

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday 14th February 2022 at 7:13pm
in the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

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

P 22/53 Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs E Gadsdon, R Patient and M Strubel.

P 22/54 Declarations of any:

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

on any matter on the agenda for 14th February 2022:

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 22/55 Public Forum:

No members of the public were present.

P 22/56 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th November 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 22/57 Action List Update – February 2022:

22/57.1 The condition of the wall in Elizabeth Close playground had not changed.

22/57.2 Members were referred to Agenda item 9 (Minute P 22/61).

22/57.3 There were no updates from the Friends of Hawkwell Parks (FoHP).

22/57.4 The Clerk was investigating the use of 'smart water' for the new chipper. Cllr R Gardner reported that all defibrillators were marked with smart water.

22/57.5 Members were referred to Agenda item 8 (Minute P 22/60).

22/57.6 A badger hole had appeared in the Magnolia Bridlepath and the issue had been reported to Essex County Council Public Rights of Way (ECC PRoW). Since the emergence of the first hole another hole close to it had also been discovered. There was a new PRoW Officer in post who had met with the local badger group and had contacted Natural England (NE). NE had informed the PRoW that they did not permit the use of another road plate on the new hole given it may cause issues for the badgers and that specialised works would have to be carried out under an extended licence; the PRoW Officer was in the process of filling out the necessary paperwork for that, but in the meantime had replaced the road plate HPC had installed with one of their own; it was noted HPC had acted on ECC's behalf given the initial hole had posed an immediate threat to the bridlepath users and ECC had not acted. It was noted the road plate installed by ECC was considerably smaller and less robust than the one HPC had put in place and the Clerk raised concerns about its suitability.

22/57.7 Initial enquiries about how to remove the goldfish from the pond had shown that licences would be required from the Environment Agency, along with the possibility of a Conservation Licence due to the presence of Great Crested Newts. A specialist contractor and a 're-homing' site would need to be considered as part of any plan to remove the fish. Members discussed the logistical difficulties regarding removing the fish and noted that the

Great Crested Newts would be returning to the pond at the end of March/early April which left limited time for the goldfish to be removed. Members further discussed ways to deter people from adding more fish to the pond, but it was agreed too much attention to the issue may encourage some people to illegally dump more fish in the pond. It was agreed that the Clerk would investigate the matter further and Cllr R Gardner would make enquires with a local fishing shop to see if they could assist in resolving the matter.

22/57.8 Members were referred to Agenda item 7 (Minute P 22/59).

22/57.9 The annual and weekly playground inspections had not identified the gullies in Magnolia Park needing any work despite Members bringing the matter to the Committee's attention as a potential hazard. It was agreed the Clerk would revisit the matter and arrange for any works if required.

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

P 22/58 Financial Report – January 2022:

The Clerk reported that the Parks Committee budget was 72% spent at month 10. There would be bridlepath and tree works in the coming months, along with further post work on the height barrier and the Magnolia car park entrance way would need the tarmac repairing. There were no questions and Members **accepted** the Financial Report.

P 22/59 Instigate registering 'Church Strip' with Land Registry as belonging to Hawkwell Parish Council:

The Clerk had used a specialised company to carry out the searches for the land by the Church and it had been confirmed the land was unregistered. Cllr Mrs M Weir proposed that HPC register the land as its own which was seconded by Cllr R Gardner with all in agreement. The Clerk would carry out the necessary work to get the land registered and informed Members legal assistance may need to be sought. A Member suggested Council's insurance company may be able to offer legal advice in relation to the registration of land.

P 22/60 Magnolia Park Nature Reserve Working Group (MPNRWG) - Notes of the meetings held on the 23rd October 2021 and 7th February 2022:

Members of the MPNRWG discussed the idea of painting a section of wall within Magnolia Park with a hand painted mural and the proposed artwork was shown to Members. A discussion around painting materials took place and all Members agreed it was a good idea and would improve the park. It was noted the group also intended to plant trees for the Queen's Green Canopy and the official planting date was the 11th March 2022. All Members of the MPNRWG would visit several garden centres to assess the prices of Magnolia trees. The Clerk circulated information on specialised plaques to mark the Queen's Jubilee and Members agreed that a wall plaque for the wall which would have a mural painted on it would be a good idea; the Clerk would make the order accordingly.

Members discussed the flower bed which would be in front of the mural wall and it was agreed a strip of earth would need to be left to deter anything from re-growing up the wall noting works had been carried out in the past to remove growth from the wall. Members agreed the first task would be to rotavate the patch of land they intended to have as a bed and then to paint the wall in a suitable background colour.

P 22/61 Completion of Tree Survey for Council's Parks and Open Spaces:

Members noted there were only four trees which needed to be attended to within four weeks; three were in the process of being sorted by the regular contractor and one would need a specialised tree contractor who was due to make a site visit over the coming days. Members noted the high quality of the report and extensive information supplied.

P 22/62 Summary of Decisions:

- Clerk to carry on investigations into how to remove the fish from Magnolia Pond; Cllr R Gardner to assist by asking a local fish shop for advice.
- Clerk to carry out the necessary work to register Church Strip; legal advice/assistance to be sought if necessary.
- Clerk to reassess drainage gullies for Magnolia Park playground and arrange for any works should they be necessary.
- MPNRWG to start work on the Queen's Jubilee Garden; all Members to visit garden centres to investigate prices of Magnolia trees ready for planting on 11th March 2022. Bed to be rotavated and wall to be painted in a background colour. Clerk to order specialised plaque for the wall.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7:50pm.

DRAFT