



Town Hall | 61 Newland Street | Witham | CM8 2FE
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MINUTES

Meeting of: **Environment Committee**

Date: **Monday, 11th November 2019**

Present:	Councillors	T.A.	Pleasance	(Chairman)
		J.C.	Goodman	(Vice Chairman)
	Mrs	S.	Ager	
		J.C.	Bayford	
		S.E.	Hicks	
	Miss	C.	Jay	
	Mrs	A.	Kilmartin	
		M.C.M.	Lager	
	Mrs	S.C.	Lager	
		C.S.	Livermore	
		R.P.	Ramage	
	Miss	M.L.	Weeks	
	Mrs	G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)
	Mrs	H.	Andrews	(Assistant Proper Officer)
	Miss	N.	Smith	(Assistant RFO)

52. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

53. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held 16th September 2019 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

54. INTERESTS

Councillor J.C. Goodman declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 57 – Clerk’s Report, as he was affected by the Traffic Regulation Order for Chippingdell.

Later in the Meeting at Minute 69 – James Cooke Wood, Councillor J.C. Bayford declared a non-pecuniary interest as he uses the woodland regularly.

55. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no member of the press or public present.

56. REPORT(S) FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

There was no Member from the County Council present but it was noted that Essex County Councillor James Abbott had given a detailed report at the last Town Council Meeting a fortnight previously.

57. CLERK'S REPORT

Councillor J.C. Goodman had declared an interest.

The Clerk's Report on matters arising was received.

Members were informed that an email of thanks had been received following the Operations Team being called upon to rescue car keys from a drain. The Chairman asked that the Town Council's thanks to staff be recorded.

A form had been received from Braintree District Council requesting details of land requiring improvements which could be included in the Open Spaces Action Plan. It was agreed that details should be sent to Members for consideration and the matter referred to a Planning Applications and Transport Sub-Committee Meeting.

Members were informed that the Whetmead entrance gate had to have an extra piece added as bikes had been able to gain access.

Members were told that at the Blackwater Rail Trail meeting to be held on 12th November 2019 information would be sought regarding advice given by the Highways Department in relation to planning applications.

It was noted that the final knee railing had been installed on the River Walk and it was understood that stronger regulations to prevent incursions could be enacted.

RESOLVED That the report be received and information noted.

58. WITHAM LOCAL HERITAGE LIST

Councillor J.C. Goodman said that in addition to himself and Mr John Palombi, Councillor Mrs S. Ager had offered to be part of the Task and Finish Group. Councillor M.C.M. Lager also agreed to assist.

RESOLVED That Councillors Mrs S. Ager, J.C. Goodman and M.C.M. Lager, along with Mr J. Palombi of the Witham & Countryside Society, form a Task and Finish Group to look at the Witham Local Heritage List.

59. ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE BUDGET

The Environment Committee Budget was received.

The suggestion was made that the Environment Committee should make appropriate virements from one budget to another.

RESOLVED That the Budget be received and noted.

60. ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET 2020/2021

(a) **Business Plan**

The draft Business Plan was received.

It was suggested that keeping the Town Council's Open Spaces up to a high standard should be included in the Business Plan.

It was thought that the next stage of the Business Plan should be to include costings, resources, skills and timetables along with any risks. The suggestion was made that a Lead-Member should be appointed for each project.

Members suggested that the bench sponsorship scheme should also include the opportunity for dog memorial benches.

RESOLVED That a memorial dog bench scheme be included in the Business Plan.

RESOLVED That the Business Plan be agreed.

(b) **Budget 2020/2021**

A draft Budget was received.

RESOLVED That the 2020/2021 Budget for the Environment Committee be referred to the Estimates Sub-Committee Meeting on Monday, 6th January 2020.

61. PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND TRANSPORT SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Planning Applications and Transport Sub-Committee Meetings held 16th and 30th September; and 14th and 28th October 2019 were received.

RESOLVED That the Minutes be received.

62. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION STEERING GROUP

The Minutes from the Town Centre Regeneration Steering Group meeting held 17th October 2019 were received.

Members considered this to have been a constructive meeting.

RESOLVED That the Minutes be received and noted.

63. HIGHWAYS REPORT

An updated Highways Report was received.

Members noted the long time it had taken for the issue of motorists parking across the entrance to Lawn Chase to be resolved. Members agreed that the Local Highways Panel should be asked as to why these issues take such a long time, why it was first rejected and why the proposed extended commuter parking restrictions in Chipping Hill have not been implemented.

RESOLVED That the Local Highways Panel be asked about the length of time issues are taking to be resolved, why the original application was rejected and why the extended commuter parking restrictions in Chipping Hill have not been implemented; and that Essex County Councillor James Abbott be made aware of these issues and assistance sought.

RESOLVED That the Highways Report be received and noted.

64. HIGHWAYS CONSULTATION

Details of the Highways Consultation were received.

It was agreed that Members should respond individually to the Highways Consultation.

RESOLVED That the Highways Consultation be received and Members respond individually.

65. CONRAD ROAD – SPEEDING

Councillors S.E. Hicks and Miss M.L. Weeks gave a report regarding the 20's Plenty Campaign.

Councillor Miss M.L. Weeks explained that she had been assured by Braintree District Council and Essex Highways that the whole layout of Conrad Road would be changed to alleviate problems for once the new development is built. Members agreed that Essex County Council do not plan ahead and had not given any serious thought to this area where there is a concentration of schools. It was suggested that a letter should be sent to the Leader of Essex County Council asking for better proposals because of the increased number of children that the new development in Conrad Road would generate. Members agreed that there should be a 20 mph speed limit outside all schools.

RESOLVED That a letter be sent to the Leader of Essex County Council asking for better road layout proposals as there will be an increased number of children once the new development is built off Conrad Road.

RESOLVED That the Report be received and noted.

66. HIGHWAYS DEVOLUTION

The Assistant Proper Officer gave a verbal report on the Highways Devolution pilot scheme. She explained that she needed Members to advise on jobs that require to be carried out. At present she had been advised of 22 jobs but only 13 could be completed as work on priority 1 routes, B1389 (Colchester Road, Newland Street and Hatfield Road) and B1018 (Collingwood Road, Braintree Road and Cressing Road) are not allowed. She said that from the £17,200 grant just over £3,000 had been spent which included course costs and road signs. She had been to an Essex Association of Local Council meeting to give feedback but there was no information as to whether the scheme would continue. Despite regular contact the schedule of works is still awaited but she had been introduced to her 'Highway Buddy' who would give assistance.

Members were frustrated that work could not be carried out on the priority routes.

RESOLVED That the information be received and Members inform the Town Hall Office of work that needed to be carried out.

67. TREE GROUP

The Notes from the Tree Group's meetings held in September and October 2019 were received.

RESOLVED That the Notes be received and noted.

68. RURAL/MARKET TOWNS GROUP

Information was received from the Rural Services Network and Members were asked to consider becoming part of the Rural/Market Town Group.

Members considered that with a population of over 27,000, and rising, it would not benefit Witham to join this Group.

RESOLVED That the information be received and the invitation to join the Rural/Market Town Group be declined.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

69. JAMES COOKE WOOD

A report was received.

Councillor J.C. Bayford declared a non-pecuniary interest.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

70. PUBLIC DOMAIN

Members agreed that the item discussed in Private Session should not be moved into the Public Domain.

RESOLVED That Minute 69 – James Cooke Wood, should remain in Private Session.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 9.19 p.m.

Councillor _____
Chairman

GK/18.11.2019