

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday, 13th February 2012
at the Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford, Essex**

Committee Members Present: Chairman Cllr Mrs M Weir, Cllrs Mrs J Barney, Mrs E Chippette, Mrs K Cooke, Mrs L Haskew, R Patient, D Weir and ex-officio Cllrs J Dickson and V Leach.

Also Present: Cllr A Williams, Mr E Short & Mr L Barratt - Members of the Hawkwell Parish Plan Group (HPPG) and Diane Scrivener.

52. Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Cllr Mrs C Cunningham (unwell) and Cllr Mrs A Heath (work). Members accepted the apologies tendered.

53. Declarations of Interest:

None.

54. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 2012 and to approve the destruction of the manuscript notes in respect of that meeting:

Members approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th January 2012 as a true record and agreed to the destruction of the manuscript notes in respect of that meeting.

55. Parks – Action List Update:

The Clerk went through the action list.

- **Footpath signs – complete artwork and arrange siting:** Still awaiting authorisation from ECC – the Clerk said he would follow up in a week's time but he had no concerns.
- **Clerk to seek RDC approval re QEII Field:** Awaiting response.
- **Co-operation between parishes re dog fouling:** Cllr Leach updated that the EALC had thought Saffron Waldon may have a warden; after investigation he found that was not the case but they referred him to Uttlesford who did. Therefore he would be able to follow up with Uttlesford to gain information such as what byelaws they needed to adopt etc. He advised that Basildon were employing 2 operatives from a security firm acting as dog wardens and he hoped to have costs and information to bring to the next meeting.
- **RDC complaint re Glencroft:** The Clerk had spoken to Kelly Gymer - RDC's Legal Representative and there was some debate as to whether the trees should be poisoned. He was awaiting confirmation from Geoff Dawson, but, he was very busy due to RDC's ground's contractor going into liquidation. At present, Dave Abrams had carried out work to top the trees. Cllr Leach advised he was involved at this point during the Clerk's absence and described the action he had taken as the complainant was now reporting cracks in the brickwork around the bathroom window of the main property. Due to the nature of the complaints, together with the queries raised at the time of the original planning application, which included a willingness to

demolish the properties and rebuild; he had consulted Shaun Scrutton – RDC’s Head of Planning and he was now researching the matter and would advise.

- **Resurrection of ‘Friends of Magnolia’:** The Chairman gave the Clerk a draft she had written for publication in the next issue of the newsletter to call for Friends of Magnolia.
- **Contact educational establishments re. Point 2 of Operational Plan:** Cllr Mrs Cooke was congratulated on her detailed report and Members discussed the content with her. The Chairman summarised the lack of toilet and hand washing facilities being the main obstacle but to provide such would require significant capital investment. Members discussed this in detail and agreed it would be worth putting on the agenda in the future. Diane suggested seeking advice or exploring partnership with the Meadowfields educational centre in Hockley which was already up and running. The Clerk added that Magnolia was verging on a site of specific interest (SSSI) being the habitat of Great Crested Newts. This was noted but no decisions were made.
- **Change wording of Point 3 of Operational Plan regarding work on the open space by the Cemetery:** Completed.

56. Financial Report:

At this point the Chairman received complaints from Councillors that they were unable to hear verbal communication clearly due to muffled voices and others talking out of turn and a microphone system was called for consideration in the future. Heated debate followed and the Clerk said he would research the possibility of a microphone system and report back.

The Clerk advised expenditure for the month was £11,290, however, £8,288 of that was for the side arm, and therefore, the balance of about £3K had been spent. Once the transfer of earmarked reserves of £8,288 had been made at year-end Parks should be under spent.

Cllr Mrs Cook asked what the nature of the criminal damage was; the Clerk answered it was generally graffiti but also the cradle swings had been twisted which caused breakage.

There were no further questions and Members accepted the Financial Report.

57. Truck Replacement:

The Clerk went through his detailed report and included an alternative suggestion from the Grounds man for consideration to be given to the purchase of a ‘Mule’ - an all terrain vehicle and trailer at a cost of around £13K.

Members discussed the options at length and strong opinions were expressed re. need, type of vehicle, maintenance & parts, value for money, depreciation and deposit redress. Cllr Weir challenged the need for replacement suggesting the tractor and trailer be used for its function. The Clerk clarified to travel between parks and the store at 5mph would cause a considerable waste of the Grounds mans time, together with the need to travel outside of the parish from time to time.

Cllr Mitchell offered to make contact with a member of his family working in the role of European Operations Manager for Fords to seek any help/advice with an order and whilst some Councillors expressed interest others were opposed and this was not taken further.

Cllr Patient congratulated the Clerk on his report and moved the Clerk’s recommendation in point 8. “That Council purchase a Ford Ranger, price

as indicated, and place an order as quickly as possible to start the extended delivery timetable immediately". Cllr Mrs Cooke seconded and with a show of hands, the motion was carried.

At this point Cllr Leach left the Chamber to attend another appointment.

- 58. Letter from St. Mary's Church re. storage of equipment for Payback Team:**
The Clerk went through his report and spoke in support of the initiative. Members discussed the request and recommendations in detail highlighting concerns and benefits; the shed dimensions were queried and reasons why the Churchyard could not accommodate it were explained. It was ascertained that Council's Insurers would be informed but Council would not be liable for cover and the erection of a shed in the compound was within the terms of the lease from RDC.
Members therefore approved the request in accordance with the Clerk's report 'That PCC (i.e. the Church) provide a shed and erect it in the compound – suitably distant from the main building, and Council allow them a compound key for the Church Wardens to collect the machines as and when they need'.
- 59. Operational Plan 2012/13 – For approval:**
Members approved the Operational Plan 2012/13.
- 60. Recognition of Hawkwell Parish Action Plan – Delegation of Action Points to Standing Committees:**
Members recognised the time constraint due to the meeting overrunning and the need to give consideration to the Action Points delegated to the committee. Therefore it was agreed to carry the item over to the next meeting agenda.
- 61. Email from Woodland Trust re. Jubilee Project – Plant 6 million trees (referred from Full Council on 6th February 2012):**
Due to the time constraint this was delegated to the Clerk for consideration and action.
- 62. Summary of decisions:**
- Diarise agenda item for future consideration of capital expenditure for toilets/hand washing facilities following on from bullet point 2 of operational plan.
 - Approved Clerk's recommendation to purchase a Ford Ranger and place an order immediately.
 - Approved St. Mary's request for storage space for gardening equipment used in the Cemetery.
 - Members approved 2012/13 Operational Plan.
 - Recognition of Hawkwell Parish Action Plan – Delegation of Action Points to Standing Committees –carried over to the next meeting agenda (March 12).
 - Email from Woodland Trust re. Jubilee Project (Plant 6 million trees) delegated to the Clerk for consideration and action.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Chairman

Footnote to Members: Please recycle this document from within the Full Council Papers for use at the next Standing Committee Meeting.