

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday, 9th March 2009
at the Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford, Essex**

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

Also Present: Cllrs Mrs T Bateman and Mrs H Glynn.

1) Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting:

Cllrs J Dickson (other meeting) and K Holmes (holiday). Members noted and accepted the apologies tendered.

2) Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

3) Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th February 2009 and to approve the destruction of the manuscript notes in respect of that meeting:

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th February 2009 were noted and accepted at Full Council on 3rd March 2009 with the exception of item 12 relating to Glencroft Woodland. Cllr James felt that what was said at the meeting was incorrect. He felt as the Minutes would be posted on the website the point needed clarification. Cllr Leach felt what was said at the meeting was accurate at the time of writing. Cllr James stated the Minutes read 'HPC had no knowledge of the development of the site' and that was not true and he would be happier if that was taken out. Cllr Weir said the Planning Committee had knowledge that there was a proposal from the developer to put a footpath there. Cllr Leach said according to the Director of Planning at RDC there was no planning for a path in the woodland. He said what he had seen showed the path going through the woods as part of the street scene and nothing to do with the planning application. He went onto say if anyone viewed the plan that was currently on RDC's website there was no path in that woodland and he felt it was an unfounded rumour. Cllr Weir said whether there was a plan or not he remembered discussing it and deciding to object to it. The Clerk empathised with the way the Minutes may be interpreted on the website, and if it was the wish of the Council, to make an amendment to read 'there was no knowledge of the wider development of the woodland'. Cllr Leach disagreed and stated that Council could not change the minutes just because it didn't like what was said. The Clerk asked if a note could be added to the bottom of the Minutes. Cllr James commented that the drawing was still on the website and it showed the footpath going into the red area. The Clerk said the debate was not that the Minutes were inaccurate but that what was said in those Minutes was inaccurate. As a way forward if Members were concerned about the public being misled by the minutes a note could be added on the bottom separate from the Minutes. Cllr James proposed a separate note be added to the bottom of the Minutes and Cllr Mrs Weir seconded. Members voted and the motion was carried. Cllr James asked the Clerk what the note would say and the Clerk clarified the content. The Vice Chairman asked Members if they were happy with the content and they were.

Members agreed to the destruction of the manuscript notes.

4) **Parks – Action List Update:**

The Clerk went through the action list.

- **Ponds:** Ongoing.
- **Footpath Signs:** Ongoing.
- **Allotments:** The Clerk had brought the information to the meeting on the process of Compulsory Purchase provided by RDC. Cllr Mrs Weir asked if HPC were on any Agents list with a view to acquiring land as she was aware of land for sale in Ashingdon. The Clerk answered HPC were not on a list with any Agents but he was aware the land was for sale, but took no action due to the location being in Ashingdon. A lengthy discussion ensued on the availability of land until such time as it was decided as to where housing projects would take place, bearing in mind the project was being phased up to 2020. The Clerk felt he would not get a great response from the Legal Department of RDC with a 'hypothetical' piece of land, it was a long, involved and expensive process but they would have to do it if no land was available on the market if HPC needed to buy a piece of land either by ordinary purchase or by Compulsory Purchase the Parish would have to pay the legal expenses. Ongoing.
- **ROSPA:** Ongoing.
- **Open Space, Rectory Road:** Letter received, matter to be closed.
- **Tree Thinning in Spencers Park:** Ongoing.
- **Spencers Bridle path:** At the Area Meeting RDC said they had put aside a sum of money to do the works in this coming financial year to bring the bridle path from the end of Hawkwell Park Drive alongside the car park/playing fields and then into Spencers where the bridle path would run between the two hedges and join up to the bridle path running down the side of stream from Clements Hall Approach to Thorpe Rd/Spencers. The Vice Chairman queried how it would go across Clements Hall playing area and the Clerk said that is what they had put the money aside for and clarified the route. He said it would have to be done later in the year as the necessary tree work could not be done as spring was upon us. .
- **Litter/dog bins collections:** Cllr Mrs Glynn had spoken to dog people in Magnolia Park up to the Rugby Club, there were 2 different Contractors to pick up dog mess and where she lived the bin had been emptied regularly.
- **Adult Gym:** Received 2 responses, RDC would be happy to come along to Parks and if Members wished, the Clerk would invite them to come next month. The Vice Chairman asked Members if they were happy with that and they agreed they were.
- **Glencroft Woodland:** See Agenda item 3.
- **Letter of complaint re.dog mess:** The Clerk had tried to contact the dog warden at RDC but he had left. He had asked the grounds man to put up 3 different notices obtained from Cllr Mrs Heath. Cllr Mrs Glynn said she was very pleased to see the different signs, they stood out and she wished to thank the Clerk and D Abrams for putting them up. Cllr Mrs Cunningham felt it was a waste of time as she had erected signage around her bungalow and someone had taken them down.

5) **Financial Report:**

The Clerk went through the Financial Report, in his judgement the Parks & Open Spaces Committee slightly overspent but Council, overall, would be £10-12K under spent year end. There were no questions and Members accepted the Financial Report.

6) New Tractor – verbal update:

The Clerk gave an update that the tractor had a technical problem. He added that due to the groundsman being qualified to deal with mechanical issues he had spotted the technical problem and the machine had been returned. The Clerk had spoken to the vendor on Friday and they were offering HPC a 24 month mechanical warranty on it. If the tractor came back fixed he would be perfectly happy. Cllr Mrs Weir asked if the tractor was brand new and the Clerk replied that it was 3 years old but with only 238 hours of usage. Initially he had queried why someone had sold a tractor with so low a usage on it and the response was that they had gone bust. He felt it was a reasonable answer and it explained why it was in such good condition. The Clerk finished by saying that it was an excellent tractor.

7) Summary of decisions:

- **Minutes of the Meeting dated 16th February 2009, item 12. Glencroft Woodland:** Separate note be added to the bottom of the Minutes of the Meeting dated 16th February 2009 to clarify item 12.
- **Open Space, Rectory Road:** Confirmation letter received from RDC - matter to be closed.
- **Adult Gym:** The Clerk to invite representative from RDC to come to meeting next month.

Chairman