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MINUTES

Meeting of: **Environment Committee**

Date: **Monday, 12th July 2021**

Place: **Town Hall, 61 Newland Street, Witham**

Present: Councillors

J.	Goodman	(Chairman)
K.	Atwill	(Vice Chairman)
A.	Kilmartin	
M.	Lager	
C.	Livermore	
H.	Andrews	(Assistant Clerk)
G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C. Lager, S. Hicks and M. Weeks who had previous engagements.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and accepted.

2. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held 27th January 2020 were received and Members reminded that the delegated decisions previously taken under the Covid-19 Governance Overview had been received by the Town Council.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Environment Committee held 27th January 2020 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3. **INTERESTS**

No interests were declared at this time.

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

There was no member of the press or public present.

5. **COMMITTEE INCOME, EXPENDITURE & BUDGET REPORT**

The committee income & expenditure reports for the period 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021 and for 1st April 2021 – 31st May 2021 were received.

The Clerk explained that there had been some overspends because of repairs but overall Environment was under budget at year end. Members considered that as the Financial Regulations stipulated that orders should not be placed if the individual budget line was over 100% then either a virement or a change in the Regulations should be considered.

Members asked about the tree work and the Clerk explained that 2020/2021 was the third year of the planned tree maintenance and that the new contractor had proved to be cheaper. Members were reminded that tree work would be an ongoing issue.

Members then spoke about the expense of the toilet block in the park.¹

RESOLVED That the Income and Expenditure reports for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 and for 1st April to 31st May 2021 be received and noted.

6. **CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk's report was received.

The Clerk explained that the Climate Audit Panel had met and the Notes and recommendations would be taken to the next Meeting.

Members spoke about the vandalism on the River Walk and digressed into ways of educating the young which would be referred to the Community Committee for further discussion.

RESOLVED That the report be received and the suggestion that Members visit the Secondary Academies to explain about the work of the Town Council and taxation be referred to the Community Committee for consideration.

7. **OPEN SPACES MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Minutes from the Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee meeting held 21st April 2021 were received.

It was noted that the additional gate at Whetmead is yet to be installed but will be progressed.

Members spoke about the peregrine falcon seen in the town centre and the discussion turned to the serious pigeon situation with guano on streets and buildings. Members were reminded that this was a District Council matter.

RESOLVED That the Minutes be received and a letter sent to the Public Health Officer Braintree District Council regarding the pigeon problem in the town centre.

¹ This would be considered as part of the Climate Audit Panel's audit.

8. TREE GROUP MINUTES

The minutes from the Witham Tree Group meetings of 18th May and 5th June 2021 were received.

RESOLVED That the minutes be received and noted.

9. HIGHWAYS DEVOLUTION SCHEME

The Clerk explained that with the warm, wet weather a lot of work had been undertaken to cut back overgrown vegetation. Members were reminded to inform the office of suitable tasks which could be undertaken as part of the scheme.

Members made several suggestions including the cleaning of bus stop signs.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

10. LOCAL HERITAGE LIST REVIEW GROUP

Members were asked to review the group and were reminded that following the last meeting on 9th January 2020 the amended list was submitted to the District Council. It was agreed that Mr Palombi who had assisted the District Council with the Courtauld list be asked to use his contacts to ascertain the current situation. It was an aspiration for the Town Council to publish a book.

RESOLVED That the information be received and Mr Palombi asked if he could assist in progressing this issue with the District Council.

11. HIRE OF OPEN SPACES POLICY

The Hire of Open Spaces Policy was received.

Members agreed that the wording should be changed from ‘No alcohol may be consumed’ to read ‘No alcohol may be sold’.

RESOLVED That the above amendment be made, the Hire of Open Spaces Policy agreed and reviewed annually.

12. COMMEMORATIVE ITEMS ON THE RIVER WALK

The Commemorative items on the River Walk policy was received.

Members agreed that the paragraph ‘Commemorative plaques are not permitted next to Commemorative Trees’ be removed.

RESOLVED That the above amendment be made, the Commemorative items on the River Walk policy be agreed and reviewed annually.

13. SNOW CLEARANCE POLICY

Members agreed that the Snow Clearance Policy should be retained and updated.

RESOLVED That the Snow Clearance Policy be retained, updated and reviewed annually.

14. BUS SHELTERS

A report and licence were received.

Members noted that the replacement bus shelter had cost £4,980 and a further £1,080 to install. The Clerk explained that following the County Council review of bus shelters it would seem that the Town Council is now only responsible for three shelters, the other two in Albert Road by the railway station.

RESOLVED That the report be received and information noted.

15. REVIEW OF STREET FURNITURE

A report was received detailing the locations of Witham Town Council litter bins and benches.

Members agreed that ownership of 141 litter bins throughout Witham was excessive and noted that many need replacing.

It was agreed to seek confirmation from Braintree District Council that the town centre litter bins would be included in the regeneration project. It was also noted that following the sharing of the asset list the District Council had not responded.

RESOLVED That the report be received, confirmation be requested from Braintree District Council that the litter bins in the town centre would be included in the regeneration project and that a response be sought following the asset list being shared.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 9.28 p.m.

Councillor J Goodman
Chairman

HA/GK/14.7.2021