

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday 11th September 2017 at 8:46pm
in the Committee Room, The Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford.**

Present: Chairman Mrs P Young, Cllr Mrs E Gadsdon, Cllr S May, Cllr R Patient, Cllr Mrs L Shaw, Cllr M Strubel Cllr Mrs M Weir.

37. Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Cllr R Gardner and Cllr D Weir had given apologies.
Members **received** the apologies tendered.

38. Declarations of any:

- a) **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;**
- b) **Other Pecuniary Interest; or**
- c) **Non-Pecuniary Interest**

on any matter on the agenda for 11th September 2017:

Cllr Mrs L Shaw made a declaration under b) Other Pecuniary Interest in relation to Agenda Item 7a (Minute 43.a) and withdrew from the discussion.

Members made no declarations relating to any change in their Register of Members' Interests.

39. Public Forum:

No members of the public were present.

40. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2017 and to approve the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting:

The Minutes of the meeting were **approved** as a correct record and Members approved the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.

41. Action List Update – September 2017:

- 41.1 Members noted that the path improvement work in Spencers Park had been completed and the funding from Essex County Council Community Initiative Fund (CIF) had been fully received. Members agreed to close the item.
- 41.2 Members were referred to Agenda item 13 (Minute 49).
- 41.3 Members noted budget provisions for 2017/18 had been made for the deteriorating wall post in Elizabeth Close Playground, while the posts would continue to be monitored accordingly.
- 41.4 Members noted the 2017/18 budget had included a contingency for possible CCTV, but that further investigations were necessary.
- 41.5 Members were referred to agenda item 11 (Minute 47).
- 41.6 Members noted there had been an indication that the next Parks Forum meeting would occur in early October, but no formal date had been set.
- 41.7 The Clerk informed Members she had contacted the contractor multiple times to request he go ahead with the installations of the posts along Spencers Park bridle path, but had still not been in touch. It was agreed the Clerk would now look for an alternative contractor.

- 41.8 Members were referred to agenda item 8 (Minute 44).
- 41.9 The Clerk informed Members KeyMed had been in touch and had asked for estimated costings for aquatic plants. Members were reminded that planting was on hold due to the low water levels and options to improve that were currently being explored, including the possibility of a borehole. Cllr Mrs L Shaw advised contacting Essex County Council's Sub Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) department for advice, noting that a recent training event she had attended had indicated boreholes were not advisable given the expense to maintain them. It was further noted that the recent spell of heavy rain had not brought the levels up and therefore the low water levels were still a concern. Cllr M Strubel enquired whether lining the pond would be a suitable solution, but it was agreed the cost of that process, which would include emptying the entire pond, would be too great and further noted the Great Crested Newts could not be disturbed.
- 41.10 Members noted that budgetary consideration was required for 2018/19 for possible future fencing replacement in Magnolia Park.
- 41.11 The Clerk informed Members that a meeting with ADT was scheduled for the 28th September 2017 to undertake a service review, update keyholders and undertake a business risk assessment for Council's needs. Cllr R Gardner would accompany the Clerk.
- 41.12 Members were due to arrange a date for a site visit at Glencroft Open Space to meet with a resident to determine the exact location of a boundary line.
- 41.13 Research into a 'nest swing' (play equipment) for Magnolia Park playground was underway, with a comparable commercial product costing around £2k. The Clerk informed Members she had been in touch with Vic Leach's family and they had not been able to go ahead with the fund-raising event they had intended to be part of to raise funds for the swing. It was agreed the cost for a commercial project was substantial and would need further consideration.
- 41.14 Members noted visits to both Glencroft Open Space and Spencers Park had taken place on the 26th July 2017 and the Health and Safety Audit reports had been referred to on both visits. It was agreed to close the item.
- 41.15 Members noted that the work to remove a vine, which had encroached on a resident's property at Magnolia Park and had strangled her conifers, had now been completed. Members were disappointed to learn the resident had since been in touch and was not pleased with the clearance work as she felt it exposed her property on the park side, parallel to her property. It was noted that the intention had been to clear the vegetation and this had been communicated on a site visit. The Clerk informed Members a neighbouring property had contacted the office to complain about the Virginia Creeper which still extended further along the fence-line and therefore another site visit would need to be considered.
- 41.16 Members noted that the event held by Hawkwell Baptist Church during the Bank Holiday weekend in Magnolia had been a success. The event holders had since indicated they hoped to hold a bigger event in 2018 which was noted. Members learned that following the event many painted stones had been found in the grass, which Cllr Mrs M Weir had personally removed. It was explained this was a recent trend/game, but Members agreed this posed a problem given the park needed to be regularly mowed and that the matter would need to be raised with the church.

Members noted and **accepted** the Action Update List and **agreed** to the removal of the closed items.

42. Financial Report – Aug 2017:

Members noted that the Parks' budget was underspent.

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

43. Business Continuity – Parks Works:

a) Quotes for short-term cover for essential works in Groundsman's absence:

Members agreed it was necessary to have a contingency plan in place during the Groundsman's absence. Members were reminded the current budget had included 45 days for the use of a contractor and that he was currently being used to carry out the essential works such as grass cutting. It was noted the work carried out by him during this time had received praise from several members of the public and Members agreed the parks and open spaces were being maintained well with the work carried out extremely efficiently. It was understood the contractor had other work commitments and that support from another contractor would therefore be required. Members noted the quotes received for the additional support and it was agreed Green Gateway Trading (GGT) would be used on an ad-hoc basis, as required.

Members discussed the importance of obtaining quotes for works based on the same measures and it was agreed any future assessment would ensure due-diligence.

44. Magnolia Park Management Plan – Review 2017

Members were thanked for revising the plan and it was agreed the information was very educational and interesting. Members noted the Magnolia Park Management Plan.

45. Email from Rochford District Council (RDC) regarding 'Draft Public Space Protection Orders' – rescinding of existing Dog Control Orders & opportunity to address other anti-social issues

Members noted the Orders were in draft phase and there may be an opportunity for areas of Hawkwell to be added. The Clerk had been in contact with RDC to obtain a copy of the existing schedule and it was noted Magnolia Park Nature Reserve and Elizabeth Close were not included on the existing schedule for Dog Control Orders. It was agreed those areas should be put forward to RDC, along with any areas that may be viewed as problematic when it came to anti-social issues. Members who were aware of any specific area they felt needed to be included would contact the Clerk who would submit a response to RDC.

46. Report to RDC Portfolio Holder for Environment regarding County Highway Rangers.

Members noted the report.

47. Quote from Wicksteed regarding moving the Adult Gym - revised quote of £3,645, excluding the Spacewalker which will be removed and not relocated (previous quote was £4,149):

The Clerk informed Members she was still waiting for information from Wicksteed whether Construction Design Management Regulations (CDM) would apply, as raised by Cllr Gardner. Members agreed to proceed with the work outlined and priced in the quote, dependent on whether CDM regulations would need to be applied.

48. Correspondence from Rayleigh Town Council re. Management Contract – Lower Wyburns Woodland, Rayleigh

Members agreed it was not practical to participate in the tender for the work outlined.

49. Magnolia Park Nature Reserve Signage: Proposed wording attached:

Members discussed the proposed wording prepared by the Clerk. The Clerk explained she had run the sign by RDC who had advised the sign to display the word 'shall' instead of 'should'. Members questioned whether the sign was too text heavy and if the inclusion of pictures would be better, but Chairman Mrs P Young explained the difficulties and cost implications of including pictures. Members agreed two signs needed to be placed at either entrance of the Nature Reserve from the recreation field. The Clerk informed Members she would get the sign artwork drawn up so the sizes could be better determined and to ensure the appropriate background colours were used.

50. Summary of Decisions:

- Possible site visit to be arranged for Magnolia Park to assess the Virginia Creeper issue; Clerk to confirm following communication with resident.
- Hawkwell Baptist Church to be contacted about event in Magnolia Park to address issue with stones left in grass area of park.
- Contractor to continue to be used to cover essential works in the parks/open spaces during Groundsman's absence, with Green Gateway Trading to be used on an ad-hoc basis as and when required.
- Clerk to respond to RDC to request the inclusion of Magnolia Park and Elizabeth Close (and any additional areas as advised by Members) to the RDC Public Space Protection Orders.
- Re-location of Adult Gym to go ahead, conditional on Wicksteed's response regarding CDM regulations.
- Offer to tender for management contract of Lower Wyburns Woodland, Rayleigh declined.
- Clerk to have artwork drawn up for Magnolia Nature Reserve Signage.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 21:50pm.

Chairman