



Operations & Amenities Committee

Present: Cllrs Goodman (Chairperson), Banks, Bolanz, Chapman, Cooper-Marsh, Dunford, Johnson and Maslen.

In attendance: Town Clerk, Operations Manager

Absent: Cllr Collins, Hitchin

Minutes of the meeting of the **Operations & Amenities committee** held on **Tuesday 21st May** at 7.30pm in the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

ACTIONS

001 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and noted from Cllrs Collins and Hitchin.

Admin

002 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

003 Minutes

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Operations and Amenities Committee held on 16th April 2024 as a true and accurate record.

Admin

004 Action list

Members received the committee action list. The following key updates were received;

LHI Applications 2023/24

The Crosshall Road consultation had resulted in the majority of responses voicing support for the scheme. The final decision on implementing the scheme sits with the County Council Ward Member and the Highways Traffic Manager. It looks likely the scheme will go ahead but some further amendments are being considered in relation to points raised during the consultation.

Public Toilets

- It was noted that the estimated timeframe for HDC's delivery of the Changing Places toilet at Riverside was the end of June.
- The Operations Manager had received costs for redecorating internal and external past of the South Street toilets and would be progressing work under delegated budgets. Quotes would also be sought for Tebbutts Road toilets.



- The Town Clerk commented that he hoped to have a draft lease with HDC for the public toilets ready to bring to Committee in June 2024.

Cemetery Land

The Clerk had made contact with Highways England in regard to potential opportunities for land resulting from the A428 works which might be able to provide future allotment land. The Clerk would continue to pursue the opportunity.

005 Allotments

Members received and considered a report from the Town Clerk on allotment fees and security. The Committee had previously resolved to increase allotment fees by a significant percentage. Officers had received feedback from allotment holders on the level of increase and in the case of Cemetery Road the lack of site security and fencing. Members noted that allotment fees had been increased by a substantial percentage based on the principle of a large one off increase to recognise increases in general maintenance, administration and water costs rather than very small annual increases.

Members considered a query from officers as to whether they would like officers to investigate fencing options for the site, initial quotes put the cost of work in the region of £15,000.

Members commented that the level of income generated from allotments was small and the cost of installing fencing at one site was significant and unbudgeted. Members felt would be difficult to justify the expenditure as it would not fully secure the site. **RESOLVED** that officers do not further investigate costs for fencing the Cemetery Road allotment site at this time based on financial viability. That the Operations Manager investigates planting options to improve the perimeter hedge and any gaps within it.

006 Play Park Improvements

Members received and considered a report from the Town Clerk which included a recommendation from the Play Park Working Group that the Committee recommend that the Council use funds held in earmarked reserves for play equipment to install an inclusive seesaw previously identified for inclusion in the Brickhill's play park enhancement scheme.

The two key priorities for play park investment highlighted by the Working Group were the inclusive seesaw, thereby finishing the Brickhills play investment and the creation of a new play park in Eaton Ford to address gaps in play provision. It was noted that the available reserves held would not be sufficient for a new play park, but use of some of the reserves would allow the Brickhills project to be concluded.



RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the Finance and Governance Committee that the Council release £24,495.60 from £70,759 earmarked reserves for play park provision for the purchase and installation of an inclusive seesaw and supporting infrastructure and equipment at Brickhill’s play area.

007 Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Hub

i) **RESOLVED** that the Deputy Town Clerk register the former St Johns Building along with the former Red Cross building as the Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Centre.

RESOLVED that the Deputy Town Clerk applies for direction signage to the building as “Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Centre” and should this wording be too long for the signage, that it be “Steve Van de Kerkhove Centre”

ii) Members received and noted a report from officers which advised the Local Planning Authority required a full planning application for tarmacking of the access track at the Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Centre and that this may result in an increase in costs as a result of any conditions put on the permission, such as use of permeable tarmac.

iii) Members noted an update from the Town Clerk on a proposed longer lease for one of the buildings with the Mans Cave. This required further work and the establishment of a rental figure and would be circulated to Members for comment.

008 Jubilee Garden

Members received and noted a report from the Town Clerk on Jubilee Garden. A number of maintenance matters had been highlighted and these would be progressed as the priority for the site, with further investigation around other potential enhancements that had been identified by Councillors.

Key maintenance matters to be addressed;

Flower Beds - Adding membrane where practical may help reduce weed growth.

Flower Beds - More robust planting to be considered to address vandalism.

Jubilee Bench - Missing bolt securing the Jubilee bench to be replaced.

Brickwork/Paving - Brickwork to be power washed.

Mosaic - Operations Manager to work with mosaic artist to restore mosaic tiles and consider measures that can be implemented to prevent repeated damage through foot traffic, weather or vandalism. Covering with an appropriate resin to be investigated by artist.

Commemorative Plaques - Plaques to be identified and installed marking both events to be brought forward.

Information Board - Replacement with watertight notice board and printing and renewal of contents.



Gravel Areas - Gravel areas to be reinstated to prevent movement of stones under benches and borders.

Iron Work - Current iron work including benches will be left in position and repainted.

009 Tree Works

Members noted that priority tree works identified as part of the Council external tree stock inspection had now been completed. There were some follow up matters the Operations Manager would be addressing with the contractor and the next round over required works would start in autumn 2024.

Work to fell a tree at Eynesbury Village Green which had a deep cavity would be carried out in August 2024.

010 Play Park Annual Inspection

Members received and noted the findings of the annual ROSPA play park inspections. It was noted that there were no 'high' or 'very high' risk recommendations and that the Operations Manager would be addressing those medium risk recommendations as a priority.

011 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the date of the next Operations and Amenities Committee would be on 11th June 2024 at 7.15pm.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON