

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday 24th May 2021 at 7:30pm
in the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

Cllrs present: Mrs L Dalby, R Gardner, S May, R Patient, M Strubel & Mrs M Weir.

Also present: Three members of the public.

P 21/1 To elect a Chairman for the civic year 2021-22:

Cllr R Patient nominated Cllr S May as Chairman which was seconded by Cllr Mrs M Weir. There were no further nominations and Cllr S May was elected Chairman.

P 21/2 To elect a Vice-Chairman for the civic year 2021-22:

Cllr R Patient nominated Cllr Ms M Weir as Vice Chairman which was seconded by Cllr S May. Cllr R Gardner nominated Cllr M Strubel, but no Member seconded the nomination. Cllr Ms M Weir was elected Vice Chairman by a majority vote.

P 21/3 Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs E Gadsdon. Members received the apologies tendered.

P 21/4 Declarations of any:

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

on any matter on the agenda for 24th May 2021:

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.

P 21/5 Public Forum:

Three members of the public were present.

P 21/6 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2021 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.

P 21/7 Action List Update – May 2021:

- 21/7.1** The Clerk would continue to monitor the wall at Elizabeth Close and advise Members of any changes. It was agreed to remove the item from the list.
- 21/7.2** Most of the work derived from the tree surveys had been carried out; new tree surveys were due to be organised.
- 21/7.3** Members noted the matter relating to the legalities surrounding the entrance of Glencroft Open Space be kept under review.
- 21/7.4** Works to address the boggy area by the pond in Magnolia Nature Reserve had been completed. Members agreed to close the item.
- 21/7.5** The resurrection of 'Friends of Magnolia' had been put on hold until the end of the Coronavirus restrictions. When ready, the CEWG would consider it further.

21/7.6 New equipment had been purchased and old redundant equipment had been traded in accordingly. It was agreed to close the item.
It was **resolved** that Members noted and accepted the Action Update List and agreed to the removal of the closed items.

P 21/8 Financial Report – April 2021:

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

P 21/9 Correspondence from resident(s) regarding bench in memory of a resident:

Members noted the correspondence received and the Chairman relayed Council's decision to decline the bench in October 2020. Members noted that there had been substantial support from the public who had raised funds for the bench and that Council had not historically ever received such a level of community support. A Member enquired how Council would deal with potential future requests if approved and a precedent set; Members did not address the issue raised; a Member commented that memorial requests were rare.

Cllr R Patient moved that the request for a memorial bench in Magnolia park/Nature Reserve be permitted which was seconded by Cllr Mrs Weir. Following a vote, it was **resolved** that the memorial bench be permitted. The resident(s) involved would liaise with the Clerk to progress the matter. The members of public present expressed their gratitude.

P 21/10 Consideration for tracker for new chipper:

Members enquired what a tracker was, and the Clerk gave explanation. It was noted the tracker would be a useful addition should the recently purchased chipper be stolen. Members enquired who would monitor the tracker; that level of detail would be researched should approval be granted.

It was **resolved** that Members agree in principle to purchase a tracker for the new chipper; the Clerk would provide more information at the next meeting.

P 21/11 Height Barrier incident: consideration of insurance claim:

Members noted the damage to the height barrier in the photos provided by the Clerk and that a new structure was required. It was estimated costs for the structure would be around £3k. Members discussed historic damage to the barrier and most damage appeared to be accidental with large vehicles using the entrance area to manoeuvre when they were unable to pass under the height-restricted railway bridge. Members agreed it would be beneficial to reposition the barrier, setting it back from the entrance gate so any future large vehicles using the space to manoeuvre would be less likely to hit it. There was discussion around adding warning signs, but it was agreed there was no suitable location. A Member also suggested contacting Essex County Council (ECC) to assist with signage, but the Clerk reminded Members those requests would need to go via the Local Highways Panel (LHP) and that would take considerable time with no guarantee of success. Members also commented on the design of the structure and suggested one length with reinforcement bars opposed to having two sections bolted together. Members discussed making an insurance claim and the Clerk reminded Members Council had made a fairly substantial claim for the Magnolia playground rocking horse and that further claims may impact premiums.

It was **resolved** that Council pursue an insurance claim; the Clerk would progress the matter.

P 21/12 Criminal damage – Damage to park signs in March-May:

Members noted the reports of damage. Members surmised whether damage had occurred by children/youths who had been off school during the lockdown, but the Clerk pointed out the damage had occurred since the children had returned to school. A Member reported there also had been an arson attack at the back of Hogarth Way, backing onto the Reserve. It was

noted the Clerk had ordered replacement signs and that they would be re-installed in due course.

P 21/13 Surfaced/exposed concrete and metal in Magnolia field:

The Clerk informed Members a company had been engaged to dig up and remove the concrete and metal as it posed a hazard. Members suggested it was old football posts.

P 21/14 Consideration for planting more trees in Council's parks and open spaces:

Members thought it was a wonderful idea to plant more trees. It was noted any planting would need to consider the general work carried out by the contractor(s) in maintaining the open spaces and parks.

The Clerk advised Members it would be important to look at all potential sites for planting, find a suitable supplier of trees, ensure any plantings are appropriate by having native species. The Clerk also advised Members that external resources for planting would need to be arranged and managed accordingly.

It was **resolved** that Members take action to plant more trees in Council's parks and open spaces.

P 21/15 The Parish Council will resolve to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting due to confidential business under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 s.1(2)

It was **resolved** to exclude the press and public. The Chairman thanked the public for their attendance before they left the Chamber.

P 21/16 Litter/dog waste bin emptying contract – report attached:

Members noted the report provided by the Clerk and were reminded of the circumstances that had led to having to seek a new contractor for the litter/dog waste bins. Members briefly discussed the options available, noting there were very few that offered the service required. Cllr R Patient moved that Council approve 'option one' which was seconded by Cllr R Gardner and unanimously agreed by Members. It was therefore **resolved** that Council engage TBS Hygiene for the litter/dog waste bin emptying service for the remainder of the year.

P 21/17 Summary of Decisions:

- Cllr S May elected as Chairman for 2021-22.
- Cllr Mrs M Weir elected as Vice Chair for 2021-22.
- A request for a memorial bench in Magnolia park/Nature Reserve approved; Clerk and Members to liaise with person(s) involved to find suitable site.
- New tracker for chipper agreed in principle; Clerk to provide more information at next meeting.
- Height barrier insurance claim to go ahead; barrier to be set back from original location.
- Criminal damage noted; new signs to be re-installed.
- Concrete and metal to be removed by contractor from Magnolia field.
- Members agreed to plant more trees; Members to progress action.
- Members agreed to engage TBS Hygiene Ltd for litter/dog waste bin contract, commencing June 2021.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8:08pm.

Chairman