

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday 12th November 2018 at 7:35pm
in the Committee Room, The Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford.**

Cllrs present: Chairman Mrs P Young, R Gardner, S May, R Patient, Ms A Rees-Jones, Mrs N Shaw, M Strubel, Mrs M Weir & S Wootton.

46. Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Cllr Mrs E Gadsdon had given her apologies.
Members received the apologies tendered.

47. Declarations of any:

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

on any matter on the agenda for 12th November 2018:

No declarations were made relating to a), b) and/or c). Members also made no declarations relating to any change in their Register of Members' Interests.

48. Public Forum:

No members of the public were present.

49. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st October 2018 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.

50. Action List Update – November 2018:

- 50.1 Members noted that the Clerk had received a call from a resident who had suspected the wall in Elizabeth Close had started to move. The Clerk informed Members she had taken photos of the wall and had compared them to historic photos. The photos showed the wall had not moved but a change in vegetation had made it look that way. These photos were shared with the resident who agreed that the wall had not in fact moved. Members were reminded there was a budget provision in the Ear Marked Reserves (EMRs).
- 50.2 There were no updates regarding the RDC Parish Parks Forum.
- 50.3 Members were reminded of the approach from KeyMed regarding assisting towards the costs of improving the pond. Stillwater would carry out the silt remediation work that week. The Clerk had contacted the Essex Amphibian and Reptile Group (EARG) and was informed they may remove the Goldfish which had been illegally dumped in the pond. It was noted that the fish were currently not visible due to the time of year. The EARG had indicated they may carry out some work digging around 'Duck Island' and in the overwintering pond and the Clerk had requested something be put in writing.
- 50.4 Members noted the Clerk had been in contact with RDC's legal team regarding the land grab matter as Magnolia was leased to HPC by RDC. RDC had told her they would look into the matter. Members noted the Title Plan of the property which had erected the fence and further noted the areas of encroachment.

- 50.5 Members noted Cllrs Mrs E Gadsdon and R Gardner had visited the office and had gone through the HMRC online form with the Clerk to iron out the discrepancies between answers obtained by the Clerk and Cllr R Gardner. It had been agreed between parties that the engagement fell under 'self-employed' status. Members suggested it would be appropriate to draw up a simple 'Grounds Maintenance' annual contract going forward. Members agreed to close the item.
- 50.6 Members noted that they were to alert the office when the boggy area in Spencers Park returned so a site visit could be arranged.
- 50.7 Members were referred to Agenda item 7 (Minute 52).
- 50.8 The Clerk had contacted Swallows Nursery who had recommended a specialised pond company to carry out a Risk Assessment (RA). Unfortunately, that company had been unable to assist. A member of the Essex Amphibian and Reptile Group had advised the Clerk they may be able to find someone who could carry out a RA. The Clerk highlighted the issue that it was proving tricky to find someone qualified to carry out a pond RA. Cllr M Strubel informed Members that he was aware Southend Council had recently carried out work on their ponds in Priory Park and suggested they be contacted for possible advice.
- 50.9 Wicksteed had raised the nest swing in Magnolia Playground by circa 5cm to ensure it met the correct standards. Members agreed to close the item.
- 50.10 Members noted the three sets of correspondence from 3 residents and that two residents had been informed of Members' decisions. Information was still awaited from one resident. Members discussed the erection of zero liability signs and noted that the advice from the Insurance Company was that erecting certain signs did not always hold up and that it was a grey area. Members agreed to close the item.
- 50.11 Members noted the 2018-19 Essex County Council Communities Initiative Fund (ECC CIF) had been submitted for the upgrade of Glencroft Open Space's footpaths. The Clerk informed Members that she had not yet received a date for the Grant Panel, noting that there was a staff storage issue and therefore the process was likely to be delayed.

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

51. Financial Report – October 2018:

Members noted that Council remained under budget.

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

52. Tree Condition Survey:

a) Magnolia: Urgent Priority work completed

Members noted the information and that there had been two trees (a Willow and Ash) which had required urgent attention. It was noted the Clerk had dealt with the issues immediately and had employed the necessary contractors. All work which could be carried out with the regular contractor had also been identified and was in-hand.

b) Magnolia: Moderate priority work reviewed and being scheduled:

Members noted the information.

c) Glencroft Open Space: Moderate Priority work to be reviewed:

Members noted the information.

d) Spencers: No urgent or moderate works required.

Members noted the information. Cllr Ms A Rees-Jones noted that the Oak Tree in Spencers, which Members had previously agreed to remove, was showing as low priority. The Clerk explained that the tree would still be removed soon given Members' decision.

e) Rectory Road trees: Low priority works, dead tree removed:

Members noted the information and that a dead tree had been removed near Golden Cross. The Clerk had also been informed some tree bows were encroaching onto the highway and there had been reports buses were touching those bows occasionally. Cllr Mrs M Weir pointed out that if the trees were encroaching on the highway then Essex County Council would attend to it; the Clerk would therefore report it to ECC Highways.

f) White Hart Shopping Parade (Main Road): Low priority works (crown lift trees) completed.

Members noted the information and works carried out.

Members praised the content and presentation of the report, noting it was clear and easy to interpret. Members agreed it had been hugely beneficial to have carried out historic tree surveys and noted that the current report did not include a high level of urgent works due to the work previously completed. The Clerk commented that RDC's co-operation had been exemplary and they had been the most economical option compared to other companies she had approached.

53. Agree Parks Budget: Copy of 2019-20 for recommendation to the Finance Committee:

Members went through the budget line by line, noting an overall reduction of £29.5k from £78,958 for 2018-19 to £49,475 for 2019-20. It was noted the decrease was largely due to the decision not to employ a new member of staff.

Members discussed the new footpath in Spencers and the CIF bid which had been submitted, also for a new path in Glencroft; Members agreed there needed to be an allocation for the additional maintenance of those paths, noting there had been some weed growth alongside the Spencers path since its installation which had been unforeseen. Members also agreed suitable new access gates would be required for Glencroft Open Space if the footpath bid was successful.

Members also discussed the bins and agreed that increasing that budget would be prudent given the likelihood the contract emptying prices may increase. Members also agreed that an additional bin was required near the picnic table in Magnolia and increased the budget accordingly to allow for the new bin, installation and emptying service.

Members felt it would not be necessary to allocate any money for new Adult Gym pieces given the purchase of three new pieces in 2018-19. The general feedback had been positive, and it was noted many members of the public used the gym.

Consideration was given to reduce the Agricultural Machinery budget, but it was noted that the tractors would require a service and it was important not to let the machinery deteriorate. Members briefly discussed the matter of the machinery in the store and were reminded further discussion was needed in the new year regarding that matter. It was noted that the chemical toilet would be removed given there would be no employee. Members approved the budget for recommendation to the Finance Committee.

54. Summary of Decisions:

- Clerk to contact Southend Council to seek assistance regarding possible Risk Assessment for pond.
- Clerk to report tree encroachment onto highways to ECC.
- Parks budget for 2019-20 approved for recommendation to the Finance Committee.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8:18pm.

Chairman