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MINUTES

Meeting of: **Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee**

Date: **2nd September 2026**

Present:	Councillors	B	Fleet	
		J.M.	Coleman	
		J	Goodman	
		P	Heath	
		R	Ramage	
	Co-optees	J.	Palombi	(CPRE)
		P.	Shuttleworth	(Local Wildlife Interests)
	Officers	H.	Andrews	(Deputy Town Clerk)
		H.	Smith	(Operations Manager)
		S.	Puckey	(Open Spaces Officer)

Five members of the public were present.

12. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Susan Black. Jane Casement was absent.

13. INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

14. MINUTES

The minutes were **AGREED** and subsequently signed by the Chairman.

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15. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public enquired about future plans for the closed Period Garden. The Deputy Town Clerk explained that the garden had been closed due to a damaged wall and anti-social behaviour but they were considering the possibility of opening up part of it again as a community garden, following the installation of a new shed.

A second member of the public was concerned that the River Walk Back Channel and parts of the river in the vicinity were overgrown with reeds and needed clearing. The Town Clerk agreed to contact the Environment Agency. A question was also raised about the line of desire path around the pond being reinstated but it was explained that this had been left to grow over to prevent anti-social behaviour.

A question was also raised about the ownership of the triangle of land next to Lidl where important Bee Orchids are regularly cut by staff. It was advised that this is Braintree District Council land but they would be informed of the Bee Orchids.

16. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's report was received by Members. Members were further advised that Wednesday 28th October had been set as a date for raking at Mill Lane Meadow with a view to try and reinstate the buttercup meadow.

Members **AGREED** to receive the report.

17. OPERATION MANAGER'S REPORT

A member of the Operations Team provided a verbal update. It was noted that the team were on schedule with all regular maintenance, with very little grass cutting required this quarter due to the weather. Notable achievements included several new bench installations, a new entrance sign at James Cooke Wood, and three successful Council events held on the River Walk - the music festival, teddy bears' picnic and new summer fair.

Members **AGREED** to receive the report.

18. WHETMEAD MANAGEMENT PLAN

While members were happy with the management plan, a question was raised about the accuracy of one of the paths and it was agreed that this would be reviewed.

Members **AGREED** to recommend adoption of the management plan to the Environment Committee.

19. RIVER WALK TREES

Members were in agreement that it would be good to plant a new oak tree on the River Walk near the veteran oak close to Pattison close / Laurence Avenue to provide succession for future residents to enjoy.

Members **AGREED** to receive the report.

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20. RIVER WALK HEDGE

Members accepted that planting the hedge would be expensive and time consuming to maintain.

Members **AGREED** to receive the report

Meeting concluded at 2.50pm.

SP/3.9.26

Signed by Chairman…….

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