

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday 9th October 2023 at 7:30pm
in the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

Cllrs present: Chairman S May, Mrs L Dalby, R Gardner, T Hargrave, Mrs L Massey (from 7:33pm), Mrs J Strubel, M Strubel, R Patient & Mrs M Weir.

Also present: One member of the public.

P 23/44 Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

No apologies were received.

P 23/45 Declarations of any:

a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;

b) Other Registrable Interest; or

on any matter on the agenda for 9th October 2023:

No declarations were made.

P 23/46 Public Forum:

One member of the public was present.

P 23/47 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th September 2023 and to approve the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting:

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 18th September 2023 were **approved** as a correct record and Members approved the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.

P 23/48 Financial Report – September 2023:

The Clerk reported that at month six, Parks was 41% spent and slightly under target. There were no questions and Members **accepted** the Financial Report.

P 23/49 Action List update – October 2023:

23/49.1 Work to re-route the section of BR35 had been completed.

Cllr Mrs L Massey arrived at 7:33pm

23/49.2 The solicitor had advised that Land Registry would need to undertake a site survey for Church Strip. The Clerk had completed and returned the necessary documentation and it was expected the survey would be carried out during October. The solicitor had also informed the Clerk that Land Registry required a Land Value Certificate; the Clerk was in the process of clarifying this as nothing had been mentioned at the start of the process. Such a certificate would incur additional costs and the Clerk had contacted Dedman to try and ascertain how much the service would be. The area of land was approximately 0.5 acres.

23/49.3 The installers of the roundabout at Elizabeth Close had carried out the work on Thursday 5th October 2023 and had adjusted the section of the roundabout that was grinding. The Clerk would monitor the performance of the roundabout throughout the winter and weather changes, given the issues appeared to be caused by ground changes.

23/49.4 There had been no further progress with the wall mural due to the Chair's health issues.

23/49.5 Members were referred to Agenda item 7 (Minute P 23/50).

23/49.6 A walnut tree would be purchased from Potash Garden Centre to be planted in Nov 2023.

- 23/49.7 The Clerk was investigating machinery costs following the Glencroft Management Plan recommendation for grass collection.
- 23/49.8 Cllr T Hargrave would plant the bulbs in Magnolia Park under the new Magnolia trees. It was **resolved** that Members noted and accepted the Action Update List and agreed to the removal of the closed items.

P 23/50 Spencers Brook Update:

a) Verbal update from Cllr T Hargrave regarding the water vole survey:

Cllr T Hargrave reported the survey had been incredibly positive and rewarding. No water voles had been discovered but the brook was abundant with wildlife. A Kingfisher had been spotted multiple times, along with Water Scorpions and a variety of different fish. Animal tracks had also been discovered and were being investigated. If certain clearance works were to be carried out, then potentially water voles may be attracted to the area.

b) Verbal report from the Clerk regarding contact with the Environment Agency (EA):

The Clerk reported she had sent a further detailed enquiry to the EA and the enquiry was being assessed by the Flood and Coastal Risk Management Team. The Clerk would report back once more information had been obtained.

P 23/51 Magnolia Park Nature Reserve – water leak from property in Lincoln Road:

The Clerk reported that water was being dispersed into the Nature Reserve from a private residence in Lincoln Road. Several park users had complained to Council about the boggy areas in the Reserve and that areas were becoming impassable. The Clerk had contacted Rochford District Council's Environmental Team who then went out to assess the matter. There had been a lack of clarity around who was responsible for the pipe which was leaking into the Nature Reserve; Essex & Suffolk Water had initially indicated they were in the process of fixing the leak but then reported the asset was not theirs and the matter would be down to the property owner. The water appeared to not be contaminated but concerns were raised over why the pipe was laid to disperse into the Nature Reserve and that the water, even if clean, could disturb the habitat for the new Great Crested Newt (GCN) pond. The Clerk would remain in contact with the appropriate RDC Officer and would report back.

P 23/52 Consideration of items for 2024-25 Parks budgeting in November 2023:

Members noted there would need to be a budget for the new solar panels for the store following the recommendation from the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG). Monies would be required for a grass collector following the recommendations laid out in the Glencroft Management Plan. An allocation for any Spencers Brook work would also need to be considered along with a budget allocation for security enhancement works for the Magnolia Store. Members felt it prudent to liaise with the regular contractor to obtain advice about any new/replacement machinery. Members also considered an allocation to 'professional fees' should the matter of adverse possession for Church Strip incur further costs. Members enquired about the replacement asset fund and the Clerk reminded Members £5k was allocated to the fund each year and that the fund stood at around £26k.

P 23/53 Summary of Decisions:

- Clerk to report back once more information received from EA regarding Spencers Brook.
- Items for budget consideration – solar panels, increased security for Magnolia store, new parks equipment including grass collection machinery, Spencers Brook works, potential increase in professional fees if Church Strip adverse possession incurs further costs.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7:56pm.

Chairman