

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday, 11th March 2013 at 7.30pm
In the Committee Room, The Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford.**

Committee Present: Cllr Mrs P Young (Chairman), Cllr V Leach (ex-officio), Cllr Mrs L Haskew, Cllr R Mitchell, Cllr R Patient (ex-officio), Cllr L A Sampson, Cllr D Weir, Cllr Mrs M Weir and Mr E Short – HPPG.

Also Present: Cllr J Scrivener, Cllr Mrs L Shaw, Members of the 'Friends of Magnolia' – Mr R Cranfield, Mrs L Waters and Mr P Waters.

84. Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Cllr Mrs K Cooke (Family matter), Cllr Mrs C Cunningham (Family matter) and Cllr Mrs A Heath (Inclement weather). Members accepted the apologies tendered.

85. Declarations of any:

a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;

b) Other Pecuniary Interest; or

c) Non-Pecuniary Interest

on any matter on the agenda for 11th March 2013

None were declared.

86. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2013 and to approve the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting:

Members approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th February 2013 as a true record and agreed to the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.

87. Parks – Action List Update – March (For Noting):

87.1 The Clerk updated that Finance had given approval for her to obtain a Council Debit Card for the Current Account for which paperwork was being requested and this would enable her to move forward with the purchase of a mobile phone for the Groundsman. The Clerk advised progress on other items was as per the action update report.

87.2 Cllr Sampson added that he had contacted Cory Environmental Trust re. funding for signage; the request would be put in with other bids in the new financial year. This was noted.

87.3 Cllr Weir expressed concern that most of the actions were 'ongoing'; he was also having trouble hearing the updates and asked for a report regarding co-operation between parishes re. dog fouling. Cllr Leach relayed the update given at the last meeting that Hawkwell, Hockley, Hullbridge and Rayleigh were willing to share the cost of a dog warden as long as it was found to be not too expensive. A report would be put together for consideration prior to the next budgeting round to enable the Parishes to decide whether the collective project would be affordable. Members were content with the report.

87.4 The Clerk informed that the Greensward Academy had been chased for a response to Council's letter but they had not come back yet. Members accepted the Action List Update and approved for the removal of completed actions.

88. Financial Report – February (For Noting):

There were no questions and Members accepted the Financial Report.

89. Update of Magnolia Management Plan (For Discussion):

a) Site visit – verbal update: The Chairman reported that the Working Group had met together with the Groundsman to discuss the management plan. That Group, accompanied by the Clerk, then attended a site visit from which a lot was learned and there were a number of actions to take forward. Another meeting would be scheduled in two weeks time to finalise the management plan and task the 'Friends of Magnolia' with some actions. The Chairman invited comments from the floor. Cllr Sampson added that a good set of proposals had come from the meetings and hopefully a date would be set for the next meeting to settle the management plan.

b) Next steps: The Chairman reported that as solid fencing could not be replaced in the section along the bridleway where the fence had been removed, Ray Cranfield recommended that the 'Friends of Magnolia' weave a dead hedge fence and this would be one of the first jobs to move forward with. The type of woven fence would also be considered for other areas, some already earmarked and Ray Cranfield would conduct training for that. The Chairman agreed to pass on contact details for the 'Friends of Magnolia' to Mr Cranfield for him to set up Training dates. The Chairman reiterated the importance of keeping the Groundsman informed of all planned works and asked the 'Friends of Magnolia' to advise her of any specific things needed. The Chairman advised that Council would be purchasing a small store for the 'Friends of Magnolia' to be situated within the compound. The Clerk handed out copies of the Magnolia Park Lease for information.

90. 'Friends of Magnolia' – Verbal update:

90.1 Cllr Leach expressed for the sake of the minutes that he was delighted with progress and congratulated the group for driving things forward. Cllr Mrs Haskew recommended taking photographs as works progressed with a view to newsletter publicity. She suggested this could lead onto a competition asking parishioners if they could identify the areas depicted.

90.2 It was queried whether horses would still have access to the bridleway whilst the fencing work was in progress; the Chairman advised signage could be put out and reiterated the importance of working with the Groundsman.

91. 'Shared Garden Scheme' proposal – Verbal update by Cllr Mrs Haskew:

Cllr Mrs Haskew referred to the information gathered from some of the more established garden schemes that had been properly co-ordinated. She reported, however, these did not seem suitable for HPC as it was not in Council's remit to co-ordinate a scheme. Cllr Mitchell reported that the Horticultural Society had raised concerns as to how the project could be monitored and that a garden partnership may be the way forward. Examples were given as to there being no recourse should the house owner be taken ill and family Members disallowed the garden sharer to return. Cllr Mrs Haskew advised she had written to Hove Council for advice on this issue and at least if circumstances changed, the sharer would be able to get their crop off as they had invested their time into that. The Chairman recommended more research to find a resolution and reiterated that it was Council's wish to promote the idea but not to manage it.

Members discussed the issues raised including Police checking, costs and time. It was felt that whilst the garden share idea was a good one it was fraught with difficulties and more information regarding structure was needed. The Clerk pointed out it would have been better to do the research before publishing an article to 4500 homes and questioned the value of taking it forward with only two responses; Cllr Mrs Haskew and Cllr Mitchell agreed to continue their research so that a response could be given to the two residents who were interested in the scheme.

92. Letter from resident re. Memorial Plaque request (For Decision):

The Clerk reported that the resident had phoned the office and was informed that Council had taken the decision previously to cease memorial plaques now the trees were full; the resident had since written to ask Council to reconsider. Concern was expressed about the park becoming a memorial garden with a plaque on every tree, whilst it was understood that a memorial plaque gave great comfort to relatives. Members discussed using other trees taking into consideration the tree management process. Cllr Weir cautioned that allowing the request would set a precedent for others and raised the on costs of administration and the Groundsman's time. Members discussed the rising costs of materials and it was recommended that the price of a plaque be increased to £100. **It was resolved that on this occasion Council would allow the resident's request but the cost would be raised to £100 and the Clerk would liaise with the resident and Groundsman to select a suitable tree. It was agreed to refer the subject to the Policy Committee to consider thereafter.** Members voted and the resolution was carried.

93. ECC Highways – Interactive PROW Map (For Information):

This was noted.

94. Summary of Decisions:

- Cllr Mrs Young to schedule Management Plan Working Group meeting.
- Cllr Mrs Young to forward 'Friends of Magnolia' contact details to Ray Cranfield.
- Ray Cranfield to organise training dates for weave fencing.
- Cllr Mrs Haskew/Cllr Mitchell to continue garden share structure research and report back.
- Approved request for Memorial Plaque, cost increased to £100.
- Clerk to liaise with Groundsman and resident regarding tree selection.
- Memorial Plaque to be referred to Policy Committee thereafter.

The meeting was closed at 8.10pm.

Chairman

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