

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday, 13th June 2011
at the Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford, Essex**

Committee Members Present: Chairman Cllr Mrs M Weir, Cllrs Mrs J Barney, Mrs E Chippette, Mrs C Cunningham, V Leach, R Patient, D Weir and Mrs P Young.

Also Present: Cllr A Williams and Mathew Hodgkinson, Public Rights of Way Officer - ECC.

The Chairman welcomed Mathew Hodgkinson and invited him to give his presentation prior to items 10 and 11. A summary of the presentation is noted in item 12.

10. Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Cllr Mrs Heath had presented an apology for absence to celebrate her 30th wedding anniversary and this was accepted.

11. Declarations of Interest:

None.

12. Mathew Hodgkinson PROW Officer – P3:

Mathew Hodgkinson advised he was working for Community Action from County Hall on community projects empowering people to do well. He informed that his colleague Chris Brown, carried out a the maintenance/enforcement role in Basildon.

The P3 Scheme, a partnership scheme which the Parish remained a member of, aimed to empower people in the Parish to take on projects and P3 was the ideal way do it.

The Parish Council would undertake and support it and Community Action would provide training and assistance.

The Parish Council would have a P3 manual and some one should be nominated as the Parish Council representative.

The Scheme was about volunteers that wished to do well in the network.

Several Members wished to speak and Mathew Hodgkinson answered the following questions:-

- We have some very pretty walks but there is a difficulty finding volunteers.
- Always find it difficult to find people to volunteer.
- Who is responsible for sign posts and way markers?
- Active group in place some years ago; their willingness to volunteer changed and Council haven't been able to get anyone since - can't always get someone to organise the volunteers as things change over time.
- Have got equipment in store from P3; the Grounds man looks after the parks but Council would have to pay someone to use the P3 equipment to clear the paths.
- Explore extending litter pick to incorporate something (agenda item 7).
- Promote P3 in the newsletter, call for volunteers and heighten awareness that the footpaths need looking after.
- Network of footpaths are quite significantly used.
- It would be nice to supply markers.

- What is legislation for dogs off lead on footpaths?
- Should farmers reinstate the path after ploughing?
- What is the law regarding wheelchair access?

13. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2011 and to approve the destruction of the manuscript notes in respect of that meeting:

Subject to one typo correction on the title, Members approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th May 2011 as a true record and agreed to the destruction of the manuscript notes.

14. Parks – Action List Update:

The Clerk went through the action list.

- **Footpath signs – complete artwork and arrange siting:** The Clerk had received a response from Maureen McCutcheon, ECC and she had come back with some questions. He reported, as he had expected, it seemed highly unlikely that ECC would agree to the siting of a sign at the end of Footpath 7 on the Ashingdon Road. ECC suggested that Council move 2 of the locations to stand adjacent to the Parish Notice boards, one of which was Golden Cross; they were making points about stats and services undertaken there but he thought Council should stick with its plan. ECC had suggested relocating the proposed Ironwell Lane sign by Dalys Road but Council wished to pursue placing it at Ironwell Lane due to the footpath. The Clerk advised it was moving along slowly but at least it was progressing.
- **Spencers Pond:** Digger to be hired, action by the Clerk – ongoing.
- **Chairman to speak to Grounds man re. painting cautionary instruction on roadway at entrance to Magnolia Park:** The Clerk advised Council would need to purchase road paint as no donations had come fourth. Cllr Leach informed that the stop look right sign was very large and prominent; he was happy to talk to the neighbour to seek permission to cut back the bush in order to fit the sign and he felt sure that the overhead sign could be guillotined down. The Clerk added that he had spoken to Graham Marshall who informed they could take 25mm off the ends of the sign and it would look okay; should the lamination break in doing so, the Clerk would ask them to redo it.
- **Cllr Mrs Weir to write article on vandalism for Newsletter:** Editorial committee agreed not to have an article on vandalism in the current issue which had gone to print.
- **Clerk to provide yearly cost of vandalism in parks:** Information provided at last meeting (in previous minutes). Item to be closed.
- **Clerk to seek RDC approval re QEII Field:** Response still awaited.
- **Clerk to Invite HT PROW Officer to meet committee:** Completed, item to be removed.
- **Water whips along bridlepath adjacent to Church:** Recent rainfall had helped.

15. Financial Report:

The Clerk reported being month 2 of the financial year he was relaxed about the current position and everything was proceeding normally. He informed Members of a recent scare regarding the tractor which looked like a significant problem with the gear box. However, Dave Abrams, after searching the internet, was able to fix the problem in a matter of hours saving £5K! The Clerk advised that Dave was saving Council lots of maintenance costs by doing it himself.

There were no questions and Members accepted the Financial Report.

16. Love Where You Live:

The Clerk referred to his report and email from ECC within the papers, he reiterated the earlier comments about promoting P3 together with developing something for parks and footpaths, he highlighted the opportunity in July to do something and he asked how Members would like to progress. Cllr Leach advised within the next meeting he would be asking for a small group to be called to discuss a fayre next year and he suggested that Council delegate that group to come up with something if Members were happy for that to happen. The Clerk informed he had been asked to set up a village fayre meeting and this could be brought forward. **Members agreed to delegate Love Where You Live Week to the group and a provisional meeting of the Village Fayre Working Group was set for Friday evening to be confirmed after the Parks meeting.**

The Clerk reported daily comments were being received now from parishioners complaining about dog fouling and the Parish had a problem. He recommended Council make application via RHALC to seek sharing the cost of a dog warden or ask RDC to provide a warden. The Clerk advised that he had stopped the Grounds man from using the strimmer over the bridle path now as it sprayed dog faeces all over him and he now used the flail which had to be hosed down after each cut. Cllr Mrs Cunningham expressed strong views; she reported that in London parks dogs had to remain on a lead and the open areas were for families to enjoy, she questioned why a small area of each park in the parish could not be allocated for dog walking to isolate the mess. This was debated and the Clerk informed that the Parish had the power to implement a by law if it was so wished, however, enforcing it would be a problem; it was defeated in previous years and Members must have a care as to what Parishioners wanted. He advised that the District Council had the power to fine people for not picking up their dogs faeces but RDC did not have the staff to police it. **Cllr Leach proposed that he make contact with all the parishes in the area and ask for their consent to put an item on the next meeting agenda of the RHALC and explore ways to take the recommendation forward. Cllr Mrs Weir seconded and Members approved the action.**

17. Summary of decisions:

- Bullet points 5 & 7 to be removed from Action Update List.
- Agreed to delegate Love Where You Live Week to Village Fayre Working Group - provisional meeting to be confirmed.
- Cllr Leach to contact parishes in the area and ask for their consent to put an item on the next meeting agenda of the RHALC re. sharing dog warden/RDC providing warden.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Chairman