

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday 10th October 2022 at 7:40pm
in the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

Cllrs present: Chairman S May, Mrs L Dalby, R Gardner, A MacPherson, Mrs L Massey, R Patient, Mrs J Strubel, M Strubel, M Vallance, Mrs M Weir.

P 22/29 Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:
No apologies were received.

P 22/30 Declarations of any:
a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;
b) Other Pecuniary Interest; or
c) Non-Pecuniary Interest
on any matter on the agenda for 10th October 2022:
Cllr Mrs L Dalby made a non-pecuniary interest declaration as a member of the Essex Wildlife Trust in respect of agenda item 7. (Minute P 22/35). Cllr R Gardner also made the same declaration along with his membership to the United Nations Association of Climate and Oceans.
Members noted the declarations made.

P 22/31 Public Forum:
There were no members of the public present.

P 22/32 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th July 2022 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 22/33 Action List Update – October 2022:

- 22/33.1** There had been no changes to the wall at Elizabeth Close. It was agreed to close the item, but the Clerk would continue to monitor the situation.
- 22/33.2** The high priority tree survey works had been carried out; other works were being carried out throughout the summer. Cllr Mrs M Weir requested another copy of the tree survey.
- 22/33.3** There were no updates regarding Friends of Hawkwell Parks (FoHP).
- 22/33.4** The Smart Water had been applied to Council's equipment at the store and the registration procedure had been completed. It was agreed to close the item.
- 22/33.5** There were no updates regarding the badger hole along the bridlepath within Magnolia Park Nature Reserve. A large crack had also appeared in the bridlepath and this had been relayed to Essex PRoW; it had been reported repairs would be underway.
- 22/33.6** The solicitors had indicated the completion for the adverse possession of Church Strip could occur in September 2023. Discussions around the cost of the solicitor were had and the Clerk reminded Members they had agreed costs, these had been paid and that a reputable company had been used. It was noted the matter was now in Land Registry's hands.
- 22/33.7** The Ecologist had confirmed works for the overwintering pond would commence week beginning 10th October 2022. A Member raised concerns about ducks posing a problem to the Great Crested Newts (GCN), but it was agreed only so much could be done to protect the GCN.

- 22/33.8 The new Glencroft gate had been installed. Members were pleased with how it looked. It was agreed to close the item.
- 22/33.9 The new adult gym equipment had started to be installed that day. The Clerk was very disappointed with the poor communication from Wicksteed, noting she had not received any notification they would be starting work that morning. Fortunately, the regular contractor and resident who opened Magnolia Park gate were able to assist the installers with access.
- 22/33.10 The new basketball post/combined goal would also be installed along with the adult gym equipment.
- 22/33.11 A new accessible roundabout had been ordered for Elizabeth Close playground and was due to be installed in October. The Clerk had chased Sutcliffe Play for an installation update but had still not heard back.
- 22/33.12 Members organised a visit to Magnolia Park for Saturday 29th October 2022 at 10am.
- 22/33.13 The swing replacement had been installed at Magnolia Park. Council had paid for the swing, despite those responsible indicating they would pay for the damage caused. Members enquired if the costs could be recovered via an insurance claim, but the Clerk reported the excess exceeded the cost of the swing. Members were disappointed by the outcome. It was **resolved** that Members noted and accepted the Action Update List and agreed to the removal of the closed items.

P 22/34 Financial Report – September 2022:

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

P 22/35 Cllr Mrs L Dalby – consideration for Wilder Villages Scheme:

It was noted there were limitations on what Council could do given it only had jurisdiction over its parks and open spaces. A Member enquired about the content of the Essex Wildlife material, noting snakes and some birds were not mentioned in one aspect of the material; the Member could contact Essex Wildlife Trust to enquire about this. A Member felt it would be good to approach bird watchers within Magnolia Park to ask what they were looking for; Cllr M Strubel would make that approach. Cllr S May would also bring the scheme to the RHALC's attention to see if other Parish Councils were signed up to it or considering it. Cllr M Vallance proposed Council sign up to the Wilder Villages Scheme which was seconded by Cllr S May with all in agreement.

P 22/36 Magnolia Park:

- a) **Car park – consider removing a car park space by the field gate for easier access into the recreation field:** The Clerk explained that there had been some issues with the fire crew accessing the park in the summer. It was agreed a car park space be removed by adding yellow chevron markings indicating no parking to allow better access.
- b) **Bin near teen shelter pulled put and dumped in hedge:** Members noted the matter had been dealt with that day and the bin had been re-installed. It was further noted further costs would be incurred under the criminal damage budget.

P 22/37 Glencroft Open Space – ground cracks:

- a) **Solution – short term filled with chippings; long term – create wild island over the area:** Members noted the extreme dry and hot conditions over the summer had caused the cracks.
- b) **Footpath cracks – fill with chippings/re-bond the path:** The Clerk would organise works to re-bond the path with a suitable company.

P 22/38 Elizabeth Close playground:

The Clerk would find a suitable company to repair the lifting safety surfacing around the springy tractor.

P 22/39 Consider items for Parks budgeting round in November 2022:

Members felt it would be prudent to seek advice from the regular contractor about possible new equipment for the parks and open spaces. Members considered monies for pond planting works, but the Clerk pointed out the water levels were so extreme that marginal planting was very difficult. Members enquired about the work truck and it was noted it was around 10 years old but had very low mileage and was running well. Members also discussed the office, noting the gangplank needed repairing/replacing and that a new door was required, but it was noted that did not fall under the Parks budget.

A Member raised an issue with some horses now galloping across Magnolia recreation field and asked for advice with how to deal with the matter. It was agreed Members would look at the access routes onto the field on the site visit arranged for 29th October 2022 at 10am. It was hoped the regular contractor would join Members on the visit to show them the potential breaches in the hedging.

P 22/40 Summary of Decisions:

- Clerk to send another copy of the tree survey to Cllr Mrs M Weir.
- Site visit to Magnolia Park organised for 29th October 2022 at 10am. Issue of breaches in hedging around recreation field to be addressed on visit along with other matters.
- Council to sign up to Wilder Villages Scheme. Cllr M Strubel to approach bird watchers in Magnolia for information. Cllr S May to bring matter to RHALC to see if other Parish Councils are signed up/considering it.
- Car park space to be removed and replaced with no parking yellow chevrons to allow better access.
- Clerk to find suitable company to re-bond the path in Glencroft Open Space.
- Clerk to find suitable company to repair safety surfacing around springy tractor in Elizabeth Close playground.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8:22pm.

Chairman