

**Minutes of the meeting of the
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE
held on Monday, 13th July 2009
at the Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford, Essex**

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

Also Present: Cllrs Mrs T Bateman, Mrs H Glynn and R Mitchell.

1) Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting:

Cllrs J Dickson (another meeting) and Mrs M Dorrell (unwell). Members noted and accepted the apologies tendered.

2) Declarations of Interest:

Cllr Mrs Glynn declared an interest should any subject arise relating to her address. Cllr Mrs Heath declared an interest on Item 4. Action List Update – Footpath signs as she knew the artist, Gary Morley.

3) Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2009 and to approve the destruction of the manuscript notes in respect of that meeting:

Members approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th June 2009 as a true record and agreed to the destruction of the manuscript notes.

4) Parks – Action List Update:

The Clerk went through the action list.

- **Arrange for clearance of ponds on a timely basis:** The Clerk reiterated he was awaiting a proposal from TCM on how best to proceed and he advised that he received an email that day where TCM had admitted to having no solution other than the weed be removed manually. Members discussed the pennywort being an ongoing problem and ways to resolve it, whether it should be cut and dragged out, or let it run its course. Debris in the pond and the existence of water lilies was also discussed. **Cllr Weir proposed contacting a local group or pond society in Essex to seek help or advice. Cllr Mrs Weir seconded.** Members voted and the motion was carried. The Chairman volunteered to research local groups on the internet and provide the Clerk with the addresses of whom to contact.
- **Footpath signs:** Cllr Mrs Heath declared an interest. The Chairman asked the Clerk if the artist would be providing suggestions for the committee to vote upon and the Clerk responded there had been problems in producing the map to be visually clear enough to be understood and digested and he would try to get the information required to present at the October meeting. Members were content.
- **Research provision of allotments:** Members discussed potential sites and the Chairman reminded that Council agreed to await final decision from RDC on Core Strategy for housing before researching further and he asked Cllr Mrs Glynn if she was aware of when that was likely to be. Cllr Mrs Glynn advised the Core Strategy was likely to be published in September 2009.

- **Work Programme for ROSPA:** ROSPA to return in September to update the report, in the meantime, the Clerk to ask the Groundsman to take the dangerous edge off the step formed as a result of the repairs in Elizabeth Close and grass later.
- **Tree Thinning in Spencers Park:** Agenda item 8.
- **Spencers bridle path:** The Chairman informed Members of the details of the site meeting with RDC that took place on 10th July 2009. Cllr Mrs Glynn said she would be meeting an equestrian group in a week and the Chairman asked her to provide the Clerk with the date of that meeting.
- **Litter/dog bins collections:** The Clerk advised that the officers from RDC had seen first hand the problem of the overflowing dog bins during a site visit on 10th July. Members debated at length the insufficiency of service in emptying bins, the increased use of the park and size of dog bins. Members felt the poor level of service provided by the contractor now needed to be taken to a higher level within RDC and the Chairman asked the Clerk to write to Michael Starke, the Cabinet Member of the Environment identifying the problems with copies of the letter to be sent to Ward Councillors D Stansby and J Mason. Members were content.
- **Adult Gym:** Cllr Mrs Weir provided photographs of the gym equipment placed in Priory Park. Some Members felt very strongly that a decision needed to be reached now to pursue installing the equipment and a debate followed where budget, funding, health and safety and vandalism were discussed at length. **Cllr Holmes proposed from the Chair the Adult Gym be placed on the Agenda for the September meeting to allow time for the Clerk to research funding and bring information back to that meeting, Cllr Mrs Weir seconded.** Members voted and the motion was carried.
- **Great Crested Newts:** Members agreed to close item.
- **Mural in Magnolia Park:** Members agreed to close item.

5) **Financial Report:**

The Clerk went through the Financial Report and advised it was on target. The Chairman queried cost centre 301 Magnolia Park and the Clerk responded the cost was probably as a result of planting the whips but he would check and clarify. There were no further questions and Members accepted the Financial Report.

6) **Disabled Access – Spencers Park: Complaint from a Hockley Resident:**

Cllr Holmes proposed from the Chair the Committee look at costing of shaped access bars that allow wheelchair access and prevent motorcycle and horse access, (as per entrance at Clements Hall) with the intention of putting one at Spencers and Thorpe Road entrance. Cllr Mrs Heath seconded. A discussion followed. The Chairman asked Members to vote on the proposal to ask the Clerk to research cost of shaped access bars. Members voted and the motion was carried. The Chairman asked the Clerk to respond to the resident's email advising what action HPC were taking.

7) **Request for a more suitable seat for elderly people in Spencers:**

Cllr Mrs Glynn said there were 3 seats available. The Chairman said the seats in the store were purchased as street furniture and there was a need to get agreement that one of these seats be utilised in the park, it was also recognised that Council needed to look at replacing the countryside seats with the new benches recently purchased. It

was agreed that, subject to the agreement of General Purposes one of the seats purchased for replacement of street furniture be placed in Spencers.

8) Tree thinning in Spencers – to note trees identified for felling:

The Chairman advised 29 trees had been identified for felling to fulfil obligation to the insurance and they had been discreetly marked with a red dot. Cllr Leach asked at what stage would Council start planning the thinning of the remaining park and the Chairman responded that once work in respect of the insurance requirements was complete the thinning programme for the rest would start within the next 2 years and continue over a period of years. Members noted.

9) Dog bin emptying (referred from Full Council). Frequency of service from RDC and possible provision of bigger bins in Spencers and Magnolia.

The Clerk advised the cost of the larger dog bins would be £200 each. In light of the decision to write to Michael Starke, Cabinet Member of the Environment, the Chairman asked Members if they were happy to hold off making a decision until Council had heard from RDC on the routine. Members were content.

10) E-mail complaint from resident re. surface of Magnolia bridleway:

Members asked who had laid the material and the Clerk informed that County Council Public Right of Way Officer had arranged for this material to be laid. HPC were required to maintain access through the bridle path but not to maintain the path surface. The Chairman asked the Clerk to forward the complaint to ECC and put pressure on them to correct the material used on the path, sending a copy to the resident. Members were content.

11) Summary of decisions:

- Cllr Holmes to research local groups or pond society to gain addresses to pass to the Clerk for him to contact seeking help/advice on clearance of pennywort.
- The Clerk to contact Gary Morley to provide maps for footpath signs - to be available to present at October meeting.
- The Clerk to ask the Grounds man to take the dangerous edge off the step formed as a result of the repairs in Elizabeth Close and grass later in the year.
- Cllr Mrs Glynn to advise the Clerk of the date of her meeting with the equestrian group.
- The Clerk to write to Michael Starke, the Cabinet Member of the Environment identifying the poor service of emptying dog bins with copies of the letter to be sent to Ward Councillors D Stansby and J Mason.
- Adult Gym to be placed on the Agenda for the September meeting to allow time for the Clerk to research funding and collate information
- Great Crested Newts - to be removed from Action list.
- Mural in Magnolia Park - to be removed from Action list.
- Cost Centre 301 Magnolia Park - the Clerk to clarify the nature of the expenditure.
- The Clerk to seek costing for disabled access bars for entrance to Spencers and Thorpe Road entrance and to advise complainant of the decision
- Log seats to be replaced with new Benches in Spencers.
- Agreed to hold off making a decision to purchase larger dog bins until response received from RDC.
- The Clerk to contact ECC regarding inappropriate material used to surface bridle path and send copy to complainant.

Chairman