

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday 14th November 2022 at 7:30pm
in the Committee Room, Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford**

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

P 22/41 Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:
No apologies were received.

P 22/42 Declarations of any:
a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;
b) Other Pecuniary Interest; or
c) Non-Pecuniary Interest
on any matter on the agenda for 14th November 2022:
Cllr Mrs L Massey made a declaration in relation to agenda item 7 (Minute P 22/47) due to being the spouse of Council's regular contractor; Cllr Mrs L Massey withdrew from discussion and decision accordingly a that agenda item.
Cllrs Mrs L Dalby and R Gardner declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to agenda item 5 (Minute P 22/45.10) by virtue of being members of the Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT).
Members **accepted** the declarations made.

P 22/43 Public Forum:
There were no members of the public present.

P 22/44 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 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 22/45 Action List Update – November 2022:

- 22/45.1** There were no updates regarding Council's tree survey.
- 22/45.2** There were no updates regarding Friends of Hawkwell Parks (FoHP).
- 22/45.3** Another hole had appeared in Magnolia Nature Reserve's bridlepath, close to the existing hole which had temporarily been covered by a road plate. The new hole had been reported to Essex County Council Public Rights of Way (ECC PRoW). The Clerk had spoken to the ECC ProW Officer and had been assured the appropriate team would get to it that week.
- 22/45.4** Members were reminded that Council's adverse possession of Church Strip could take up to a year; the Clerk reminded Members the delay was due to Land Registry processing the request and that the solicitor had carried out all the necessary duties.
- 22/45.5** The Ecologist had carried out works for the overwintering pond in Magnolia Nature Reserve. A fence had been erected and the Ecologist was replanting some plants within the pond area. It was hoped the pond would start to fill with water over the Autumn/Winter period.
- 22/45.6** The new adult gym equipment had been installed. Members agreed to close the item.
- 22/45.7** The new basketball post/goal had been installed. Members agreed to close the item.
- 22/45.8** A new accessible roundabout had been installed in Elizabeth Close playground. The Clerk was awaiting a response from the installers about works to the safety surfacing given some unexpected gaps had been left after installation. The Clerk informed Members the annual safety inspections were due soon and therefore the issue may be picked up.

- 22/45.9** Members had visited Magnolia Park to look at the perimeter wall with the view to add more artwork. They had also looked at the new overwintering pond, along with various hedging and where there were breaches in the hedging. Thanks were given to the regular contractor who had accompanied Members on the visit and had shown them various areas of the park and Nature Reserve. The group would need to present their ideas to the Parks Committee at their next meeting for review.
- 22/45.10** A Council had been signed up to the Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT) Wilder Villages Scheme. A representative from the EWT wanted to organise a visit with Members and had proposed several dates which Members would need to agree on. The Clerk requested Members email in with their preference for dates. A Member had informed RHALC about Council's decision to join the scheme and it appeared no other local Parish Councils had joined the scheme.
- 22/45.11** A quote was due for the removal of a car parking space by adding yellow chevrons to denote no parking in Magnolia car park. A Member enquired if there were any disabled parking spaces and the Chairman confirmed there was one near the compound.
- 22/45.12** The contractor who had undertaken the original works in Glencroft Open Space had assessed the footpath cracks and recommended the matter be reviewed after winter to see if there would be any natural improvements.
- 22/45.13** The Clerk had a company about safety surfacing repairs in Elizabeth Close playground. It was **resolved** that Members noted and accepted the Action Update List and agreed to the removal of the closed items.

P 22/46 Financial Report – October 2022:

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

P 22/47 Consideration of new capital equipment purchase:

The Clerk's report was read out by the Chairman. Members discussed the equipment options and noted the Clerk had been in consultation with the regular contractor for advice on the most appropriate equipment needed. Members further noted the use of battery powered machinery would be in line with trying to find an eco-friendly way of working.

Cllr M Vallance moved that options 1 and 2 (Stihl MSA chainsaw and Stihl long-reach hedge cutter) be purchased using the capital purchase budget. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs J Strubel with all Members in agreement.

Cllr R Patient moved that an offset verge cutter be purchased (either DW Tomlin or Sicma, as set out in the quotes received) using the Asset Renewal Reserve Fund (ARRF); advice about which specific model would be sought from the regular contractor. This was seconded by Cllr S May with all Members in agreement.

A Member suggested Council's insurance would need to be updated but the Clerk explained the asset register would be updated and the insurer informed at the next annual assessment.

P 22/48 Agree Parks Budget 2023-24 (bid 1) for recommendation to the Finance Committee:

A Member complimented the Clerk on her budgeting noting the Parks budget proposal had increased only by £375/. The Clerk noted it was important to bear in mind the financial crisis and the impact on parishioners. A Member enquired if District Council's bin contractor may be an option for emptying Council's bins; the Clerk could investigate the cost when the contract came to an end.

A Member enquired if the equipment which now would be redundant following the purchased at agenda item 7 (FC 22-47) could be sold on or could be sold for scrap; the Clerk would investigate/

The Parks Committee budget for 2023-24 of £60,875 was agreed by Members and passed to the Finance Committee for recommendation.

P 22/49 Summary of Decisions:

- Members who visited Magnolia Park to present ideas/proposals to Parks Committee for review at the next meeting.
- Members to email Clerk with date preferences regarding a meeting with EWT Representative.
- New capital equipment purchases approved – 1 chainsaw, 1 long-reach hedge cutter and an offset verge cutter to be purchased.
- Parks budget for 2023-24 of £60,875 approved for recommendation to Finance Committee.
- Clerk to investigate selling old redundant equipment for either re-sale or scrap.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8:03pm.

Chairman