

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday, 14th March 2011
at the Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford, Essex**

Committee Members Present: Chairman Cllr Mrs M Weir, Vice Chairman Cllr Mrs A Heath, Cllrs Mrs J Barney, Mrs E Chippette, Mrs C Cunningham, Mrs H Glynn, V Leach (ex-officio), R Patient and D Weir.

Also Present: Cllrs R Mitchell and Mrs P Young.

59. Apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Cllr Dickson (ex-officio) (another meeting) and Cllr Mrs Dorrell (another appointment). Members accepted the apologies tendered.

60. Declarations of Interest:

Cllr Mrs Heath declared a personal interest relating to the Action Update List – ‘Footpath signs’ in that she knew the artist who painted the artwork.

61. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th February 2011 and to approve the destruction of the manuscript notes in respect of that meeting:

Members approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th February 2011 as a true record and agreed to the destruction of the manuscript notes.

62. Parks – Action List Update:

The Clerk went through the action list.

- **Arrange for clearance of ponds on a timely basis:** The Clerk advised that the Payback team had done a good job clearing the pond of rubbish, however some more rubbish had been thrown in the pond since then; the Chairman added that she had removed a crate and tyre recently. The Clerk asked Members if they would like the item to be removed from the list for the time being. This was considered with varying views expressed but it was agreed to leave it on the list for the purpose of monitoring with a review in May.
- **Footpath signs – complete artwork and arrange siting:** The Clerk handed out A3 copies of the artwork. He notified that the final version would be 3 to 4 times bigger and drew attention to the space at the bottom of the poster that needed filling. He asked Members to consider how they would like the space to be used and gave some examples of information about the history of Hawkwell or to enlarge the contact details or enlarge the pictures. The Clerk was asked where the signs were to be placed and he informed the locations were chosen by Members as far apart as possible to represent the corners of the map or 3 most densely populated areas of the Parish; at the end of Hawkwell Common, Footpath 7 and the Rochford end of Ironwell Lane. The Clerk mentioned that he was unsure approval would be granted for Footpath 7 due to services under ground and the Chairman suggested, if that was the case, it would be a good idea to relocate that one to Golden Cross. Members discussed the map content in great detail and many opinions and ideas were expressed to:-
 - add where one footpath linked to the next,
 - include the surplus pictures that were painted (if they were available),
 - review text size,

- introduce where the places denoted in the pictures lay on the map, indicate by letter/geographical pointer, and
- re-space pictures making room for a Title/Road name.

After much debate **Cllr Mrs Weir moved from the Chair that the space between the pictures be increased to enable inclusion of the Road name and Cllr Mrs Heath seconded.** The Chairman asked Members to vote; 5 hands were shown in favour and the motion was carried. **Cllr Mitchell proposed, in addition to the motion above, to add letters on the map and alongside the corresponding pictures to indicate where they were located geographically;** this was seconded by Cllr Mrs Weir who asked Members to vote and the additional motion was also carried.

Cllr Mrs Glynn queried whether the signs would require planning consent and the Clerk advised they did not because the signage boards were for information purposes and did not carry any advertising.

- **Adult Gym:** The Clerk reported that he had spoken to the technical department the day before and they were currently looking at the unit. Cllr Mrs Glynn asked if the rest of the equipment was usable and the Clerk confirmed it was.
- **Disabled access, Spencers:** The Clerk advised the equipment would be installed sometime in March.
- **Spencers Pond:** The Clerk reported that financial constraints meant that action could not be taken until review in the new financial year.
- **Request donation from equestriennes re signage:** Item to be removed.
- **Chairman to speak to Grounds man re. painting cautionary instruction on roadway at entrance to Magnolia Park:** Ongoing as per report.
- **Chairman to ask Grounds man about further work on the public open space adjacent to the cemetery:** Cllr Mrs Glynn reported the sale of hedgerow whips priced at 50p each - a really good price; she suggested if they were purchased and planted very soon they would settle well while the ground was wet and make a real difference within 6 months to finish off the area along the open space. The Chairman queried the budget and the Clerk advised Parks was already overspent however overall the budget could run to it. Cllr Weir asked Members to think carefully about sapling/tree planting, to have some foresight and look at the positioning to avoid future costs of taking them out and his comments were noted. Members discussed how many hedgerow whips would be required and the Clerk calculated, from memory, about 270 would be needed. Cllr Mrs Glynn urged that the whips be bought and put in at the weekend. Cllr Mrs Heath queried whether the whips would require watering or nurturing and in answer it was suggested that as the ground was so wet, they would do well if they were planted very soon. **Cllr Mrs Heath proposed that £120 be spent on the purchase of hedgerow whips to be planted along the open space and this was seconded by Cllr Mrs Weir.** Cllr Weir requested clarification of the area and the Clerk advised the whips were to be planted along the bridle path adjacent to the open space that HPC cleared to formally enclose it. **The Chairman asked Members for their approval and the motion was carried.**
- **Cllr Mrs Weir to write article on vandalism for Newsletter** – Ongoing, for May edition.
- **Clerk to provide yearly cost of vandalism in parks** – Ongoing, report to be presented after year end.
- **Clerk to arrange for crown reduction of oak tree** – Completed, item to be removed.

- **Clerk to seek RDC approval re QEII Field** – Ongoing. Cllr Mrs Glynn questioned, bearing in mind the Parks were already named, was the intention to include QEII Field to the name and the Chairman advised that Council were awaiting a response from RDC and there was no point in discussing the matter until such time as RDC approval was granted.

63. Financial Report:

The Clerk went through the report. He advised that Parks were £12,379 over spent, however, the £13K granted from the big lottery fund (for the adult gym) was not reflected in the income column, therefore, in other words Parks were on balance and he stressed the budget was very tight. The Chairman queried the cost of the crown reduction of the oak tree and could payment be reflected in next years accounts, the Clerk informed the cost was £470 which would still be accrued to the year's accounts. There were no further questions and Members accepted the Financial Report.

64. Changes to Payback Team Operations:

The Clerk referred Members to his report; he went through items 1 to 9 and asked Members to consider the request and advise their decision on the storage of equipment only. Members discussed the report and situation in great detail, they conveyed surprise that cuts were being made to the service and expressed their concern about the consequences of this and the impact on the provision of community service for the Parish. Overall the feeling was to find the best way to facilitate keeping the valuable service in the Parish or the work would fall at the feet of the Grounds man anyway. The Clerk was asked to clarify the use of the equipment and he stressed that at the moment the payback team provided and used their own equipment; the Grounds man did not repair or service it and Council were only being asked to store their equipment for them to use fortnightly at present. It was asked whether there was anywhere at the Church to store the equipment and the Clerk advised he had followed this up with the diocese and it was not possible. **Cllr Patient recommended, after listening to everyone's comments, that Council adopt the report and in particular item 5; "I am implacably opposed to allowing anyone other than Parish staff and Councillors access to the store and allowing anyone access is too much of a risk" and item 7; "we could agree to hold the equipment and deliver it to site rather than allowing them to collect. This would take a little more of Dave's time than we currently expend (i.e. he already buys and delivers the fuel). I would recommend this approach"**. Cllr Mrs Glynn seconded the motion and stated that she did so on the basis that delivery of the equipment was only to the Parish Church and if it meant other areas she required clarification of that; the Clerk then confirmed delivery was to St Marys. More debate ensued, strong opinions were expressed and the Chairman referred Members back to the fact that a decision was being taken on storage of equipment only and a motion was on the table. **Members voted and the motion was carried.**

65. Summary of decisions:

- Members approved for the following items to be removed from the Action List:–
 - 'Request donation from equestriennes re signage',
 - 'Clerk to arrange for crown reduction of oak tree'.

- ‘Arrange for clearance of ponds on a timely basis’ to remain on Action List with a review in May.
- Approved to alter footpath sign artwork:–
 - to mark pictures with a letter and correspond to indicate on map the location, and,
 - to increase space between pictures to allow for road name to be added.
- The Clerk to purchase hedgerow whips up to £120 for planting along open space adjacent to cemetery.
- Members approved to adopt the Clerks recommendations in his report on Payback team: changes to operations.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Chairman