

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday, 7th April 2014 at 8.50pm
in the Committee Room, The Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford.**

Committee Present: Cllr Mrs P Young (Chairman), Cllr L Sampson (Vice Chairman), Cllr Mrs L Haskew, Cllr Mrs A Heath, Cllr R Patient, Cllr Mrs L Shaw, Cllr J Tutton, Cllr D Weir and Cllr Mrs M Weir.

106. Presentation by Jo Ford re. Mobile Refreshment Kiosk in Magnolia:

Mr & Mrs Ford gave an informative presentation and gave out a flyer:-

- Small, self-contained kiosk with power and water;
- Sale of ice cream, donuts, frozen yogurt, tea, coffee and cold drinks;
- Awarded five food stars from Environmental Health;
- Reasonable prices;
- Attended school fetes and fairs;
- June to August – busy period/quiet – September;
- Proposed offering refreshments 10.30am till 5pm on a Saturday or Sunday as a way of adding benefit to people using the park but this would not be regular due to other commitments;
- Face book page/Twitter account available – happy to dedicate a page on their site to advertise the dates they would be present;
- Offer a percentage of takings (as for Schools and Charities);
- Registered with RDC as a mobile food provider;
- Public liability insurance in place carried to every event; and
- Suggest trial period for review.

Questions/points raised and discussed:-

- Height of trailer requested; there would be a need to arrange for the height barrier to be unlocked if above 8ft which would be a problem.
- No toilets.
- They would be responsible for removing any rubbish generated.
- Fresh water on board.
- How often would they be likely to be able to attend?
- 10% taken on trust.
- Set times and conditions would be put in place.
- Short term contract which would be reviewed.
- Environmental health visits.
- Would it just be weekends? What about during school holiday times?
- Groundsman did not work weekends for barrier opening.

The Chairman thanked Mr & Mrs Ford and advised that Council would consider the proposal and they left the Chamber.

Members discussed the above points and concern lay with the practical difficulties of opening the barrier due to the height of it and Council would not like to give out a key at this stage. **Cllr Mrs Young moved from the Chair to ascertain whether the vehicle could go under the barrier first and foremost and it was agreed through the Clerk to liaise with Mr & Mrs Ford in this regard. Members showed hands and the motion was carried unanimously.**

107. Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Cllr Mrs A Heath (Work), Cllr V Leach and Cllr R Mitchell (unwell). Members accepted the apologies tendered.

108. Declarations of any:

a) **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;**

b) **Other Pecuniary Interest; or**

c) **Non-Pecuniary Interest**

on any matter on the agenda for 7th April 2014: None were declared.

109. Public Forum: None Present.

110. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2014 and to approve the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting:

Members approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th March 2014 and agreed to the destruction of the meeting notes.

111. Action List Update – April:

The Clerk went through the list.

111.1 Cllr Sampson updated that the illustrative signage artwork had been done; he had seen a copy and asked for copies to send to Cory and the Clerk which were expected next week.

111.2 Cllr Mrs Shaw reported the funding bid submitted to Fords for £3K was now into the second stage. Successful bids would hear by 20th April. She advised the best price of seeds all around the Country was £170 and she would know the outcome of the bid by the next Parks meeting.

111.3 Cllr Sampson recommended holding off advertising the Back Hoe for sale until end of April/beginning of May in time for potential buyers to have their new budgets in place. This was accepted and Members agreed for the Back Hoe to go out for bids by the next Parks meeting.

111.4 Cllr Sampson advised he was still working on the plan of works following the Tree Inspection Reports.

Members noted the Action List Update and agreed closure of completed items.

112. Financial Report – March 2014:

a) **Report on Parks Committee Budget overspends in the year:**

The Clerk went through the breakdown of overspends (£9,400) and Members were content to note the report and accept the Financial Report as presented.

113. Email from resident requesting replacement of seats in Magnolia Recreation Field:

Cllr Mrs Young referred to the email and Cllr Mrs Haskew had received comments from Parishioners that the benches were missed. Councillors hoped to fund replacement seats with grant funding; Cllr Mrs Shaw had included benches within the funding bid submitted to Fords. Members discussed costs of replacement seating including modelling and installation of handmade metal seats as before which remained free of vandalism; the Clerk expressed caution taking into consideration the Groundsman's workload for the coming season of grass cutting etc. Deferral was considered until the next meeting based on outcome of funding or whether to look to the vandalism budget. Cllr Sampson suggested engaging the

'Friends of Magnolia' with assembling benches; he reported 7 metal slats of the same size would be needed per bench which would take approximately 2/3 weeks delivery. The Clerk advised it would not cost an excessive amount of money. **Members were content to get the equipment on order for the benches and review funding later and the Clerk was instructed to place an order and respond to the resident.**

114. Public Safety Concern in Magnolia Play Space:

The Clerk reported that the Groundsman had found a pair of scissors planted 'blades up' in the children's play area; Police were investigating the matter after attending the scene and finding 'intent'. Cllrs Sampson and Leach had checked the play area over the weekend and the Groundsman routinely inspected play spaces on a weekly basis. Members were deeply concerned about the danger and discussed dummy/CCTV monitoring but this was thought to be unsuitable due to legal issues regarding a camera aimed at the children's play area. **It was resolved to organise a monitoring rota over the weekends and during the Groundsman's holiday. Cllr Mrs Weir advised that she checked the play areas every weekend and Monday mornings during her routine litter picks and she would be available and Cllrs Sampson and Mrs Shaw volunteered to liaise with Cllr Leach to fill in with checks.**

The Clerk reported someone had been camping in Magnolia and Cllr Sampson informed that bags were found which were used for holding drugs; Cllr Mrs Weir picked up the bags regularly during litter picks and Cllr Sampson asked her to hand them into the Police going forward.

115. Seminar on Wildlife Conservation and related matters – Cllr L Sampson:

Cllr Sampson reported that the Groundsman had been approached by Rochford District Council for advice regarding management of badger sets on a bridleway which he was happy to oblige. Cllr Sampson commended the Groundsman's knowledge and qualifications and proposed inviting other Parish Councils to go along to the Store and talk to the Groundsman as a networking exercise for up to an hour to discuss relevant issues which may be beneficial and worth pursuing. Mixed views were expressed regarding use of time. **After a debate Cllr Mrs Shaw proposed a trial of the seminar which would not be repeated if it was found to be of no use. Cllr Sampson seconded and after a show of hands, the motion was carried.**

116. Willow weaving in Spencers – Cllr L Sampson

Cllr Sampson proposed inviting a Willow Weaving Tutor to use Spencer's Park, he gave background information for the idea and the potential benefits:-

- no cost to council;
- free raw materials (cuttings from willow trees in Magnolia);
- he would bring along his own students;
- might be an attraction to visitors to the park;

Cllr Sampson could seek pictures of his work if Members wished or invite him to come and talk to the Committee but this was not requested. Some concern was expressed. The Clerk confirmed there would be no impact on the Groundsman's workload. **It was resolved that approval would be granted subject to making it clear that it would be the Tutor's responsibility for collecting materials. The Chairman asked for a show of hands and the motion was carried.**

117. Notes of Meeting of Parish/Town Council Walks (Footpaths) Meeting:

Cllr Mrs Young asked whether anyone else was in a position to attend the next meeting on 8th April and only Cllr Mrs Weir could do so. Cllr Mrs Weir gave a verbal report of the last meeting. The Clerk updated that the PROW Officer, Chris Brown, had not been involved until now but he had received an invitation to the next meeting. The Clerk advised she thought this was one of many initiatives that would be seen through the new RDC Chief Executive's aspirations for all of the Authorities to work in unison. Members agreed to continue monitoring.

118. Summary of Decisions:

- Clerk to liaise with Mr & Mrs Ford re. Vehicle & kiosk fitting under height barrier.
- Re-advertise Sale of Back Hoe end April/beginning May.
- Clerk to order slats for replacement benches and contact resident.
- Councillors to liaise re. monitoring Magnolia Play area during Groundsman's holiday/weekends.
- Wildlife conservation and related matters seminar approved for trial.
- Monitor progress re. Parish/Town Council Walks (Footpath).
- Approved Willow Weaving in Spencers – Cllr Sampson to follow up.

The meeting was closed at 9.55pm.

Chairman

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