



**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF BUNTINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, THE MANOR HOUSE, BUNTINGFORD AT 7:00PM ON
THURSDAY 5TH JANUARY 2023.**

Present: Councillors, D. Wallace, S. Bull, G. Waite, S. Bowman, G. Bonner, Mrs P. Furness & M. Furness.

Officer Present: J. Jones (Town Clerk), A. Georgiou (Admin Officer)

Also Present: 8 members of the public.

311. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies from Councillors B. Lemay & Mrs J. Danagher.

Apologies received but not reported from Councillor Mrs S. Coote.

312. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Councillor Bull - Norfolk Road Playing Field & proposed pump track.

313. TO APPROVE AS A TRUE RECORD AND AUTHORISE THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 24TH NOVEMBER 2022.

Following a proposal, second and a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

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

314. TO CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATION DECISION FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A PUMP TRACK AT NORFOLK ROAD PLAYING FIELD.

The Chairman stated that planning permission for the pump track was granted in December. Council had always said that the decision would come back to Council again because of the time the planning decision has taken.

The Chairman went through the 3 planning conditions included with the application.

Councillor Bull declared an interest but wanted to make a statement before he left the meeting.

Councillor Bull stated that he was concerned with the location of the pump track and the removal of trees. Councillor Bull was also worried about the future of the fair which currently uses that area of land. Councillor Bull feels that Norfolk Road Playing Field is becoming too crowded with equipment and did not sit comfortable with the proposal.

Councillor Waite stated that only 1 tree is being removed because it is dead/dangerous, this tree would be removed regardless of the pump track.

Councillor Bull left the meeting.

The Chairman asked for Councillors comments on the proposed pump track.

Councillor Waite stated that this project has been ongoing for nearly 2 years and has lots of support in the town. The track is designed for all ages, specifically 4 - 14 years. Councillor Waite believes there is no indication there will be an increase in anti-social behaviour and also noted that there are no flood lights to be installed. It was also suggested that there is nowhere else the Council can put the pump track and for these reasons Councillor Waite supports the proposed pump track.

Councillor Bowman stated that he echoes what Councillor Waite has said but questioned the budget. The Clerk stated that the Town Council already hold the funds and have included a contingency for any increase in price since the original quote.

Councillor Bonner stated that he has been involved in the project since the start, he also stated that he

has been involved in the Town Council for many years and there has always been complaints that the youth of the town have nothing to do. This would be an amenity for the youth and for that reason Councillor Bonner supports the application.

Councillor Mrs P. Furness stated that she has not been involved from the start of the project but has assessed areas of the town for alternative sites and also believes that there is no alternative location. Councillor Mrs P. Furness stated that she hopes another location can be found for the fair. It was also stated that the Council have to consider the growth of the town and the influx of children, it is believed that this proposal can be an asset for the youth of the town. For these reasons Councillor Mrs P. Furness supports the proposed pump track.

Councillor M.Furness stated he joined the Council later in the process but had been privy to discussions. We try to do our best for the town but will always upset someone. We followed the process, we consulted. My view is we've done as we should do and should stick with the planning authorisation.

The Chairman stated that the Town Council has been given a large amount of money from developers for outdoor sports facilities but nobody has given any land for these facilities. It was noted that there is both support and opposition for the pump track in the town. The Chairman has looked at the range of reasons for opposition to the pump track.

One main opposition is the perceived increase in anti-social behaviour. The Chairman stated that he has looked at pump tracks in Godmanchester and Trumpington, and looked at the crime maps in these areas. There were no reported crimes in Oct and Nov 22 in Godmanchester and there were no reported crimes in Nov 22 in Trumpington (it was noted only the Nov 22 data was available for Trumpington). The Chairman believes there is no indication that the pump track will increase anti-social behaviour. Another main reason for opposition was the removal of trees. The Chairman stated only 1 tree is being removed and it would have to be removed regardless of whether the pump track goes ahead or not. The Chairman noted that the hedge adjacent to the proposed pump track has recently been cut, it was suggested that the Council ask HCC if this hedge can be cut higher in the future.

Councillor Mrs P. Furness questioned as to whether it would be possible to install more aesthetic screening for residents on Bowling Green Lane. It was agreed this can be investigated in the future.

The Chairman invited members of the public to ask questions before a resolution is made.

A question was asked on the budget and how much the project will cost. The Clerk stated that the project is in the region of £100,000 - £120,000 and is funded from S106 funding specifically for outdoor sports facilities. A contingency has been built in, but if any increased costs exceed the contingency then further S106 funds would have to be applied for.

One member of the public expressed their concern with the risks involved in the pump track specifically for young children. The member of the public went through risk criteria for another pump track that she has investigated. The Council explained that they cannot police every risk and leave much of the risk assessment to the expert contractors who have installed thousands of pump track around the world. One key risk was the trees adjacent to the track, however it was stated that many pump tracks go through woodlands. It was also stated that many of the risks mentioned are the same risks that apply at the skate ramps and playground.

One member of the public liked the idea of the pump track and believed the location, although not maybe ideal, is suitable and believes it is something that will benefit the town.

There were concerns with the possibility of floodlighting being installed in the future, the Council stated there are no plans to install flood lighting at any time.

There were concerns with lack of parking and lack of toilets for the facility. It was noted that there are not currently toilets for the skate ramps and play area. There are also 30 parking spaces in the car park at Norfolk Road, no additional spaces have been included with the application. There is always a risk that users may park on the road, however there is parking available in Norfolk Road car park.

One member of the public stated that the pump track is being placed where it is because there is no other suitable location. It was asked that if the members of the town wanted a swimming pool, would this also be located at Norfolk Road Playing Field in the same area. It was suggested that hypothetically this location may well have been considered for any development, but it would still have to go to East Herts Planning Department.

Following a proposal second and a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That this Council moves forward with its application and meets with the contractor to proceed with the installation of the pump track.

315. TO INVITE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ASK QUESTIONS

No further questions.

Meeting Closed: 20:03

Next meeting of the Full Council 26th January 2023.