

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday, 15th September 2014 at 7.30pm
in the Committee Room, The Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford.**

Committee Present: Chairman Cllr Mrs P Young, Vice Chairman Cllr L Sampson, Cllr Mrs A Heath, Cllr Mrs L Haskew, Cllr V Leach (ex-officio), Cllr R Patient, Cllr Mrs L Shaw, 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 5th 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`.

39. Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Cllr J Tutton (holiday). Members accepted the apologies tendered.

40. Declarations of any:

a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;

b) Other Pecuniary Interest; or

c) Non-Pecuniary Interest

on any matter on the agenda for 15th September 2014:

None were declared.

41. Public Forum: None present.

42. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2014 and to approve the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting:

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th July 2014 were approved and Members agreed to the destruction of the meeting notes.

43. Action List Update - September 2014:

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

43.1 Cllr Mrs Weir congratulated the 'Friends of Magnolia' on works carried out around the basketball area. Cllr Mrs Weir to set up Saturday 'Friends of Magnolia' working party/Cllr Mrs Young to forward works programme. Cllr Sampson reported the next working party was scheduled for Thursday which he would attend and forward a work schedule to Cllr Mrs Young. Cllr Mrs Young was asked to follow up claims made at the last meeting and report back.

43.2 Cllr Sampson advised the work was completed on the Management Plan but needed to be typed up; he had been pre-occupied for the last fortnight which was understood.

43.3 A provisional date had been set for the Wildflower Working Group to meet on 26th September. This clashed with the Groundsman's holiday and Cllr Sampson said he would liaise with him beforehand.

43.4 The Clerk handed out a proposal from DWH to plant 3 large Field Maple Trees between November and March and maintain for one year. A Council Representative would be required on site to instruct the exact positioning of the trees when work commenced. This was **accepted** and the Clerk was asked to respond and arrange for the Groundsman and Chair of Parks to be available; Cllr Mrs Shaw volunteered to stand in if needed.

- 43.5 The Clerk suggested postponing the Seminar due to lack of response and to give more lead time but Cllr Sampson was content to go ahead which was **accepted**.
- 43.6 The willow weaving action point would be brought back if the Specialist came out of retirement and made contact.
- 43.7 Cllr Sampson reported that the lighting socket on the Truck tow bar had probably never worked as a problem was only discovered when the chipper was plugged into it recently but this would be corrected under warranty during the week.
- 43.8 The Clerk recommended consideration in the budgeting round to purchase a new laptop for the office; this would free up the current laptop for the Groundsman and the desk top would remain in the office as a spare. It was noted that the Groundsman would have use of his mobile phone for email and internet. Cllr Mrs Shaw reported there were courses that could be taken online which was one of the reasons why it was agreed for a computer to go into the Store. Members **agreed** with the Clerk's recommendations which would be reviewed at the budgeting round. Members noted the Action List Update and **agreed** closure of completed items.

44. Financial Report – July and August 2014:

The Clerk reported 53.6% of the budget was spent which was slightly over. There were no questions and Members **accepted** the Financial Report.

45. Parks Signage Review Report:

Cllrs Mrs Young together with the Clerk and Cllr Mrs Weir had conducted a review of all Parks signage and referred Members to the findings laid out in the Clerk's report.

- 45.1 Members agreed they wished to keep signage simple and uniformed adding any specific by-law signage at a later time if necessary.
- 45.2 Adult Gym signage was **approved** to be as large as possible regarding minimum age.
- 45.3 **Approved in principle** use of RDC's 'Your Dog, Your Job' paint stencil either to be purchased (£20) or for RDC to come out on request.
- 45.4 Cllr Mrs Weir reported that the Magnolia play space gate no longer self-closed. The Clerk informed she was following this up with the supplier.
- 45.5 Cllr Leach recommended fencing off the 'bogey' as young children had been climbing on it and parents had not shown any concern. Removal was discussed but it was agreed it would be more cost effective to fence it in and retain it for its historical relevance. Different fencing ideas were put forward and it was **agreed to pursue quotes for an attractive bow top wrought iron fence and signage**. Cllr Sampson and Cllr Mrs Shaw volunteered to assist the Clerk with research.
- 45.6 Spencers signage **approved** with a view to follow RDC's example for by-laws.
- 45.7 Consideration to install some type of disabled gate at the entrance to the bridle path from the recreation field in Magnolia was **approved**.
- 45.8 The future of the Container in Magnolia was discussed and Cllr Leach gave a detailed account of its history. Donation, organisations, sale, buyer collect and alternative uses were discussed. It was agreed that firstly an idea of works required to clear the dense vegetation around the container would need to be gained. The Clerk pointed out that the Groundsman's

programme of works was heavy and it was **agreed** to obtain a quote from Cory to clear the vegetation. Cllr Mrs Young reminded there was no money in the budget at present for this work.

46. Magnolia Car park entrance – complaint from resident regarding clearance work undertaken:

Cllr Patient commended the Clerk for the way she had dealt with the correspondence and recommended sending a message to the Groundsman to congratulate him on the work he had done. Cllr Mrs Shaw had not received communication about this for which the Clerk apologised and Cllr Mrs Young recounted details. The Clerk informed that the clearance of Ivy along the entrance was now part of a general maintenance programme. The Clerk reported that the residents had cleared Ivy from behind their garages and had undertaken some tree work but there was one Sycamore tree left overhanging the Store guttering which was full of debris. The Clerk was asked to write to the residents to ask if they were planning to undertake work on this tree along with other work currently being undertaken.

47. CIF Application – Refurbishment of Elizabeth Close Playground & e-mail from resident:

The Clerk had replied to the resident who had recommended that two access points should be made available in a children's play area; this was a recommendation from ROSPA and RDC had also received a query about it. She advised that this had not been picked up on the Inspection Report as yet. Cllr Mrs Shaw reported that she was looking at 'Grants for All' with a view to finding the money to install another exit. The Clerk informed that other complaints had been received about the playground and Cllr Leach recommended a simple response that Council were seeking funding for improvements. The grant application and potential award was discussed together with huge cost of equipment and the Clerk advised that the figures would have to be juggled depending on the funding awarded. A new type of child's swing was discussed and the Clerk notified that a Working Group would be set up to look at the detail once funding was secured. Cllr Mrs Heath suggested publishing in the Newsletter that Council were seeking funding to regenerate the playground and this was noted.

48. `Wild Wednesdays` - verbal report by Cllr Sampson:

Cllr Sampson reported that Able Education Solutions had delivered a programme to ECC primarily around Chelmsford to enjoy and promote the open spaces and type of activities such as pond dipping, hammock making, kite flying, building walls with pots and mud piles and bottle rockets. The activities were run from 11-2pm. The activity days were promoted through County Schools with no money involved. ECC wished to expand the programme and Harlow had expressed an interest. Cllr Sampson asked Members if they would like to offer Magnolia Park as a venue as it had enough space and all the natural resources that would be needed and would be advertised through the local Schools. The activities would be run and operated by the Rangers responsible for Danbury Park. Should the Committee be interested in following this up permission was sought to allow the Groundsman to visit Danbury Park for an afternoon and he would inevitably become a Ranger. Positive comments were expressed in promoting the Park and activities for young people. Lack of toilet and hand washing facilities was raised but as the participants would be Senior School level aged 11-14 years, it was not

felt to be an issue. Liability was discussed and Policies were in place for County Parks and Able Education. Concern was expressed in overloading the Groundsman's work schedule; Cllr Sampson reported having discussed the project with the Groundsman who he described as a 'font of knowledge and crucial' to the involvement. It was **resolved to pursue** the project and agreed for the Groundsman and a Member of Council to attend training on 29th October for which Cllr Mrs Shaw volunteered and was **accepted**.

49. Height Barrier at entrance to Magnolia Park damage:

Members noted the incident and selected the artwork to replace the sign. Changing the height line was discussed but not taken forward.

50. Magnolia Park Playground: surfacing problems – verbal report by Clerk:

The Clerk informed that a member of the public had initially raised issue of trip hazards where the surface was being dug by animals and despite repair and short term remedies a long term solution was required. The Clerk recommended a way forward which was discussed in detail and it was noted that it would not be possible to exclude all animals but it would reduce the problem. It was **agreed** to seek costs.

51. Summary of Decisions:

- 'Friends of Magnolia' – Cllr Mrs Weir to set up Saturday Group, Cllr Mrs Young and Cllr Sampson to forward works programmes and Cllr Mrs Young to follow up claims from last meeting.
- Approved planting proposal from DWH – Clerk to respond and organise for representatives to be on site.
- Agreed to consider new office laptop at budgeting round with a view to passing current laptop into the Store for Groundsman's use.
- Approved Parks Signage Review findings as above.
- Approved consideration to some type of disabled gate at entrance to the bridle path from the recreation field in Magnolia.
- Clerk to obtain quote from Cory to clear vegetation around Container.
- Clerk to write to residents re. Sycamore Tree.
- Note funding application to regenerate Elizabeth Close Playground for November Newsletter.
- Agreed to pursue 'Wild Wednesdays' with approval for the Groundsman and Cllr Mrs Shaw to attend training.
- Approved height barrier artwork to replace sign.
- Clerk to obtain costing to resolve Magnolia Playground surface problems.

The meeting was closed at 8.55pm.

Chairman

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