

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday 17th June 2024 at 8:45pm
in the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

Cllrs present: L Fane, T Hargrave, A MacPherson, Mrs L Massey, S May, Mrs J Strubel, M Strubel & Mrs M Weir.

Also present: One member of the public.

P 24/1 To elect a Chair for the civic year 2024-25:

Cllr Mrs L Massey nominated Cllr S May; Cllr S May declined the nomination. Cllr S May nominated Cllr A MacPherson, which was seconded by Cllr M Strubel. There were no further nominations and Cllr A MacPherson was elected Chair for 2024-25.

P 24/2 To elect a Vice-Chair for the civic year 2024-25:

Cllr M Strubel nominated Cllr T Hargrave as Vice-Chair which was seconded by Cllr Mrs J Strubel. Cllr T Hargrave nominated Cllr L Fane and this was seconded by Cllr Mrs L Massey. Following a secret ballot, Cllr T Hargrave was nominated Vice-Chair for 2024-25.

P 24/3 Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs L Dalby & R Gardner.

P 24/4 Declarations of any:

a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;

b) Other Registrable Interest; or

on any matter on the agenda for 17th June 2024:

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

Members **accepted** the declarations made.

P 24/5 Public Forum:

One member of the public was present.

P 24/6 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th April 2024 and to approve the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting:

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 8th April 2024 were **approved** as a correct record and Members approved the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.

P 24/7 Financial Report – May 2024:

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

P 24/8 Action List Update – June 2024:

24/8.1 Members had attended a site visit with the Essex County Council Public Rights of Way Officer (ECC ProW) to assess the bridlepath behind Church Strip. The ECC ProW had given permission to Council to lay an appropriate surface to make the path more passable. Permission had also been granted should Council want to cut back the vegetation to allow more light in to dry the area out. The purpose of works was to encourage users to use the bridlepath rather than cut through Church Strip.

24/8.2 The wall mural would be completed within the year.

- 24/8.3 Members agreed to remove the item relating to Essex Wildlife Wilder Villages.
- 24/8.4 Members enquired if the water was still leaking from the property in Lincoln Road into Magnolia Road. The Clerk was unsure if the leak was still occurring.
- 24/8.5 The battery strimmer had been purchased. Members agreed to close the item.
- 24/8.6 The Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) report had been received and deferred to the Health & Safety Sub-Committee; a Fire Management Policy was under consideration.
- 24/8.7 The bye-law signage for Magnolia Park was in progress.
- 24/8.8 The Clerk had received one estimate for concrete works in Magnolia compound along with one estimate for tarmac which had come from the same contractor. The Clerk was in the process of trying to obtain further estimates.
- 24/8.9 The Clerk was still to find out about the closure of the Team Wilder Programme.
It was **resolved** that Members noted and accepted the Action Update List and agreed to the removal of the closed items.

P 23/9 Park updates:
Magnolia Park:

a) Solar panels at Magnolia Store:

The Clerk explained that there was an issue with Octopus Energy and that they were not taking on business customers for the smart export tariff. Another provider may need to be sought and Cllr R Gardner was looking into the matter. Cllr L Fane would send a list of possible providers to the Clerk.

b) Anti-Social Behaviour (ABS) in Magnolia Park:

Members noted the ABS issues.

c) Encampment in the Nature Reserve: Members noted a contractor had to be called in to remove the encampment.

d) King's Coronation Planter: Members who had seen the planter were pleased with how the plants had established and the overall design; praise was given to Cllr T Hargrave for all his efforts in maintaining it. Cllr T Hargrave noted that payment was required for the plants and bark; the Clerk requested an invoice be sent over so payment could be paid.

Spencers Park:

a) Work at Spencers Brook:

It was noted the work to clear the weir had been carried out that day. Cllrs T Hargrave and A MacPherson had been in attendance. It was further noted that people were using the weir to cross over to the Clements Hall estate. A Member suggested planting hedging on the bank to help prevent those crossing but it was noted there would need to be an access point for any other future works. Members discussed other options to secure the area and to try to prevent residents from crossing the water. It was **agreed** the matter would need to be considered at a future meeting.

P 23/10 Church Strip – Consider next steps:

a) Works on bridlepath:

Members noted that the power company had carried out some works on the trees which had been encroaching the power lines. It was **agreed** that any works to be carried out would occur after the bird nesting season; the Clerk would obtain the necessary quotes.

b) Fence off Church Strip and notify Land Registry:

It was **agreed** that Members carry out another site visit following the works on the bridlepath to ascertain what needed fencing.

c) No response from St Mary's Church regarding whether they require Church Strip for further graveyard space:

Members noted the matter had been addressed at a parish church meeting.

P 23/11 Items referred from the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) – see Parks Management page from the Eco-Audit report:

PK3 – It was **agreed** that advice be sought from the regular contractor about open grassed areas and the possible introduction of low-height flowering and herb covering plant seeds.

PK4 – It was **agreed** a site visit would be required to ascertain whether an edible forestry approach could be achieved.

PK7 – Members **agreed** it was not practical to have community orchards.

PK11 – Members felt there were sufficient wildlife corridors in the area and **agreed** not to pursue the item.

P 23/12 Woodland Trust Nature Detectives:

Members agreed to publicise the information on Facebook and in Council's noticeboards.

P 23/13 Summary of Decisions:

- Cllr A MacPherson elected Chair for 2024-25.
- Cllr T Hargrave elected Vice-Chair for 2024-25.
- Cllr L Fane to send list of commercial solar energy guarantee (SEG) tariff providers to office.
- Cllr T Hargrave to arrange for invoice for King's Coronation planter plants to be sent to office.
- Matter relating to barrier at Spencers brook/weir to be discussed further.
- Clerk to obtain quotes for bridlepath works at Church Strip; further site visit to be arranged post works to agree area to be fenced.
- Regular contractor's advice to be sought regarding open grassed areas recommendation from Eco-Audit report.
- Site visit to be arranged regarding edible forestry recommendation from Eco-Audit report.
- Woodland Trust Nature Detectives information to be published on Facebook and within Council's noticeboards.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:26pm.

Chairman