

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday, 17th May 2010
at the Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford, Essex**

Councillors present: Mrs E Chippette, Mrs C Cunningham, Mrs M Dorrell, Mrs J Fern, Mrs H Glynn, Mrs A Heath, A James, V Leach, R Patient, D Weir and Mrs M Weir

1) Elect Chairman:

Cllr Mrs Glynn proposed Cllr Mrs Heath, however she declined. **Cllr Mrs Dorrell proposed Cllr Mrs Weir and Cllr Patient seconded.** Members discussed that Cllr Mrs Weir was already Chair of Planning and sought the advice of the Clerk. The Clerk advised it was not good practice as it was policy to separate the Chairs of Committees; however, there was no specific rule that stated one could not chair 2 committees. Members accepted the Clerk's advice, there were no further nominations forthcoming and Members voted on the proposal to elect Cllr Mrs Weir. The motion was carried and Cllr Mrs Weir accepted office.

2) Elect a Vice Chairman:

Cllr Patient moved to nominate Cllr Mrs Heath and Cllr Mrs Dorrell seconded. There were no further nominations and Members voted, the motion was carried and Cllr Mrs Heath accepted office.

3) Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting:

Cllrs Mrs J Barney, (another appointment) and J Dickson (another meeting). Members noted and accepted the apologies tendered.

4) Declarations of Interest:

Cllr Mrs Glynn declared an interest should any subject arise relating to Lincoln Road. There were no further declarations of interest.

5) Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th April 2010 and to approve the destruction of the manuscript notes in respect of that meeting:

Members approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th April 2010 as a true record and agreed to the destruction of the manuscript notes.

6) Parks – Action List Update:

The Clerk went through the action list.

- **Arrange for clearance of ponds on a timely basis:** The Clerk reported the Pennywort had returned and a way forward was necessary but he was unsure how the problem could be resolved.
- **Footpath signs:** Ongoing as per report.
- **Work on programme for ROSPA:** Cllr James proposed that grass seed be laid in Elizabeth Close play area with immediate effect; he wished to avoid having to close the play space down. The Clerk responded that grass seed wouldn't grow if it was walked on and was concerned it would be a waste of money. Cllr James said he was happy to rake the area and put some grass seed down himself. He expressed frustration that the item had remained on the action list whilst awaiting the Springtime to grass the area and now it was

being suggested to lay turf in September. Cllr Mrs Glynn proposed Cllr James be allowed to purchase grass seed, with a maximum spend of £10, to rake the seed in and see what happens. Members debated the issue at length, they thought it was kind of Cllr James to volunteer but felt the seed would not grow if it was walked on, the correct way forward was to close the park for one month after seeding or laying turf. **Cllr Patient moved that turf be laid in September and the play area be closed for a month.** Cllr Mrs Chippette seconded and Cllr Mrs Glynn withdrew her proposal, which had not been seconded. Members were asked to vote on the proposal put forward by Cllr Patient and the motion was carried.

- **Tree Thinning in Spencers:** Ongoing as per report.
- **Spencer's Bridle path:** Ongoing as per report.
- **Litter/dog bins collections:** Ongoing as per report.
- **Adult Gym:** The Clerk updated that Wicksteed would be installing the gym on Wednesday and it should be operational by Friday. However, there was a world shortage of soft matting therefore that wouldn't be available for installation until early June. Members were content that would give the ground time to settle. Cllr Leach asked Members if they were happy for the work to go ahead without nighttime security. After discussing the options and the fact that the equipment was going into quick drying cement, it was not highly visible and it did not present a danger, Members were content for the work to go ahead without security.
- **Disabled access, Spencers:** Cllr Mrs Heath queried when Cory would get back with a decision for a grant; the Clerk responded that the application had been sent a couple of weeks ago and a decision was not expected until September, he added that Cory would not pay for a completed project. Cllr Mrs Heath proposed that the project be postponed until September and Cllr Mrs Chippette seconded. Cllr James asked if there was anyone else that Council could approach for funding and Cllr Mrs Fern suggested Keymed. It was raised that Cory may reject funding if another application was sought but the Clerk clarified that would not be the case as no other funding had been applied for at the time the application had been made. Members requested the Clerk to apply for funding from Keymed.
- **Arrange siting of footpath signs:** Ongoing as per report.
- **Install new seats in Magnolia & Glencroft:** Ongoing as per report.
- **Spencers Pond:** Ongoing as per report.

7) **Financial Report:**

The Clerk went through the Financial Report. He explained the minus figure of -317 in works department expenditure was an accrual from the previous year for van tax and the total expenditure of -522 reflected all the accruals that had been brought forward. He advised the income figure of £9,976 was the grant for the outdoor gym and he identified that the grant from RDC should also be shown there – the Clerk to check that. There were no questions and Members accepted the Financial Report.

8) **Consider Operational Plan:**

Cllr Mrs Weir went through the Operational Plan.

- Regarding bullet point 1, Cllr Mrs Glynn requested to see the Magnolia Nature Reserve Management Plan. The Clerk responded it was the original programme of works set up 5 years ago which was ongoing, it was kept in

the office and Members were welcome to view it or speak to Dave Abrams for a more detailed explanation as he was following the programme of works.

- Regarding bullet point 2, Cllr Mrs Heath asked if Council were intending to write to local schools to invite them to use the parks. The Clerk advised this had been done 2-3 years ago, Cllr Mrs Dorrell concurred and added that the schools were running to a strict curriculum, when it had been looked at before it had been found there was not enough time to get to the park and back. Members began a lengthy discussion regarding
 - sending letters out one more time,
 - parks generating enough footfall, have many visitors walking dogs, very well used by children,
 - sending letter to church,
 - suggest schools run a Saturday club in the park,
 - football presence, overbearing or exactly what a public place should be used for!

Members agreed the park was being well used by diverse groups but they felt that letters should still be sent to educational establishments inviting them to use the parks and they requested the Clerk to action.

Members approved the Operational Plan.

9) Proposals to build a mezzanine floor in Store:

The Clerk referred Members to his report to improve the store at Magnolia Park. Members discussed and approved the Clerk's recommendations.

10) Email from resident – Pat James:

Members discussed the email content, it was felt that the outdoor gym location was correct and all other issues related to RDC. Members requested the Clerk to reply to Pat James to advise that HPC would forward her email to RDC for their consideration.

11) Summary of decisions:

- Cllr Mrs Weir was elected Chairman.
- Cllr Mrs Heath was re-elected Vice Chairman.
- Approved for Elizabeth Close play space to be closed for a month in September once turf laid.
- Members content for outdoor gym installation to go ahead without night time security.
- Clerk to apply to Keymed for funding for disabled access bars.
- Clerk to investigate financial report - income figure to include RDC grant for outdoor gym.
- Approved proposals to build a mezzanine floor in Store.
- Clerk to send letters to educational establishments – regarding bullet point 2 of Operational Plan.
- Members approved the Operational Plan for 2010/11.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Chairman