

**Minutes of the meeting of the  
PARKS, OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION & FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE  
held on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> September 2009  
at the Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford, Essex**

**Councillors present:** Chairman K Holmes, Vice Chairman Mrs A Heath, 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:** Mrs H Glynn.

**1) Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting:**

Cllrs J Dickson (ex-officio), Mrs J Barney (another meeting) and Mr S Mennell, Clerk (holiday).

**2) Declarations of Interest:**

Cllr Mrs Glynn declared an interest should any subject arise relating to her address.

**3) Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009 and to approve the destruction of the manuscript notes in respect of that meeting:**

Members approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009 as a true record and agreed to the destruction of the manuscript notes.

**4) Parks – Action List Update:**

The Chairman went through the action list.

- **Arrange for clearance of ponds on a timely basis:** Cllr Mrs Heath passed an email to the Chairman providing information on clearance of weed. The Chairman gave an update that the weed had mainly died where the ponds had dried out, the weed had been cleared in Spencers but it remained green due to lack of water. Item ongoing.
- **Footpath signs:** Cllr Mrs Glynn advised that the Priest at St. Teresa's was delighted and agreed for a painting of the Priest's house to be featured on the footpath signs for embellishment. The Chairman was asked where the signs would be positioned, he replied there would be 3 signs, one for Whitehart Common, one for footpath 7 along Ashingdon Road and for the third the entrance to Ironwell Lane had been discussed but it was yet to be decided where the third sign would be placed. Cllr Mrs Glynn proposed that the third sign be sited at the end of Ironwell Lane, being the start of the parish. The Chairman noted her comment and advised when the point was reached where the signs were ready, a debate would take place for the most appropriate place. Cllr James asked if there was to be a new sign for the Parish Office and the Chairman informed it was part of the Village Identity project.
- **Research provision of allotments:** There was a lengthy debate and the Chairman requested the discussion be noted in bullet point form:-
  - Had Council looked into asking any of the farmers whether they would be interested in releasing land.
  - Land agents had been approached who represent farmers and land owners, uniform reluctance was found at the time because of the District Core Strategy.

- The Core Strategy had now been published but it did not identify specific sites.
- Cllr Mrs Glynn gave an update on the Core Strategy spreading over 15 years working in 5 year phases and advised there were no plans for Ironwell Lane in the strategy at the moment.
- Outlying application (separate from the Core Strategy) from Barrats regarding Christmas tree Farm and another developer for Coombes Farm.
- Need to find land now to avoid the possibility of waiting 15 years for sites to become available.
- Contact RDC to put in a compulsory purchase.
- Had Council written to RDC to ask if they had land suitable?
- No land in the Parish of Hawkwell owned by RDC suitable.
- Look at green belt land going for auction.
- After 6 requests from parishioners Council had public duty to investigate availability of land and approach RDC identifying a piece of land, RDC obliged to compulsory purchase that land but Council would embark on a lengthy legal process to justify it, then the land would be leased to Council.
- Who would pay costs?
- RDC would pay and lease the land to HPC.

The Chairman asked Members for a proposal from the floor and it was suggested that Members inform the Clerk of any appropriate land for him to refine the search. He asked if Members felt that was the way forward at the moment and Members agreed. Cllr Mrs Glynn advised she had already notified the Clerk of a piece of land in green belt between Hogarth Way and the bridle path and he had made a note of it.

- **Work Programme for ROSPA:** See item 8.
- **Tree Thinning in Spencers Park:** Looking to start October/November. Cllr Leach expressed there was need to inform parishioners living near by. Cllr Mrs Heath thought it had been agreed to place an article in the current newsletter but that had not happened. Cllr Leach said it would be noted to place an article in the November newsletter and letters would go out to the neighbourhood.
- **Spencers bridle path:** Cllr Mrs Glynn advised schedules to take place between now and Christmas with the work starting in the near future. The Chairman stated HPC needed to start cleaning up the access once work had started.
- **Litter/dog bins collections:** See item 7.
- **Adult Gym:** See item 6.
- **Query on expenditure in Magnolia Park:** Members agreed to close item.
- **Disabled access, Spencers:** The Chairman read out the Clerk's recommendations in the action report and asked the committee for approval to go ahead and contract out the work to install the access points. Members agreed to the spend.
- **Log seats to be replaced with new benches in Spencers:** Members agreed the seats needed to be replaced and were content for the Groundsman to install the benches. The Chairman to advise D Abrams.
- **Complaint about surface of Magnolia Bridle path:** Item ongoing.

## 5) Financial Report:

The Chairman went through the Financial Report, there were no questions and Members accepted the Report.

**6) Adult Gym:**

The Chairman referred Members to the Clerks report and the two proposed options quoted from Park Leisure Ltd. Some Members were discontent with the two comparisons, the equipment was disappointing and appeared to be more expensive than the catalogues previously researched, they felt the equipment should include a ski walker, the sort of apparatus that people were unlikely to have at home. Members discussed the equipment in Priory Park and indicated they were hoping to provide similar apparatus. It was suggested that a lesser amount of equipment be installed and gradually expand it once usage and feedback had been monitored but it was felt that the logic behind installing a range of apparatus was a thought out work out to exercise all areas of the body. Members expressed frustration over the amount of time passed in moving forward with the subject. The soft matting, fencing and stand alone equipment was discussed. It was generally felt that the apparatus should be grouped together with soft matting in place under each piece of equipment and each piece would be spaced with grass between, the area would not be fenced off so as to enable ease in grass cutting. Due to the lengthy debate the Chairman felt it sensible to decide on a location, agree whether to process the grant application due to the 6 week deadline and further debate the range of equipment at the next meeting. **Members approved the application to secure a grant for £15K be processed and an area in Magnolia Park (in front of the car park and near the children's play area) was agreed to site the equipment as it was highly visible and less likely to be vandalised. Members agreed for the Chairman to instruct the Clerk to process the bid.**

**7) Removal of Dog Waste and litter – update:**

The Chairman referred Members to the Clerk's report and relating correspondence. Cllr Patient requested it be placed on record that he appreciated and commended the content of the Clerk's letters. **Cllr Patient moved the Clerk's recommendation for larger bins, that the situation be continually monitored and that Council consider withholding payment.** Cllr Mrs Dorrell seconded, the Chairman asked Members if they agreed, they did and the motion was carried. Members queried whether the bins would be lockable to avoid the dog waste being taken out and thrown around and felt it was urgent that the bins be installed as a number of people were putting dog waste in the general bins. The Chairman thought that the provision of larger bins would be processed on the Clerk's return from holiday. Members were frustrated that the order could not be placed in the Clerk's absence and Cllr Leach as Chair of Full Council advised as Council's proper officer the Clerk was the only person entitled to contract on behalf of the Council, Members did not have the authority to act, however, any Member could nominate someone as proper officer at a future Council meeting but circumstances at the moment according to Standing Orders dictated that the Clerk was the proper officer and only he could make contracts on Council's behalf. Cllr Patient queried whether Council would be charged more in the emptying of the larger bins and the Chairman advised it appeared the charges related to the number of visits to empty rather than the size of the bin.

**8) ROSPA Report:**

The Chairman went through the report and was delighted to inform there were no high risk areas, the vast majority seemed to be low risk issues in respect of maintenance and repair. He suggested that the Clerk together with the groundsman come back to Council with a schedule of work in due course. He notified there were

tiny holes in some areas of the soft fill and they tended to get picked at and become larger holes and suggested a quote be sought to repair the tiny holes for Elizabeth Close and Magnolia Park, to be proactive rather than reactive. Cllr Leach said as there was no financial commitment, he would be happy to source a quote so that the Clerk would have a price when he returned from holiday. The Chairman asked Members if they agreed, they did and he thanked Cllr Leach. Cllr James referred to a snag list and asked who could be contacted as some of the recommendations were unclear as to what was being referred to and the Chairman clarified the Clerk liaised with a contact and should there be any queries, the Clerk would make them known to Council.

#### **9) Financial Planning 2010/2011:**

The Chairman went through the Clerk's report. Areas discussed were:-

- Spencers Park, ground maintenance outturn would be at budget – to be amended to use all the monies.
- Disabled access - change to £500.
- Provision for budget for allotments to be noted, budget to come under Parks due to it being an open space.
- Hedge at Golden Cross Shops – project being done whilst Clerk away.

The Chairman summarised in the next few weeks it was for Members to identify what money would be needed for 2010/11 and the committees were looking at this years spend to pre-empt what may be needed for next budget.

#### **10) Summary of decisions:**

- Site of third footpath sign to be agreed upon.
- Members to notify the Clerk of any possible land sites to research for allotments.
- Letters to be sent to neighbouring properties prior to tree thinning and an article to be placed in next Newsletter.
- Query on expenditure in Magnolia Park – item to be closed.
- Disabled access, Spencers - Members approved and agreed to the Clerk's recommendations to go ahead and contract out the work to install the access points.
- Members approved the replacement of log seats with benches. Cllr Holmes to advise the Groundsman to install the benches.
- Members approved the bid to secure a grant for £15K to be processed. Cllr Holmes to instruct the Clerk to process the application.
- Location agreed for adult gym to be sited in Magnolia Park.
- Adult Gym to be placed on the next meeting agenda to further debate range of equipment.
- Removal of dog waste and litter - Members approved recommendations in the Clerk's report.
- Cllr Leach to obtain quote to repair tiny holes in soft fill mat in Elizabeth Close and Magnolia.
- The Clerk to work out a schedule of works from the ROSPA report and come back to Council in due course.
- Financial planning - Spencers Park ground maintenance to be amended to use all the monies, disabled access - change to £500, provision for budget for allotments to be noted, Members to identify what money would be needed for 2010/11.

Chairman