



Town Hall | 61 Newland Street | Witham | CM8 2FE  
01376 520627  
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## MINUTES

Meeting of: **Environment Committee**

Date: **Monday, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022**

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

Present: Councillors

J.	Goodman	(Chairman)
J.	Bayford	
S.	Hicks	
A.	Kilmartin	
C.	Lager	
M.	Lager	
M.	Weeks	
H.	Andrews	(Assistant Town Clerk)
G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

### 31. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C. Livermore who had a hospital appointment, Atwill and Rajeev who were isolating.

### 32. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### 33. INTERESTS

No interests were declared at this time.

### 34. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no member of the press or public present.

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

The committee income & expenditure report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 – 30th November 2021 was received.

Members commented on the budget, highlighting some areas of over spend although that of most concern was with regards to bus shelters.

The Clerk explained each of the budget lines with an over spend.

**RESOLVED** That the committee income and expenditure report be received and noted.

**36. CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk gave an update on the footpath opposite Helen Court. She reminded Members that this had first been discussed at a Policy and Resources Meeting in November 2021 when it had been intimated that the hedge might need to be removed to allow sufficient space for a footpath. A number of discussions had taken place between the technical manager for Bellway and an arboricultural consultant resulting in a site visit. The County Council had now permitted a 1.5m wide pavement and by reducing the hedge by 300mm along a 12m stretch this could be achieved. It would seem that this section of land is owned by Bellway but they would be working with the Town Council to improve and enhance the hedge which was infiltrated by ivy and had a number of gaps. Bellways would extend the hedge by 10m towards the development. The work to trim back the hedge would be completed next week and the Operations Manager would be in attendance. The footpath would open by the end of February 2022.

Members welcomed the information that Bellway proposed to be working with the Town Council.

**RESOLVED** That the information be received and noted.

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

The Minutes from the Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee meeting held 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 were received.

The Clerk explained that further information was required in relation to the ground water issues and the matter would be referred to Town Council should there be a cost implication. It was hoped that by re-digging the gullies and un-clogging the pipes and culverts the underground springs could be diverted.

Comment was made that it should be established which pathways on the River Walk were Public Rights of Way.

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes be received and noted.

**38. TREE GROUP MINUTES**

The minutes from the meetings of the Witham Tree Group held 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022 were received.

Members recognised the work undertaken by the Tree Group and asked that the Town Council's appreciation be minuted.

**RESOLVED** That the minutes of the Tree Group meetings be received and noted.

**39. HIGHWAYS DEVOLUTION SCHEME**

(a) Update

The Clerk gave an update on the devolution scheme. She reiterated that the constraints of the scheme meant the Town Council was struggling to spend devolution money but restrictions are under review.

**RESOLVED** That the update be received and noted.

(b) Licence

Members were asked to consider applying for a licence to replace the Maldon Road/Blue Mills Hill fingerpost, under the scheme.

The Clerk advised that if the Town Council replaced the fingerpost a licence would be required and the fingerpost would become our responsibility. She added that the procedure was not straightforward and a new licence would be required for each post.

After discussion it was agreed that the Terms and Conditions of the Licence should be examined along with the powers contained in the Highways Act 1980 which would allow notice to be served to require repairs to be made.

**RESOLVED** That the Terms and Conditions of the Licence be obtained and the Highways Act 1980 be checked to see what powers would be available to require repairs to be made.

**40. SHOP FRONT FACELIFTS**

A motion was received from Councillor Atwill to explore creative image dressing packages for shop windows on empty properties in the town centre.

**RESOLVED** That in the absence of Councillor Atwill this matter be deferred.

**41. GREEN FLAG AWARD APPLICATION**

A report on the Green Flag Award scheme which recognised well managed open spaces and parks was received.

The Clerk explained that until the footpaths/cycleways on the River Walk were repaired it would be inappropriate to apply for the Green Flag Award.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and information noted.

**42. CYCLEWAYS REVIEW GROUP**

Members were asked to consider the constitution of a Cycleways Review Group.

Members agreed that a Group should be set up to promote the delivery of linked up cycleways in the town. It was agreed that a recommendation should be made to the Town Council and the Group report to the Planning and Transport Committee.

**RECOMMENDED TO TOWN COUNCIL** That a Cycleways Review Group be set up to scrutinise and promote the delivery of linked up cycleways.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.46 p.m.

Councillor J. Goodman  
Chairman

HA/GK/2.2.2022