

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday 19th September 2016 at 7:45pm
in the Committee Room, The Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford.**

Present: Chairman Cllr Mrs Young, Cllr Mrs E Gadsdon, Cllr R Gardner, Cllr V Leach, Cllr S May, Cllr R Patient, Cllr Mrs Shaw, Cllr M Strubel, Cllr D Weir and Cllr Mrs M Weir.

Also present: District Cllr Mrs J Gooding.

33. Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Cllr Mrs L Corsham (unwell) had given apologies. Members accepted the apologies tendered.

34. Declarations of any:

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

on any matter on the agenda for 19th September 2016:

None were declared.

35. Public Forum:

District Cllr Mrs J Gooding.

36. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th July 2016 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.

37. Action List Update – September 2016:

37.1 Members agreed to remove the item regarding the Parish Parks Forum meeting. The Clerk would return it to the list when a date had been set.

37.2 Members were referred to Agenda item 7 (Minute 39).

37.3 Members noted the Clerk had prepared the CIF Grant bid and was just waiting for a 4th quote from a local contractor. She informed Members two of the quotes already received were close in price, but one contractor had quoted considerably higher. Members briefly discussed the different pathing surface materials, but agreed a decision would only be practical once all the quotes had been received.

37.4 Members noted that the Clerk was still waiting to hear from Rochford District Council (RDC) to arrange for a quote to clean the Magnolia Park car park.

37.5 The Clerk told Members the resident had been informed of Council's decision to allow the planting of a memorial tree. She and the Groundsman had since met with the resident at Spencers Park to discuss a planting location. It was

agreed an Oak tree would be most suitable for the area and planting would occur once Autumn had set in.

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

38. Financial Report – August 2016:

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

39. Magnolia Park Children’s Playground Project:

a) Vandalism - Members were extremely disappointed to learn the rope bridge had been burned on the new play equipment. The Clerk had received quotes for a direct replacement, but concerns were raised over whether vandalism would be repeated so she had asked Wicksteed to quote on an alternative part which would fit the damaged section. She informed Members she had chased Wicksteed for this quote, but was still not in receipt of it. Members noted the Groundsman had temporarily covered the exposed steel with strong tape and agreed this was a practical coverage solution until a decision could be made on the replacement part. The Clerk informed Members she would continue to chase Wicksteed and would update them when an alternative option had been presented.

b) Surfacing defect under new equipment – The Clerk informed Members a defect in the new surfacing under the recently installed multi-play unit had come to light, with a square section now removed from its original site. She had sent images of the defect to Wicksteed who had referred the issue to the wet pour contractor. The Clerk was waiting to hear from that contractor and would be advised if the defect repair would be covered under guarantee.

c) Propose dates for the Official Opening Ceremony – Members agreed an appropriate time for the Opening Ceremony should occur either late October or early November. Members noted the current issues with the playground and hoped these would be rectified before the ceremony. Members discussed inviting a winner from the Paralympics to the ceremony, but viewed it would not be appropriate given the fees involved.

40. Magnolia Pond:

The Chairman updated Members that the site visits with both Stillwater Management and FenGroup had been attended by herself, Cllr Mrs Weir, the Clerk and Groundsman. Members were particularly disappointed with the lack of useful content in the report from FenGroup, but felt Stillwater’s report was comprehensive and very interesting. It was therefore agreed to proceed with the services offered by Stillwater Management.

Members discussed the schedule of work and decided the practical approach would be to start clearing the trees and vegetation from the west bank of the pond, outlined in Stillwater’s report. The Clerk was requested to contact Stillwater to discuss timescales of the work. Members noted the cost of the work would exceed the budget allocated and the Clerk advised it would not be necessary to vire additional money from Finance; Members therefore agreed there would be an overspend in the Parks budget for 2016/17.

41. Dog Injury Claim

a) Email correspondence from claimant - The Clerk gave an overview of the incident where a dog had allegedly injured itself on barbed wire which was present in the deep Blackthorn undergrowth in Magnolia Nature Reserve. Since the incident, the Groundsman had found the area in question and had removed the barbed wire. Members discussed the claim and pointed out that detritus from the historical industrial site was extremely difficult to remove, given it was likely some was in the deep undergrowth within the reserve and in unexplored areas. The Chairman moved from the Chair that the matter be sent to the insurance company to be dealt with. This was seconded by Cllr M Strubel and agreed by Members. The Clerk was requested to respond to the claimant accordingly.

b) Additional signage in Magnolia Nature Reserve – Members thanked Cllr M Strubel for his efforts in putting forward an idea for a sign for the nature reserve and agreed it was necessary to include more signs to give the public information about the reserve. Members discussed written content for the signs and decided advice and more time for research was needed. Members therefore agreed to review sign content at the next Parks Committee meeting.

42. Proposal to purchase new Capital Equipment:

Members discussed the purchase of the proposed equipment which included a mini digger, a trailer, a wheeled brush mower and wheeled strimmer totalling an estimated value of around £13k-£15k. It was explained that the current method of hedge cutting, which used a flail attached to a tractor, had become problematic and inefficient over the years. The old tractor was due for replacement and therefore a mini digger was a cheaper and more useful option. Members also noted that the wheeled brush mower and strimmer would be more practical and efficient to allow the Groundsman to tackle the extensive work in the parks. Members thanked the Clerk for the detailed report which she had provided and noted that the Groundsman's experience and exceptional skillset had been valuable in compiling the proposal. Cllr Mrs Shaw moved the proposal to purchase the four pieces of equipment which was seconded by Cllr Leach and unanimously agreed by Members.

43. Playground/Adult Gym Annual Inspection Reports:

Members noted the reports and agreed to refer the reports to the Health & Safety Sub-Committee for review.

44. Assault on dog walker in Magnolia Park:

The Clerk explained she was waiting to hear from the Police Officer dealing with the case for the latest official update. They noted the email from the victim of the alleged attack which requested the assailant be banned from Magnolia Park, but agreed it this would not be enforced by the Council, pointing out it was a criminal matter.

- 45. Email from Canewdon Parish Council: Request for assistance with allotment maintenance**
Members agreed it was not practical to assist with the allotment maintenance in Canewdon given the workload in the Hawkwell Parish. Members therefore declined the request, but agreed it was necessary to consider possible work in the future.
- 46. Elizabeth Close Playground wall: maintenance required**
Members noted the defect in the concrete wall at Elizabeth Close Playground and agreed it needed an expert to advise on the best method of repair. The Clerk informed Members she would make enquiries with a local contractor.
- 47. Magnolia Park Bridleway Essex County Council (ECC) repairs:**
The Clerk gave Members the background information relating to a hole which had appeared on a bridleway in Magnolia Park, which was the responsibility of ECC. The first appearance of this hole dated back to June 2015 and the temporary repair put in place had now deteriorated and a large hole was present, posing a danger to users of the bridleway. The Clerk explained the office had taken a large number of calls and emails about the hole and she had therefore persistently contacted ECC to try and get the matter resolved. ECC had since acknowledged the issue and had informed the Clerk of a delay due to investigative work they claimed they needed to carry out regarding badger sets. The Clerk informed them that the set was no longer active but there was a high level of concern about the lack of warning/temporary protection around the hole as ECC had not provided any. Cllr Mrs Shaw volunteered to contact the County Cllr Terry Cutmore in order to try and resolve the matter, which was supported by Members.
- 48. Email from resident regarding ditch alongside Spencers Park**
Members noted the email regarding the poor state and sewerage smell that was omitting from the ditch. Members were aware the ditch had been historically cleared by the Community Payback Team, but noted that the ditch was not the responsibility of the Parish Council. Cllr Mrs Shaw proposed that the matter be passed to the RDC Flood Forum and Members agreed this would be most appropriate. It was also suggested that advice be given to the resident that she contact the Environmental Agency as the waste/overgrowth was obstructing running water.
- 49. Personnel Committee's decision on Groundsman's Ergonomic Assessment.**
Members noted the Personnel Committee's decision to replace the tractor seat and install two cameras on the tractor.
- 50. Summary of Decisions:**
- Clerk to wait for 4th quote for path work in Spencers Park before a decision over surfacing material is agreed.
 - Clerk to continue to chase Wicksteed for the quote for the alternative part for the Magnolia Park multi-play vandalised section before decision over replacement is agreed.
 - Clerk to propose appropriate date for end of October/early November for Magnolia Park Playground Opening Ceremony.

- Stillwater Management services to be used for pond work; Clerk to contact to agree timescales of work.
- Clerk to pass on claim regarding barbed wire dog accident to Came & Co and to respond to claimant accordingly.
- Members to research content and seek advice regarding new signs for Magnolia Nature Reserve/Park in time for next Parks meeting.
- Approval to purchase four new pieces of equipment using the Capital Replacement Fund: mini digger, trailer, wheeled brush mower and wheeled trimmer with an estimated total cost of £13-£15k.
- Playground Inspection Reports passed to Health & Safety Sub-Committee for review
- Offer of assistance at Canewdon Parish Allotments declined; Clerk to inform Canewdon Parish Council.
- Clerk to contact local contractor to obtain advice about repair of concrete wall sited at Elizabeth Close Playground.
- Cllr Mrs Shaw to contact Terry Cutmore (ECC) regarding ongoing issue of bridleway hole at Magnolia Park.
- Clerk to pass on resident's complaint about the ditch at Spencers Park to the Flood Forum and to advise resident to also consider contacting Environmental Health.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9:28pm

Chairman