

**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RIVERWALK AND NATURE RESERVES MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP AT WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD 18<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2017 AT 3:00PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.**

**PRESENT:- Councillors** J.C. Goodman, Mrs J. Williams, P. Horner. B Fleet (Chairman), J Palombi, A Chick.

**Staff:** J. Sheehy - Deputy Town Clerk  
C. Frost - Open Spaces Supervisor

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs J. Lloyd and B Wilmer due to previous engagements.

**2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016 were received and noted.

**3. INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There were four members of the public present.

There were no items that any member of the public wished to speak about.

**5. OPEN SPACES SUPERVISORS REPORT**

C. Frost delivered his report to members of the group, stating that a number of members of the public had approached him at the James Cooke Woods concerned about the placement of benches, which are currently located in a central part of the site.

After discussion, it was **AGREED** by members that costs for an additional three benches for placement around the various walking routes would be sought in addition to the replacement and repair of a deteriorating gatepost towards the entrance of the site.

**6. DEPUTY TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

The Deputy Clerk delivered his report to members of the group, stating that a backlog of work relating to the open spaces sites, caused by staffing changes, was now being cleared in anticipation of the group back on schedule by the next meeting.

**7. WHETMEAD BOUNDARY WITH A12**

The Deputy Clerk updated members of the group following correspondence received by the Town Council relating to a dog that had left the confines of the Whetmead Nature Reserve and was subsequently killed in traffic on the A12 road. It was thought by the group that fencing would be expensive and hard to maintain, and could not guarantee the safety of running animals.

After discussion it was **AGREED** that the liability to the Town Council surrounding the boundary and animal casualties be researched for a report back to the group.

**8. COMMEMORATIVE TREE SCHEME**

A report was received concerning the future planning of the commemorative trees scheme. It was agreed by members that future planning should be considered alongside the promotion of the scheme.

**9. WHETMEAD WEED CUTTING AND NEW TREE PLANTING**

Members received a request for consideration of additional tree planting and weed cutting on the Whetmead Nature Reserve. It was noted that a management plan was already in place for the nature reserve and it was subsequently **AGREED** the request be responded to by the deputy clerk explaining this.

**10. FRIENDS OF THE RIVER WALK NOTES 7<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2016**

The notes of the Friends of the River Walk meeting, 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016 were received and noted.

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman raised concerns surrounding the entrance of Whetmead and suggested that new surfacing such as bark or crushed concrete would be of benefit to the area. C. Frost stated that the pathways had been renewed once previously with wood chipping to a good visual effect, but the work was lost when the adjacent river flooded and carried away the surfacing.

It was **AGREED** that consideration be given to the renewal of the pathways leading to Whetmead, for costings to be delivered to the next meeting.

The Chairman queried the status of walking posts and interpretation boards for Whetmead (**Ref Min. 6 19-10-2016**). The Deputy Clerk explained costings were now being put together for options to be considered and approved at the next meeting. It was noted that research into the feasibility of a pond in the Closed Churchyard, Witham, had been delayed by the change in staffing and it was subsequently **AGREED** that this item be raised on the next Agenda.

Following discussion of Nature Reserve status at the last meeting (**Ref Min. 9 19-10-2016**) it was **AGREED** that research into the classification and implications of Nature Reserve status on portions of the Riverwalk would be researched and raised as an item on the next Agenda.

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted for **April 19<sup>th</sup> 2017** at 3:00PM.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 4:05PM.

**JS 19.01.17**