# Clerk’s Report to Full Council Meeting – 10 June 2019

## Fire at the Glebelands – Sunday 26 May 2019

A hedge fire in the rear gardens of numbers 86 and 88 Lyth Hill Road destroyed a number of garden sheds and their contents on Sunday 26 May at about 7pm. Two fire engines attended within minutes and the fire was extinguished with no injuries to any person.

The fire has completely destroyed the sheds and due to the amount of garden waste has also badly scorched the protected oak tree at the end of the garden in the Glebefield. The boundary hedge on the Glebefield side has also been destroyed although the majority of the trees and bushes lining the Glebefield are intact. The fire was fed by a substantial depth (20’+) of dry garden waste and leaves which have been allowed to accumulate over many years by the householders, at the ends of their gardens as a deterrent against children entering their gardens. The remains of a low wire fence on the boundary line have survived the fire.

One of the householders has suggested the fire was the result of arson and has supplied the Fire Service report number 73698 and a Police Report number 0143S270519. There were sounds of children playing nearby shortly before the fire started and of youths using a motorbike on the field the day before.

One of the householders has taped off the ends of the garden and posted warning signs to discourage entry from the field. He stated he was intending to erect some chicken wire as a temporary fence the same day. The other householder, who is currently away on holiday, has suggested it is our responsibility to prevent children from entering their gardens from the playing field. Both parties are waiting for their insurance assessors to visit before they replace their fences permanently.

I visited the site on Tuesday 28 May and took photographs of the damage. The depth of the remaining hedge is a significant disincentive to casual passers-by to enter the gardens (although if determined to do so it would not be difficult). The red and white barrier tape and signs give a clear warning of danger to anybody who has crawled through the trees.

To secure the gardens properly would require a substantial fence which is the responsibility of the owner. We do not appear to have been guilty of any negligence and I do not consider that it is our responsibility to secure their gardens so have made a note of the details and await further developments.

I have informed Balfours about the damage to the tree and Michael Watney will inspect it but hopefully it will recover over time.

## Other anti-social behaviour incidents

A large bonfire was lit on the tarmac of the skate park during the night of Thursday 30 May and was still smouldering the following morning. This was reported to the anti-social behaviour line and the police. The tarmac has not been damaged.

On Friday 31 May three youths were spotted trying to set light to the maze in Longmeadow play area but were challenged and no damage was caused.

The lifebuoy is still being thrown into the pool on regular occasions. We have also found scorch marks where disposable BBQs have been used on the football pitches and in Parr’s Wood.

As previously reported, there has been damage to benches which have been removed from around Parr’s Pool. These incidents have been reported to the police.

**The Council may wish to consider installing some CCTV cameras with appropriate warning signs to protect the Council’s assets.**

## Play Equipment Repairs

A number of repairs have been identified by Shropshire Council play area inspectors which need attention and for which prices are being sought. The Council is requested to give the Clerk delegated authority to undertake these repairs based on the best prices available from three suitable quotations and within a specified budget, which will be reported to the Council in due course:

1. Shrinkage of rubberised tarmac around toddler area and roundabout in Longmeadow – contractor quotes being obtained
2. Replacement of ramps delaminating at Skate Park – a small number of panels require replacement but it is proving difficult to source suitable replacement parts at present
3. Tarmac edging to BMX track – we will attempt to repair this ourselves in the first instance
4. Wooden bench at Longmeadow – Two rotten slats have been removed and will be replaced with new timbers. Alternatively the whole bench could be replaced with a low maintenance plastic bench or picnic table but as the bench is anchored into a concrete base this is likely to be more difficult than repairing the existing
5. Balance rope – Frayed rope removed – replacement required (proprietary part)
6. Toddler gate – The self-closing mechanism is still not working properly. We will strip it down again to try to resolve the issue but if it cannot be resolved it may require a replacement gate

Cost estimates will be provided at the meeting if available