

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SERVICES AND MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE
HELD ON 12TH SEPTEMBER 2007**

PRESENT

Mr. Mackin presided over Mesdames Harrison, King and Reddick. Messrs. Dear and Pollard.

1. APOLOGIES

Messrs. Wren and Coward and Barham.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mrs. Reddick declared an interest in the next item.

3. TRAVELLERS AT WATERSIDE – RISK ASSESSMENT

The committee is to carry out a Risk Assessment covering potential travellers sites in the town. The areas to be assessed are the Millenium Green, Digswell, Churchill Way, Riverside and the Meads. Among other things the assessment will cover the various methods that could be implemented in order to prevent unwanted access. The District Council's advice is to be sought as they have had considerable experience in these matters.

4. REPLY FROM MBDC RE A RESIDENCE IN LUCAS WAY

Some weeks ago the committee wrote to the Aragon Housing Association regarding a complaint they had received about the poor state of a residence in Lucas Way. A Housing Officer from Aragon Housing and an Environmental Services Officer from the District Council visited the premises and were able to confirm that there are no health and safety concerns regarding the waste bins and the tenant has agreed to use the local dog bin in future to dispose of dog faeces. A further visit to remedy concerns over the garden pond will take place in one month's time.

5. REPLY FROM CHIEF CONSTABLE

A response has been received from the Chief Constable of Bedfordshire regarding the committee's letter about funding of the police service. The Chief Constable's letter explained that Beds police did not receive its full allocated Government grant which meant that overall they had a £4m shortfall. The capping of Council Tax rise has also meant that they faced an overall shortfall of £1.5m in the budget to maintain current services. Beds police will have to face this situation for the next three years. The Chief Constable was sympathetic to the committee's concerns regarding a request for an overall higher police presence in the area but stated that Beds police were doing all they could bearing in mind the limited finances under which they had to operate. As Inspector Whittred had attended meetings at the Council Chamber and several letters of concern had been written to the Chief Constable, the committee felt that they had taken this matter to the end of its course.

6. COMPLAINT RE NOISE FROM BASKETBALL FACILITY-MILLENIUM GREEN

A resident has complained to the District Council about excessive noise emanating from balls hitting the metal back-board behind the hoop at Bellcote Meadow. The District Council subsequently passed the complaint on to the committee along with a suggestion that the back-board should be covered or replaced with a less noisy material to minimize the impact. The D C has given the complainant a diary sheet whereby a note of all instances of disturbance can be noted. The committee is to receive copies of the diary sheet in due course and in the meantime the situation will be monitored.

7. BEDS C C – 5 YEAR PROGRAMME 2008 - 2013

The committee has received a report from the County Council regarding their 5 year programme. Mrs. Harrison agreed to study the programme and report back in due course.

8. PLAY AREA REPORTS

The August play area reports have been received from the contractor and all issues requiring attention were noted. Particular attention was drawn to the handrail on the Carousel Roundabout in the St. Michael's play area and the absence of a fence adjacent to the gauging station at The Meads.

9. WATERWAYS RENAISSANCE AWARDS 2008

An e:mail has been received on behalf of the Chief Executive at the District Council informing the committee that the British Urban Regeneration Association (BURA) deadline for the Waterways Renaissance Awards scheme has been extended. The information is to be passed to the Shefford P3 Group with the Riverside Path in mind.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Concerns were raised about two broken branches on the Willow trees at Riverside. The branches are to be removed on 26th September.

The Play and Open Space Officer at the District Council is to be contacted to ascertain the status of the Kingfisher Way play area.

The Highways Department at the County Council is to be requested to cut back the vegetation in part of Stanford Road/Lucas Way adjacent to the bank.

It was noted that the seats at Waterside have been damaged – the possibility of replacement seats is to be considered when the annual precept is set in December.
