

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE held on
Monday, 8th March 2010
at the Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford, Essex**

Councillors present: Chairman K Holmes, Mrs J Barney, Mrs E Chippette, Mrs C Cunningham, Mrs M Dorrell, Mrs J Fern, Mrs A Heath, A James, V Leach, D Weir and Mrs M Weir.

Also Present: Cllrs Mrs T Bateman and Mrs H Glynn

The Chairman asked Members if they were happy to commence the meeting early, on the rising of the General Purposes Committee, Members agreed they were content to start the meeting after a short coffee break.

1) Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting:

Cllrs J Dickson (another meeting) and R Patient (funeral). Members accepted the apologies tendered.

2) Declarations of Interest:

Cllr Mrs Glynn declared an interest should anything arise relating to Lincoln Road and Magnolia Park and Cllr Mrs Heath declared an interest regarding anything relating to the artwork for the footpath signs.

3) Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 2010 and to approve the destruction of the manuscript notes in respect of that meeting:

Members approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th February 2010 as a true record and agreed to the destruction of the manuscript notes in respect of that meeting.

4) Parks – Action List Update:

The Clerk went through the action list.

- **Arrange for clearance of ponds on a timely basis:** The Clerk met with Essex Groundwork Trust and advised their charges were £300 per day. The Chairman advised that in respect of the pond in Spencers there was not much presence of weed at the moment but there was lots of rubbish to be cleared. The Chairman invited Members to attend a site visit to Spencers and Cllrs Mrs Fern, Mrs Glynn, Mrs Heath, Holmes, James, Weir and Mrs Weir agreed to visit the pond on March 17th at 4.30pm. The history of the pond was discussed and Cllr Mrs Glynn asked Members if they would like to see photographs of when the pond was first created, Members affirmed they would. It was suggested that contact be made with the Anglian Water Authority who had dug out the pond in the past but it was felt that the appropriate time to get in touch with them would be after the site visit and the Chairman said he would instruct the Clerk accordingly.
- **Footpath signs:** The Clerk advised it was not possible to put a sign by the Victory Pub due to services below ground. Members discussed final location of signs and agreed Hawkwell Common, Ironwell Lane (south of Roche Avenue), Footpath 7 Rectory Avenue. The Chairman asked Members if they were content for the Clerk to arrange the actual siting of the signs with authorities as near to the locations chosen as possible and Members agreed they were.

- **Research provision of allotments:** See Agenda Item 6.
- **Work Programme for ROSPA:** Ongoing.
- **Tree Thinning in Spencers Park:** The Clerk circulated a report he had prepared detailing conclusions and recommendations from the site visit with the tree specialist. The Chairman invited Members to comment and the findings were discussed at length. **The Chairman sought Members' approval to commence thinning in line with the recommendations, some Members were reluctant to begin immediately due to nesting and it was felt Autumn would be an appropriate time to start the tree thinning programme. Members voted and the motion was carried.** The Chairman clarified the programme would be carried out over 4 years, one phase of the park per year.
- **Spencer's bridlepath:** Parish work complete, awaiting completion of groundwork by RDC. Members agreed to remove item from action list.
- **Litter/dog bins collections:** The Chairman advised the committee had 3 new bins and it had been agreed to order 3 more in the next month. Members discussed appropriate sites for the bins and agreed to place 1 by bridal path/scouts hall in Magnolia Road and 2 in Spencers (by Hazelwood and Hawkwell Park Drive) and of the 3 to be ordered, 2 to go to Magnolia and 1 in Spencers. Cllr Mrs Glynn advised that RDC were mindful of the way bins were being emptied across the district and the problem was being discussed at the present time. Members agreed to keep issue on action list.
- **Adult Gym:** The Clerk asked for Members guidance as to exactly where the kit was to go with consideration to grass cutting around the apparatus. Members agreed a site visit was necessary and proposed the next day at 3.30pm.
- **Disabled access, Spencers:** The Clerk advised that expenditure now would change the outturn prediction and recommended it be left for the new financial year. Given the Clerk's advice and that only one member of the public had enquired after the access, Members agreed to defer installation and instructed the Clerk to bring costing to the next meeting in April. Cllr Mrs Heath thought it would be beneficial to investigate if a charity would provide a disabled access; Members discussed this and instructed the Clerk to ask Cory Environment if they would donate the cost of installation.
- **Log seats to be replaced with new benches in Spencers:** Cllr Holmes **proposed from the Chair that 1 seat be placed in Magnolia once the location of the gym equipment was agreed and 1 seat in Glencroft** and Members approved the proposal. Cllr Mrs Glynn asked if bulbs could be purchased for September and the Chairman instructed the Clerk to put 'bulb planting in Parks' on the next meeting agenda.
- **Clerk to write to Groundwork Essex to ascertain minimum amount of tree planting and invite them to Glencroft:** The Clerk advised that he had met Ginette Braithwaite from Groundwork Essex, they were aiming at much bigger tree planting schemes than the odd one or two such as Glencroft. She had been shown the parks and felt they could undertake work but advised that there was a daily charge of £300. Consideration would be given to using them in the right place and on the right project.

5) **Financial Report:**

The Clerk advised with 1 month to go Parks should be at or below budget, there were no questions and Members accepted the Financial Report.

6) Allotments – Paper on costings for 100 allotments:

The Clerk went through his report in detail. Cllr Weir raised the question ‘did Council have a legal requirement to provide allotments or not’. The Chairman replied that in his opinion legally Council had to genuinely show that it had considered the provision of allotments and had taken time and consideration in conducting the research; the Clerk had sought the advice of the EALC, he had gathered all the facts and figures and Council were now equipped to make an informed decision. Members began a lengthy debate encompassing reluctance of farmers to part with land at the present time, the core strategy, huge costs involved, no monies available and keeping the precept down. **Cllr James proposed that the provision of allotments in Hawkwell be dropped for the moment**, Cllr Mrs Dorrell seconded the motion. The Chairman summarised that Council could show that it had considered the provision of allotments and found it would be too much of a financial burden on the Parish at the moment, the Core Strategy was not out yet and land was not available, he asked Members to vote on the proposal put forward by Cllr James and the motion was carried.

7) P3 Scheme – Email from Charlotte Fellingham, Community Action Team Leader, ECC:

The Clerk advised this did not affect HPC as it did not currently have a P3 team; should any cutting back be required the payback team could be approached. The Chairman asked Members to note the email content and they agreed.

8) Summary of decisions:

- Site visit planned to Spencer’s pond on March 17th at 4.30pm - Cllrs Mrs Fern, Mrs Glynn, Mrs Heath, Holmes, James, Weir and Mrs Weir.
- Cllr Mrs Glynn to make available photographs of the creation of Spencer’s pond.
- The Clerk to arrange siting of footpath signs (Hawkwell Common, Rectory Avenue, Ironwell Lane).
- Members approved tree thinning programme to commence in the Autumn.
- Spencer’s bridlepath to be removed from action list.
- Agreed to site new dog bins - 1 by bridal path/scouts hall in Magnolia Road and 2 in Spencers (by Hazelwood and Hawkwell Park Drive). 3 bins on order - 2 to go to Magnolia and 1 in Spencers, Clerk to action.
- Site visit to Magnolia to agree placement of gym equipment – (next day) Tuesday 3.30pm.
- Members agreed to defer disabled access installation.
- Clerk to bring disabled access installation costing to April meeting.
- The Clerk to ask Cory Environment to donate cost of disabled access installation.
- Agreed to place new seat in Magnolia (once location of gym equipment known) and 1 seat in Glencroft.
- The Clerk to put ‘bulb planting in Parks’ on the next meeting agenda.
- Members agreed to drop provision of allotments at the current time.
- Members noted P3 Scheme email – no action to be taken.

Chairman