

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday 9th March 2020 at 7:48pm
in the Committee Room, The Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford.**

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

47. Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

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

48. Declarations of any:

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

on any matter on the agenda for 9th March 2020:

No disclosures were made.

49. Public Forum:

No members of the public were present.

50. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 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.

51. Action List Update – March 2020:

- 51.1 It was noted there had been no change in condition of the Elizabeth Close Playground wall and there was a budget provision in the Ear Marked Reserves (EMR) if any work was required.
- 51.2 There had been no updates regarding the approach from KeyMed. The Clerk had contacted Stillwater Management would be undertaking some silt remediation works on the pond during March. Duckweed treatment would also possibly be needed in the summer. Members noted the pond was full following a large spell of rain. Members agreed that the KeyMed reference was no longer relevant and the item should be altered to 'pond maintenance'.
- 51.3 Members noted some tree works had been undertaken on the Willows near the bridle path in Magnolia. All outstanding works were low priority with not much more to do.
- 51.4 The Clerk had referred the enquiry regarding Glencroft Open Space's top gate access to the RDC Legal Team who were looking into the possibility of claiming the right/easement over the access by the 'prescription method'. (Where the landowner exercises a right over a neighbour land having had access over a certain period and whereby the neighbour loses their right to object.) It was expected RDC would register the right on this basis. The Clerk informed Members she was waiting to hear back from RDC regarding this matter.
- 51.5 Members were referred to Agenda item 7 (Minute 53).

- 51.6 The Clerk was looking at obtaining suitable chippings to lay on the boggy areas alongside the pond in Magnolia. Members who had visited the pond recently had noticed it was very muddy. The Clerk would monitor the situation.
- 51.7 The consideration of resurrecting the 'Friends of Magnolia' had been referred to the Community Engagement Working Group (CEWG) and had been extended to consider all parks. Cllr Mrs M Weir expressed her view there were many jobs a voluntary group could carry out.
- 51.8 The Clerk had written a letter of support for RDC regarding sourcing additional funding for the Hawkwell Common Playground upgrade. RDC had informed the Clerk funding had now been obtained and the playground refurbishment would go ahead early in the new financial year at an estimated cost of £55k. Cllr R Patient enquired if any publicity could be gained from offering support to RDC. The Clerk pointed out that the playground was not HPC's and that the refurbishment had been on RDC's radar for some time.

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

52. Financial Report – February 2020:

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

53. Magnolia Park Update:

a) New piece of play equipment being installed week commencing 2nd March 2020:

The Clerk handed out a picture of the installation to Members. The Clerk explained that there had been some problems during the installation despite the works starting well. The regular contractor who had been working at Magnolia during the installation had tested the piece just before the safety fencing was due to be taken down and had found that it was making a grinding sound and that a small hairline crack had formed at the rear of the piece. An independent safety inspector had also assessed the piece and noted the same issues. The Clerk had liaised with the Installation Manager at Wicksteed who assured her that a team would go out and rectify the problem and would also repair the damage caused at no cost to Council, before the safety fencing would be removed. The repairs had been carried out on Friday 6th March 2020. The Clerk's assistant carried out a site visit following the repair works in the absence of the Clerk and had confirmed the piece was operational and the repair had been carried out. The independent safety inspector had also returned to the site and deemed the piece to be operational and fit for use. The Clerk noted her disappointment with the lack of communication from Wicksteed during the installation and that she had complained accordingly. Wicksteed had agreed to cover the cost of the second safety inspection. Members noted there had not been any feedback from the public yet.

b) Further quotes for repairs required to safety surfacing under the swings in Magnolia playground required:

The Clerk would obtain new quotes in new financial year. Cllr R Patient enquired if the ex-Groundsman used to inspect the playgrounds. The Clerk reminded Members that weekly inspections had never been carried out by the Groundsman and that the checks were carried out by Rochford District Council (RDC).

c) 50m of post and rail fencing been replaced along boundary with Lincoln Road Footpath:

Repairs had been carried out as the previous fence had started to fall over due to the posts which had become rotten.

54. Annual Playground Inspection Reports:

a) Minor issue with Adult Gym Horseback Rider:

Members noted the reports. Members raised surprise that some of the equipment appeared to fail to meet the standards set out in the inspection reports. The Clerk reminded Members that this often was a finding on the reports and that at the time of installation all pieces met the relevant standards but that those standards frequently changed during time. Cllr R Gardner pointed out that Brexit would mean that the standards would be likely to revert to British Standards so more changes would be afoot. Members noted the report highlighted only minor issues. Cllr Ms A Rees-Jones referred to the Elizabeth Close report (page 11) and the reference to fire damage. The Clerk was not aware of any such damage and would carry out a site visit to see the level of damage reported. The Clerk pointed out that issue had not been flagged by RDC who carried out the weekly inspections at Elizabeth Close. The Clerk reported that the Adult Gym Horseback Rider had suspected loose bearings and the work to repair the piece was due to be completed by a contractor. Screw cap covers would also be replaced on the piece as several had been removed/had gone missing.

55. Councillor Training: no parks related training on EALC Training Calendar:

Members noted there was no relevant training.

56. Summary of Decisions:

- Stillwater to carry out silt remediation works on the pond.
- New Rocking Horse successfully installed in Magnolia Playground.
- Clerk to obtain further quotes for safety surfacing in new financial year.
- 50m of post and rail fencing repaired within Magnolia Nature Reserve.
- Annual Playground inspection reports completed – no major issues arising. Minor issue with Adult Gym Horse back rider with repairs underway. Clerk to visit Elizabeth Close to investigate reports of fire damage on one of the pieces.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8:06pm.

Chairman