES ON AMENITY LAND ADJACENT TO 100, MONKS WALK.

The Chairman reported that someone has cut nettles down on the Chapel End footpath and left them across the path.

The Chairman reported that she had received a complaint regarding the lack of a dropped kerb at Applewood which forces wheelchair users and those with pushchairs to cross to the other side of Ermine Street.

The Clerk responded that this had arisen some time ago, she would speak with the County Councillor to ascertain whether any action had been taken.

The Chairman reported that she had received complaints that youths are dealing drugs at the turning circle on the Redrow Estate.

The Clerk reported that a resident at Campbell Close had complained to Rights of Way about a tree on the land between 100 and 102 Monks Walk. Rights of Way had informed the resident that the Town Council was responsible for the tree, at the time of the meeting the resident had not contacted the Town Council.

Members agreed that the tree is not encroaching on the resident's property or amenity and no action should be taken at this time.

83. REPORT ON CHURCHYARD AND NEW CEMETERY.

It was noted that the churchyard is looking very tidy, there are currently four interment plots left in the churchyard.

Councillor Waite reported that we are in a position, if necessary to take full interments, some of the family ashes plots have been marked out, also single plots. The contractor has been told that we would like the planting started by the end of next week. there are also a few outstanding jobs which we need finished.

84. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM MEMBERS OF THE RIVER RIB RESTORATION GROUP.

Councillor Lemay stated that we are privileged to have a chalk stream river and he was pleased that the Council joined the Wildlife Trust in adopting a recovery plan for the river. A quotation has been received for a survey of the river which is the next step to realise the plan for the river. The quote is for £14,500. The survey will give a budget for the undertaking the work needed. The only viable prospect for grant funding is Affinity Water, if we ask them for the funds for the survey we cannot go back to them for further funds to undertake the work required. There is no way of moving forward without this design plan. Workwise we could do the work in segments in manageable sums.

Councillor Lemay asked the Amenities Committee to recommend to Council that the design plan is funded from New Homes Bonus.

Following a proposal, second and a unanimous vote it was

RECOMMENDED

That the Town Council releases £14,500 from New Homes Bonus to fund the River Rib, Buntingford, Design plan.

Councillor Bowman queried if we should have a second quotation. Councillor Lemay responded that this is a specialist company and the original ball park figure had been £20,000. It would be difficult to find similar companies.

85. FIRST CONSIDERATION OF 2021/2022 BUDGET.

The Clerk explained that this is a draft budget which cannot be completed until the tax base figure is available, probably in December. Members stated that they are happy at this time with the draft budget.

86. TO CONSIDER WAY FORWARD FOR PROPOSALS FOR S106 CONTRIBUTIONS HELD BY EHDC FOR THE PROVISION OF OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES IN THE TOWN.

The Clerk reported that we have now received some figures from EHDC regarding the S106 funds they are holding for the provision of Outdoor Sports. A working party needs to be formed to begin the process of deciding what will be provided and where.

Following a proposal, second and a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That a working party be formed to consider the S106 funds for the provision of outdoor sports facilities in the town, to consist of Councillors Bowman, Wallace and G.Bonner.

87. TO CONSIDER QUOTATION FOR REPAIRS REQUIRED AS A RESULT OF THE RECENT ROSPA REPORT (IF AVAILABLE) AND TO CONSIDER QUOTE FROM KOMPAN FOR THE PROVISION OF AN OPERATIONAL INSPECTION REGIME FOR THE COUNCIL'S THREE PLAY AREAS.

The quotation for the RoSPA repairs was not available.

The clerk reported that she had received a quotation from Kompan to enter into an Operational Inspection contract for the three playgrounds. This would involve bi-monthly inspections of the playgrounds at a cost of £75 per playground every two months. Total cost £1350 per annum.

Councillors agreed that the safety of the playgrounds was of paramount importance and following a proposal, second and a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That the quotation of £1350 from Kompan for the bi-monthly inspections of the three playgrounds be accepted.

88. TO INVITE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE MEETING.

Councillor Wallace referred to the complaint made earlier in the meeting regarding the turning circle on

the Redrow Estate and reminded Members that incidents like this can be reported via the ECHO system, the more complaints that are received, the more something is perceived to be a problem. Texts can be sent to 66099 or via a web site address.

Alex reported that he had received an email from a member of the public stating that she had some spare plants and was there somewhere that she could plant them. Councillor Wallace noted that it would depend on what type of plants as to where they could be planted.

Alex was asked to find out what plants and how many.

Meeting closed 8.46pm.

Next scheduled meeting of the Amenities Committee Thursday 5th November 2020 via Zoom. 7pm.