

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday 16th September 2019 at 7:30pm
in the Committee Room, The Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford.**

Cllrs present: Chairman S May, R Gardner, Ms A Rees-Jones, T Manyika, R Patient, M Strubel & Mrs M Weir.

Also present: Cllr K Stubbings & Mr Lamb

23. Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs N Shaw.
Members received the apologies tendered.

24. Declarations of any:

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

on any matter on the agenda for 16th September 2019:

No disclosures were made.

25. Public Forum:

One member of the public was present until 7:42pm.

26. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st July 2019 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.

27. Action List Update – September 2019:

- 27.1 It was noted there had been no change in condition of the Elizabeth Close Playground wall.
- 27.2 Members noted there had been no updates regarding the outstanding issues with the pond and approaches from KeyMed. Cllr R Patient enquired if it was necessary to keep the item on the Action Update List and it was agreed to keep it on as work on the pond was an ongoing matter and information could still therefore be relevant.
- 27.3 Members noted Rochford District Council (RDC) had drawn up a letter confirming transfer of the title of the triangular piece of land had taken place and no longer formed part of Magnolia Nature Reserve. The letter had been signed by both RDC and HPC and had been filed with the lease documents. Members agreed to close the item.
- 27.4 There were no further updates regarding the boggy area surrounding Spencers Park. Members agreed to close the item. The Clerk requested that if the matter reoccurred during the bad weather that Members inform her so she could notify RDC who were responsible for rectifying the problem.

- 27.5 Members noted the tree works were on hold and that cutting season was coming to an end; only low priority works were outstanding. The Clerk informed Members some work on the bridle path would also be taking place.
 - 27.6 The resident who had offered to assist with Magnolia Park had been informed that Members had decided not to take up their offer. Members agreed to close the item.
 - 27.7 Members were referred to Agenda item 7 (Minute 29).
 - 27.8 There were no updates regarding the clearing of Spencers Brook and the proposal for a new wildlife board.
 - 27.9 New bins were being installed in Glencroft Open Space from the 17th September 2019; two at the top gate entrance and one larger bin at the bottom end. Members noted the contractor was also installing bins in Magnolia and had started work that day.
 - 27.10 The Clerk had referred the enquiry regarding Glencroft Open Space's top gate access to the RDC Legal Team and was awaiting a response. The Clerk informed Members the resident had also not responded to her recent correspondence.
- Members noted and **accepted** the Action Update List and **agreed** to the removal of the closed items.

28. Financial Report – August 2019:

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

29. Residents' 'Dog Poop' Container Initiative in Magnolia Park; verbal update by Mr Warren Lamb (Zachery's and Josh's father):

Chairman S May welcomed Mr Lamb to the meeting. Mr Lamb informed Members the project had launched on the 7th July 2019 and that since then his sons had been over to Magnolia Park almost every day. He estimated that around 1100 bags had been dispensed and his sons would fill up the cannisters with around 60 bags each time. He informed Members that he had witnessed people using the cannisters and felt the project was working as it should. A Facebook page had been set up and it had generated 13 followers and they had also linked in to the 'Caring about Rochford' Facebook page. It was noted there would be a change on one of the notices to re-word one of the terms in relation to supporting the Dogs Trust Charity. Mr Lamb proposed that funding be received from the Parish Council for the purchase of more bags and the Clerk informed him that a written request would need to be submitted and that could be passed to the Finance Committee for consideration. Mr Lamb further explained that he hoped the initiative would grow and that more businesses would be involved to assist.

Cllr R Gardner enquired if the bins were being emptied and were not overflowing given the increase in dog bags. The Clerk confirmed there had been a few issues with the contractors not emptying the bins over the summer but since then there had been no complaints. Cllr T Manyika enquired about the name of the Facebook page which was called "Bag it and Bin it – Hawkwell".

Cllr Mrs M Weir noted that during her litter picking at Magnolia Park there were often a lot of Dogs Trust unused bags which had been thrown around the park. She enquired if it would be worth putting them back in the cannister as she had been putting them in the rubbish. Chairman S May suggested the bags be returned to the cannisters if possible. Cllr M Strubel suggested contacting the local pet shops and veterinarians to see if there would be an opportunity for the project to seek donations that way. Chairman S May explained that Members would continue to monitor the project and if successful there

may be an opportunity to roll it out to the other parks/open spaces. The Clerk enquired about the change of text on the leaflets/signs and Mr Lamb informed her he would do a simple swap over.

Mr Lamb left the Chamber at 7:42pm.

30. Magnolia Park Update:

a) Criminal damage in Magnolia Children's Playground; Cockerel 'Rock 'n Roll' Springy destroyed and damage to safety surfacing:

Members noted the information provided by the Clerk and that the piece which had been destroyed was aimed at 2-5yr olds. Members were appalled by the criminal damage. Cllr M Strubel suggested writing to the local schools to spread the word about the impact of such damage and the financial implications of using public money when having to replace vandalised items. Members raised concerns that any publicity about the arson could encourage more vandalism. Cllr R Patient gave his view that any form of written correspondence would be disregarded by the schools and that an active approach of visiting the schools would be more effective. Cllr Ms A Rees-Jones pointed out approaching the schools would only hit one demographic and it was unclear who carried out the arson attack. It was noted there had been reports of a gang of youths hanging around the playground at the time of the arson, but nothing further had been determined or proven. Members agreed it was a good idea to increase awareness and pass on the message that vandalism would not be tolerated. Cllr M Strubel suggested installing CCTV to cover the playground but it was noted that Members had looked at this historically and had decided not to pursue the idea given the complications and issues surrounding filming children.

The Clerk had issued information on a similar alternative for the Springy, but Members agreed it was not as functional and appealing as the original model which allowed multiple children to ride it. The Clerk asked if Members would want to pursue an insurance claim and that the excess to pay would be £250. Members enquired if such a claim would affect their future premium, but it was unclear if one claim would affect the future premiums. The Clerk had also been in contact with Wicksteed, the Springy providers, and it was noted there was a new Sales Representative in post who may be able to offer advice/guidance on a replacement piece. It was agreed further research was required along with a site visit; Cllrs Ms A Rees-Jones, S May, M Strubel, T Manyika and Mrs M Weir would visit the site in due course.

b) Repairs required to safety surfacing under the swings in Magnolia Playground:

Members agreed it would be prudent to replace the safety surfacing during the other works discussed previously. It was noted that the insurance would not extend to cover the repair as the safety surfacing had deteriorated through age and had not been subject to vandalism. The Clerk would source quotes accordingly.

Damage to height barrier at entrance to Magnolia Park: height barrier being repaired after it was hit by an unknown vehicle.

The Clerk informed Members the barrier should be returned that week and that the sign needed to be re-attached. It was noted that despite the damage, the barrier was still functioning.

c) A new bin is being installed near the Teen Shelter on the field and the bin near the Lincoln Road entrance is being replaced:

Members noted the information.

31. Elizabeth Close Playground:

a) Safety surfacing repairs required on Springy Bike area:

The Clerk explained that the actual surface was fine, but it was just the edging that had come away from the surround. It was agreed the repairs should be carried out as soon as possible.

b) Bare patch of grass has revealed a small concrete area:

Members noted the information. The Clerk informed Members it had been a surprise to see the exposed concrete and wondered if an animal had dug away to expose it. It was agreed the Clerk would source a contractor to remove the concrete and flatten the area accordingly.

32. Consider the Parks Committee's responsibilities against the Strategic Plan objectives:

Chairman S May went through the points highlighted in the Strategic Plan that directly related to the works/responsibilities of the Parks Committee and the following was noted:

Strategic Plan point	Comments
2: - By working to minimise the detrimental effects of litter in the parks/open spaces and public areas by having a maintenance regime for emptying and maintaining our bins.	The Clerk confirmed this was in place.
4: - By maintaining the Nature Reserve at Magnolia Park and by working with the various authorities and agencies to improve the natural environment and sustain bio-diversity; - By developing the facilities at Magnolia Park for the use of Parishioners; - By maintaining Spencer's Park and Glencroft Open Space; - By maintaining and improving the children's play spaces, including replacing play equipment on a rolling basis; - By ensuring a safe and secure environment regarding our play spaces, by adhering to current Health & Safety regulations and inspection regimes.	It was noted Council had worked with Natural England, The Environmental Agency and the Essex Amphibian Society. Chairman S May noted the Magnolia Playground had a new gate installed to allow better, safer access following the relocation of the Adult Gym in response to the insurance claim made. It was also noted that the play spaces were regularly checked.
5: - By ensuring that Chairs of Committees take an active role in keeping under review and driving forward the strategic objectives that relate to their Committee, to assist Council to meet its overall mission;	Chairman S May noted things were regularly reviewed and cited examples such as the upgraded Magnolia playground and the investigation into bore holes for the pond. It was agreed that positive action was taken when necessary. Cllr R Patient noted that he felt everything was run extremely well with very little staff.

The Clerk informed Members they would need to provide a suitable report for the information to be relayed to Full Council.

33. Summary of Decisions:

- Mr Lamb's request for funding – advised to refer the matter to the Finance Committee and submit a written request.
- Cllrs Ms A Rees-Jones, S May, M Strubel, T Manyika and Mrs M Weir to visit Magnolia Playground to consider options for replacement Springy following arson attack.
- Clerk to source quotes for new safety surfacing for Magnolia Playground swings.
- Safety surfacing repairs and removal of concrete to be carried out at Elizabeth Close Playground.
- Points addressed in relation to Strategic Plan; Members to consider ways/report to provide to Full Council.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8:09pm.

Chairman