

**Minutes of the meeting of the  
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE  
held on Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2014 at 7.30pm  
in the Committee Room, The Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford.**

**Committee Present:** Vice Chairman Cllr L Sampson, Cllr Mrs L Haskew, Cllr V Leach (ex-officio), Cllr R Patient, Cllr Mrs L Shaw, Cllr J Tutton, Cllr D Weir and Cllr Mrs M Weir.

*Standing Order 6n. Resolution `that in view of the new Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations made on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2014 SO 6n (Photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting by any means is not permitted without the Council's prior written consent) be suspended`.*

**52. Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:**

Cllr Mrs P Young (holiday). Members accepted the apologies tendered.

**53. Declarations of any:**

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

**on any matter on the agenda for 13<sup>th</sup> October 2014:**

None were declared.

**54. Public Forum:**

None present.

**55. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014 and to approve the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting:**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014 were approved and Members agreed to the destruction of the meeting notes.

**56. Action List Update - October 2014:**

Members reviewed the Action List and updates were given as follows:-

- 56.1 Cllr Mrs Weir reported her intention to organise a weekend working party of the 'Friends of Magnolia' over one of the next two weekends and she asked about availability of tools. Cllr Weir asked whether it would be appropriate to put aside some funds to purchase some tools for the Group and the Committee agreed it would be sensible to look into quotes for half a dozen people. Cllr Mrs Shaw recommended a few lines in the next Newsletter asking parishioners to donate any unused tools for the group and this was **agreed.**
- 56.2 Illustrative artwork would be brought to Committee as soon as possible.
- 56.3 Wildflower meadow preparation was in hand.
- 56.4 Cllr Mrs Weir fed back from the Parish Walks meeting that RDC had taken up the services of a volunteer and Eddie Short had volunteered to walk all of Hawkwell footpaths on Council's behalf and he hoped to put a team together to clear vegetation in the future.
- 56.5 The Clerk advised she would attend the CIF Panel on 6th November and would report the findings.
- 56.6 The Clerk reported there was no need to get a quote from Cory to clear vegetation around the container as the Groundsman was able to do the work in-house. Cllr Patient **proposed** obtaining a quote to relocate the

container for practical use with referral to Full Council for endorsement. This was **agreed** and the Clerk was asked to follow up.

- 56.7 Cllr Leach reported feedback from resident that he would organise for the overhanging sycamore branches to be lopped in an appropriate manner. Cllr Leach recommended researching whether it would be feasible to fit a polypropene mesh to prevent leaves accumulating in the gutter. This was thought to be effective and it was agreed to research costings.
- 56.8 The date for Wild Wednesday was noted (29<sup>th</sup> October).
- 56.9 Cllr Sampson recapped the situation of animal holes dug in the play area and moved from the Chair to fence off that part of the playground to prevent trip hazard and this was **agreed**. Cllr Weir expressed concern over the high cost of the quotation for repairs and Cllr Mrs Weir recommended digging out the sand and laying compacted earth and mesh. Members discussed the situation in detail including the possibility of having to temporarily close the play area which was hoped to be avoided if possible. It was **resolved** to find all the facts and obtain 3 quotes in total for fencing and ground work to bring back to Committee for consideration.

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

#### **57. Financial Report – September 2014:**

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

#### **58. Motion on Notice from Chair of Parks:**

**‘That Parks Committee consider the Clerk’s progress report regarding extra help for the Groundsman and agree to extend the contract for a further two months to help progress the outstanding work. The additional cost would be £1,440.’**

Cllr Sampson referred to the Clerk’s report, works programmes achieved and the work required to complete the tree work. Cllr Mrs Weir talked of the increase in manpower over the years from one part-time to full-time man plus Contractors with Parks expenditure creeping up all the time. Cllr Mrs Shaw pointed out the extra manpower was worthwhile in keeping the work schedule on track and Cllr Mrs Haskew felt it was good value for money. Cllr Patient spoke of the vast difference in Magnolia which was impressive; he pointed out that times had changed such as the Payback Team were no longer allowed to use hedge trimmers, Magnolia had undergone drainage works with great success and the Groundsman had been called upon to do many other duties. Cllr Weir expressed caution that increased expenditure may ultimately affect Council tax but it was argued that once the work was up to scratch Parishioners would be proud of the area. Cllr Sampson summarised that the motion was a cost effective option where a second pair of hands was essential for some of the tree work anyway. Cllr Weir warned Council were making a big black hole and Cllr Mrs Shaw pointed out that the work was required to be completed within a certain time period to satisfy requirements and not for cosmetic reasons. Cllr Mrs Weir debated that not all of the priority work was urgent and Cllr Sampson responded that in order to complete Priority 1 category of works the £1,400 quoted compared very favourably to what Council would otherwise be charged. **Cllr Mrs Shaw proposed the motion on notice from the Chair of Parks and Cllr Mrs Haskew seconded. After a show of hands the motion was carried.**

- 59. Email from RDC – Open Space Strategy Consultation: suggest Working Group to look at this if there is a desire to respond – deadline 28.11.14.**  
Cllr Mrs Weir had examined the Strategy and reported its aims in detail. Cllr Leach summarised that it was a revenue raising, cost cutting document. Views were expressed but a working party was thought to be unnecessary. It was **resolved** that the Clerk would construct a letter in response made up of Councillor's views which were requested to be forwarded to the Clerk within 7 days.
- 60. Email from St. Mary's Church re. request to cut hedge adjacent to their road frontage:**  
Cllr Mrs Weir gave an account of historical activities which explained the relationship between the Parish, Church and the Farmer and she pointed out one concern of cordoning off the road on the bend. The Clerk advised that the Groundsman was not insured or trained to work on a bus route and to implement either would incur a cost to Council. Views were expressed and the matter was discussed in detail. Cllr Mrs Haskew summarised opinion that although the Groundsman was willing to do the work Council did not have the resource, having spoken at length about extra manpower earlier and it was **resolved** to deny the request from St. Mary's. The Clerk was asked to respond accordingly.
- 61. Email from 1<sup>st</sup> Hawkwell Scout Group re. Planting of Elm Sapling:**  
The Clerk reported the Scout Group were willing to nurture the Sapling after the first year and the Groundsman had earmarked an area for planting. The Committee **approved** the request and the Clerk was asked to respond.
- 62. Spencers – Verbal request by resident asking to cut down trees:**  
The Clerk reported that the necessary tree work had already been carried out and the tree did not present any danger. It was **agreed** to decline the request and the Clerk was instructed to respond.
- 63. Free Saplings from Woodland Trust (Arriving first week in November):**  
Some views were given and it was **agreed** to use the expertise at hand by consulting the Groundsman for his advice on planting.
- 64. Summary of Decisions:**
- Clerk to obtain quote to relocate the container in Magnolia.
  - Agreed to research costs for protective mesh over guttering.
  - Clerk to obtain 3 quotes for fencing and ground work in Magnolia Play Area to bring back to Committee for consideration.
  - Motion on notice from Chair of Parks carried.
  - Views re. Open Space Strategy to be forwarded to the Clerk within 7 days in order for the Clerk to respond by letter.
  - Request from St. Mary's Church re. hedge cutting denied. Clerk to respond.
  - Request from resident asking to cut down trees denied. Clerk to respond.
  - Clerk to seek Groundsman's expertise re. planting of Saplings.

The meeting was closed at 8.35pm.

Chairman

***Please recycle from within Full Council Papers for use at next Standing Committee.***