

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday 24th July 2023 at 8:10pm
in the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

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

P 23/23 Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Apologies were received from Cllr R Gardner.

P 23/24 Declarations of any:

a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;

b) Other Registrable Interest; or

on any matter on the agenda for 24th July 2023:

Cllr Mrs L Massey declared an interest by virtue that her spouse was a regular contractor for Council.

Members **accepted** the declarations made.

P 23/25 Public Forum:

One member of the public was present.

P 23/26 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2023 and to approve the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting:

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 12th June 2023 were **approved** as a correct record and Members approved the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.

P 23/27 Financial Report – June 2023:

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

P 23/28 Action List Update – July 2023:

23/28.1 Members agreed to close the item on Friends of Hawkwell Parks (FoHP).

23/28.2 An extension for the diversionary route on the bridlepath in Magnolia Nature Reserve had been granted and the Essex County Council Public Rights of Way (ECC PRoW) Officer would be erecting new signs. Another hole had formed on the bridlepath and the ECC PRoW had covered it with a road plate as an initial fix.

23/28.3 A decision regarding Council's adverse possession of Church Strip was expected in September 2023.

23/28.4 There were no updates regarding the overwintering pond relating to Great Crested Newts (GCNs)

23/28.5 The roundabout at Elizabeth Close was being monitored and adjustments would be made under the warranty. The latest update was the roundabout would need to be re-installed, but concerns had been raised by the installer about the problem reoccurring given the clay ground.

23/28.6 The Chair of Parks had progressed the wall mural. The Clerk praised the work to date.

23/28.7 Members were referred to Agenda item 7 (Minute P 23/29).

23/28.8 Cllrs S May and Mrs L Dalby were assisting Cllr T Hargrave with the watering of the King's Coronation flowerbed. The outside tap and water harvesting system would be installed imminently.

23/28.9 The Clerk had received a quote for the new access gate which would be added to the compound fence, park side and work would start imminently.
It was **resolved** that Members noted and accepted the Action Update List and agreed to the removal of the closed items.

P 23/29 Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT) – follow up from site visits:

a) Feedback following visit to Langdon Nature Discovery Park:

Members who attended the Discovery Park felt that the visit had been interesting and they had learned how habitats changed in a matter of few yards when it came to land/ground management. The Clerk reported that the visit had shown attendees how to use a particular app for surveying meadows. Members had now been requested to start surveying an area and the Clerk suggested using Spencers Park in the first instance. The Clerk requested that Members liaise with each other to arrange who would carry out the survey; it was noted results would need to be submitted by the end of August.

Members felt that Glencroft was well-managed from a bio-diversity perspective. A Member reported that they received positive comments about how Council's parks were managed.

b) Spencers Brook – response from Environment Agency (EA): Members noted the information from the EA conflicted the information they had received previously. The Clerk had contacted the EWT for assistance with the understanding of the information; contact information for a person who may be able to assist had since been sent to the Clerk. It was noted the EA would carry out an assessment every three years and the next one would be due in October 2023. There would be a meeting for the River Champions on the 15th August 2023 and it was hoped the representative present that day would be able to assist with understanding what management was required from Council. Cllr Mrs Weir reported there was an abundance of hemlock in the pond/weir. It was suggested that Cllr Mrs Weir attend the visit on the 15th August to discuss her concerns.

P 23/30 Recent Anti-Social Behaviour (ABS) in Magnolia Park;

a) Correspondence from resident regarding incident involving children in playground:

A Member gave their views about what had occurred as they had been in the park shortly after the incident. A Member enquired if there was anything that could be done. It was noted the security patrols had been increased since the incident but Members felt there was nothing else that could be done.

b) Correspondence from resident regarding incident with a dog:

Members discussed the fact dogs would need to be kept on leads in the Nature Reserve for the protection of wildlife and multiple users but that dogs were permitted off lead within the recreation field. Members agreed the Clerk should send a letter to the resident explaining Council's position regarding dogs off leads and the importance of owner responsibility.

c) Contractor's report of a horse and rider and quad bikes/scramblers on the recreation field:

Members noted the information.

P 23/31 Consideration to plant a Walnut Tree in Magnolia field, near the bogie to replace the tree that failed – Cllr A MacPherson:

It was **agreed** a Walnut Tree should be planted in place of the failed tree which was sited by the bogie. Members were reminded the tree had to be taken down due to storm damage.

Cllr T Hargrave would advise the Clerk about the cost and availability of Walnut Trees at Potash Garden Centre and would be able to apply staff discount to the tree should Council decide to purchase one from there.

P 23/32 Consideration of installation of trails cams in Magnolia Nature Reserve – Cllr M Strubel:

Members agreed to defer the item until more information was available.

P 23/31 Summary of Decisions:

- Cllrs Mrs L Dalby, T Hargrave, S May and A MacPherson to liaise with each other and arrange for meadow survey of Spencers to be completed by end of August and sent to EWT.
- River Champion Cllr T Hargrave to attend meeting on 15th August; Cllr Mrs M Weir to join meeting.
- Clerk to respond to resident about incident with a dog in Magnolia Park.
- Walnut tree to be planted in Magnolia Park, to replace lost tree by bogie; Cllr T Hargrave to liaise with Clerk about cost and availability for the tree.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8:38pm.

Chairman