

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SERVICES AND MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE
HELD ON 9TH MAY 2007**

PRESENT

Mr. Coward presided over Mesdames Harrison, Clark and Reddick, Messrs. Mackin and Dear.

1. APOLOGIES

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

At this point Mr. Coward welcomed five representatives from both the County Council's Highways Department and Amey Infrastructure Services.

The members were able to pass on their concerns regarding the numerous highway issues in the town. The Officers were given an opportunity to respond but initially informed the Town Council about the financial restraints under which they had to work.

The members had previously informed the Assistant Director of Highways and Transport of 27 items of highway/pavement concern that needed remedial action. These items had been costed at approximately £70,000. However, the Officers stated that their whole monthly budget was some £30,000 to cover 19 parishes but added that 4.2 million pounds had been injected into the highway system for major works.

The members pointed out that a lot of their concerns related to the poor quality of the workmanship and the fact that a lot of unfinished work still existed. Concerns were also raised about what seemed like a lack of inspection of the work that had been carried out. Several issues that appeared on the weekly Highways report were discussed to highlight the problems.

It was agreed that in future a Highways representative would attend quarterly meetings of this committee but it should be borne in mind that the first port of call to inform of a problem should always be the Highways Helpdesk. They would also be able to give progress updates on any work that had previously been given a job number. The Area 4 team is also to be made aware of the committee's request for remedial work to be carried out at the same time.

It was further agreed that the committee would urge the County Council to contribute more funds to the Highway's budget.

The committee is to receive a CD from the Highways Department which will show both the current and the five year schedule of works.

In short, it was agreed that the meeting had been helpful for both sides as it been an opportunity to discuss the numerous issues.

The Officers were thanked for their attendance after which they left the meeting.

3. TREE – E:MAIL FROM RESIDENT IN BEDFORD ROAD

An e:mail has been received from a resident in Bedford Road regarding a Willow tree that is impacting on the pedestrian pathway. Since the e:mail has been received, the Clerk has contacted an arboricultural company with view to obtaining options as to what remedial work would need to be carried out. The committee discussed the various options received and it is **RECOMMENDED** to full Council that the tree should be removed and a smaller tree be planted in its place in due course.

4. PLAY AREA REPORTS

The April Play Area Inspection Reports have been received from the contractor. It was noted that the wooden fence adjacent to the gauging station had been broken by vandals and subsequently thrown in the river including its concrete footings. The Play Area contractor suggested that it should be replaced by a robust metal fence with deeper footings. The clerk is to contact the contractor for a quotation accordingly.

5. LETTER FROM HIGHWAYS DEPT. RE SOUTHBRIDGE STREET AND BEDFORD ROAD CROSSING

A response has been received from the Bedfordshire County Council's Highways Area Manager regarding the above. The letter stated that although the finished footway in Southbridge Street did have imperfections, there was no need for remedial actions to be carried out in respect of safety. The instruction for the footway was to 'overlay only' as the existing surface did not warrant the excavation and relaying of Binder and Surfacing materials.

The County Council's Transportation Manager has indicated that there is no technical reason why a signal controlled crossing could not be installed in Bedford Road but the actual decision for the most appropriate type of crossing for any particular location is heavily dependant upon local factors for the preferred option. The said Manager has been requested to ensure that one of his engineers visits the location to ascertain if the information given in the past is still valid.

6. TOWN & PARISH COUNCIL HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME 2007/2008

It was agreed that the Town Council's allowance for highway works to be carried out should be spent on weed removal in the Churchill Way estate to the value of the allowance. It was felt necessary that the work should be carried out immediately and before the County Council carries out its main weed spraying operation later in the year.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Invitation to a Climate Change Conference on 16th May from 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. at the Forest Centre, Marston Vale Country Park.

An invitation to the Mid Beds Council Chamber to see a film on global warming entitled *An Inconvenient Truth*. The showing of the film will take place on Tuesday 15th May at 7.30 p.m. Film-goers are invited to take their own light bites and soft drinks but without any packaging or plastics.

1508 : 5/2007

Request for a replacement litter bin at The Meads. The District Council is to be contacted accordingly.

Report of tiles missing on the walls/floor of the gents public conveniences. The committee hoped to carry out a refurbishment in the current financial year as tiles matching those already in place are no longer manufactured.

Concerns were raised that some trees might be removed in Squires Park in an area adjacent to the STMA. Further information is to be sought.

The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.
