

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday 19th May 2025 at 7:05pm
in the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

Cllrs present: R Gardner, T Hargrave, A MacPherson, Mrs L Massey, S May, Miss M Ward & Mrs M Weir.

Also present: Two members of the public.

P 25/1 To elect a Chair for the civic year 2025-26:

Cllr Mrs L Massey nominated Cllr A MacPherson, which was seconded by Cllr S May. There were no further nominations and Cllr A MacPherson was elected Chair for 2025-26.

P 25/2 To elect a Vice-Chair for the civic year 2025-26:

Cllr A MacPherson nominated Cllr T Hargrave as Vice-Chair which was seconded by Cllr Mrs L Massey. There were no further nominations and Cllr T Hargrave was nominated Vice-Chair for 2025-26.

P 25/3 Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Apologies were received from Cllr L Fane.

P 25/4 Declarations of any:

- a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;**
- b) Other Registrable Interest; or**
- on any matter on the agenda for 19th May 2025:**

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

Members **accepted** the declarations made.

P 25/5 Public Forum:

Two members of the public were present. No questions were raised.

P 25/6 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 7th April 2025 and to approve the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting:

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 7th April 2025 were **approved** as a correct record and Members approved the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.

P 25/7 Financial Report – May 2025:

The Clerk reported expenditure against the budget was on track. There were no questions and Members **accepted** the Financial Report.

P 25/8 Action List Update – May 2025:

- 25/8.1** The files from Council's Adverse Possession claim had been received. The Clerk had now contacted another solicitor which was specialised in Adverse Possession claims. A call had been scheduled for that week. The Clerk felt it was prudent for Members to understand why the original application had been unsuccessful and to see if further actions or evidence could be submitted to support a new application. It was noted the cost of installing a fence would be significant and that fencing off the land for 12 years would take a public open space away from the community. The Clerk would provide an update at the next meeting.

- 25/8.2** The Clerk had contacted the Environmental Office at Rochford District Council (RDC) again to ask about feedback from the Environment Agency (EA). The EA had told RDC that no breaches had occurred that they would enforce. Council's concerns had been highlighted that the RDC Planning Officer had approved a new planning application on the site without calling it into the Development Committee and had disregarded HPC's issues with the drainage. A District Cllr had escalated the matter to senior management but no further responses had been provided. The Clerk would continue to chase the matter.
- 25/8.3** Works to address the issues raised in the annual playground inspections would be undertaken over the next few months.
- 25/8.4** The Chair and Clerk had met the gate opener at Magnolia Park. Appropriate signage templates for the car parking opening and closing times had been produced and quotes were due. It was **agreed** that the existing noticeboard in the car park be repurposed and signage placed on its post. If required, a new board could be sited in a new location.
- 25/8.5** The Clerk had contacted the resident who had requested a geocache in Magnolia Nature Reserve but had received no response. It was **resolved** that Members noted and accepted the Action Update List and agreed to the removal of the closed items.

P 25/9 Magnolia Park – Basketball court upgrade request

Members **agreed** to have linings marked on the basketball court.

P 25/10 Recurrence of 'hate graffiti':

Members noted that the hate graffiti had returned for the third year. The Clerk informed Members about the police's status with the investigation and that there was an outstanding query. Members **agreed** in principle to give permission to Council's security company about discussed surveillance methods. Members noted that appropriate signage would be required. *Chair A MacPherson left the Chambers at 7:19pm; Vice Chair T Hargrave took over proceedings.*

P 25/11 Email from MTS Renewables regarding solar panels at Magnolia Store:

The information was noted and that the solar panels had been in place for a year. The Smart Energy Guarantee was now set-up. Members discussed installing additional solar panels and the Clerk advised Members that the Environmental Working Group (EWG) would need to discuss this option.

The Clerk suggested the panels be cleaned to ensure optimum use; she would source appropriate contractors.

P 25/12 Summary of Decisions:

- Cllr A MacPherson elected Chair for 2025-26.
- Cllr T Hargrave elected Vice-Chair for 2025-26.
- Clerk to update Members on Adverse Possession possibility following call with solicitor.
- Clerk to continue to chase RDC regarding foul water issue affecting Magnolia Nature Reserve.
- Noticeboard in Magnolia car park to be re-purposed for signage.
- Lining for basketball court agreed; Clerk to source contractors.
- Permission in principle given to S-Type Security for additional security methods in Magnolia Nature Reserve, conditional on police response.
- EWG to discuss options about potential additional solar panels.
- Clerk to source contractors to clean solar panels.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 7:28pm.

Chair