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AGENDA

Meeting of: **Environment Committee**

Date: **Tuesday, 28th May 2019** Time: **7.30 p.m.**

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

Members are hereby summoned to attend the above Meeting to transact the following business. Members are respectfully reminded that each item on the Agenda should be carefully examined. If you have any interest, it must be duly declared.

To be present:	Councillors	J.C.	Goodman	(Vice Chairman in the Chair)
	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	
		P.M.	Ryland	
	Miss	M.L.	Weeks	

1. **APOLOGIES**

To receive apologies for absence.

2. **MINUTES**

To receive the Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held 18th March 2019 (previously circulated).

3. **INTERESTS**

To receive any declarations of interests that Members may wish to give notice of on matters pertaining to any item on this Agenda.

4. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

An opportunity to enable members of the press and public present to comment upon any item on the Agenda.

5. REPORT(S) FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

To receive report from County Councillors.

6. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

To receive a report from the Town Clerk ([attached](#) at page 4).

7. ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE BUDGET

To receive the Environment Committee budget details ([attached](#) at page 5).

8. BUSINESS PLAN

To consider a Business Plan for 2019/2020 ([previous Business Plan attached](#) at page 6).

9. HIGHWAY'S REPORT

(a) To receive the Highway's Report on matters outstanding ([attached](#) at page 9)

(b) To consider carrying out a further survey of residents of The Paddocks ([report attached](#) at page 10).

10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND TRANSPORT SUB-COMMITTEE

To receive the Minutes of the Planning Applications and Transport Sub-Committee Meetings held 18th March, and 1st, 15th and 29th April 2019 (previously circulated).

11. OPEN SPACES MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

To receive recommendations from the Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee Meeting held 16th January 2019 –

(a) **RECOMMENDED** to Environment Committee that a new survey be commissioned from ECOS and that the survey consider unusual trees that may benefit from Tree Preservation Orders.

(b) **RECOMMENDED** to Environment Committee to review cycleway signage.

12. HIGHWAYS DEVOLUTION

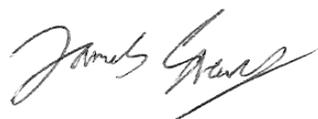
To receive a verbal update from the clerk on actions outstanding.

13. 1,000 TREES PROPOSAL

To receive a report following a request by Councillor P.M. Ryland to make a commitment to plant 1,000 trees in the next four years of this administration ([attached](#) at page 12).

14. TREE GROUP

To receive the Minutes of the Tree Group Meeting held 5th February, 12th March and 9th April 2019 ([attached](#) at page 13).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Sheehy', written in a cursive style.

James Sheehy
Town Clerk

JS/GK/22.5.2019

Officer Report: Town Clerk's Report on Matters Arising & Outstanding

The following items are for Members to note:

Minute 105/18.03.2019 - Clerks Report

Drop down posts and outstanding snags have now been completed and costs settled with the District Council for the securing of the River Walk from unauthorized encampments and incursions. One area of Saxon Drive remains outstanding as an area of land in question belongs to Essex County Council forming part of the highway. A licence application is outstanding with ECC officers. Upon grant of the licence, this final area of work can be completed.

Minute 113/18.03.2019 - Blackwater Rail Trail

Numerous correspondence has been sent following an initial meeting with ECC officers to discuss acquisition and management options for the Blackwater Rail Trail and no further response has been received. Further correspondence will now be raised to the relevant cabinet member and Essex Legal Services to progress this matter.

Minute 89/22.01.2019 - Street Lighting

Comprehensive work is underway by officers to satisfy public procurement regulations and begin a tender exercise for this project. This item of business will be referred back to the committee upon the receipt of tenders. Additional advice is being considered as to the final specification for certain lights to mitigate the impact on wildlife and ecology in sensitive areas.

Advice: To receive and note the report.

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Environment Committee Income & Expenditure Budget						
Environment	2018/2019		2019/2020			
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed
Commemorative Trees	800	190	800	0	0	0
Total Income	800	190	800	0	0	0
Operations PAYE/LGPS	93525	51372	96820	0	0	0
Equipment Supplies & Maintenance	9425	14933	8500	1038	0	0
Lighting Maintenance & Utility	6500	6303	1800	773	0	0
Toilet Block - Town Park	9000	7645	9000	27	0	0
Commemorative Trees	800	864	800	0	0	0
Dog Bin Maintenance	600	167	2500	0	0	0
Devolved Services	19075	10558	2000	0	0	0
Open Spaces General	12415	5719	1000	0	0	0
James Cooke Wood	0	63	200	0	0	0
River Walk	0	4181	3000	0	0	0
Whetmead LNR	0	63	600	0	0	0
Closed Churchyard	0	36	200	0	0	0
Witham in Bloom	11500	11401	11845	0	0	0
Overhead Expenditure	16584	17093	13926	1839	0	0

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ENVIRONMENT BUSINESS PLAN 2017 – 2020 (Revised March 2019)

Witham in Bloom Floral Displays

Outcome: To ensure that the town centre remains attractive and welcoming to residents and visitors alike and to engender a sense of pride in the town.

Action(s): Continuation of the contract with the existing third party which supplies and maintains the floral displays but to give consideration to alternative means of supply / maintenance should the need arise through reduced service and / or incompatible rising costs.

Financial implications: £11,500.00 in 2018 / 19 with estimated rises of circa 4% over the following two years.

River Walk

Outcome: To ensure that the recognised “jewel” in the town’s crown continues to provide the facility for recreation by both residents and visitors and that it is maintained in a manner which is commensurate with its importance as a main green artery.

Action(s): Negotiations between Witham Town Council and Braintree District Council regarding the River Walk have been ongoing for a considerable period of time but it is expected that such negotiations will be finalised during the Civic Year 2018 / 19.

Financial implications: Various costs will be dependent upon the result of the above-mentioned negotiations but for budgeting purposes it is anticipated that a sum of £20,000.00 be considered for the next Civic Year but reducing over the following two years.

Open spaces

Outcome: Greater use of open spaces, viz Whetmead, Closed Churchyard and James Cooke Wood owned and maintained by the Town Council.

Action(s): To promote the open spaces and encourage greater use by residents and visitors. To consider the possibility of utilising James Cooke Wood as a source of income.

Financial implications: overall costs are recorded within the general budget of circa £12,500.00 rising to circa £14,000.00 over the three years and are allied to ongoing maintenance and repairs but can be broken down to the specific areas.

Highways Issues

Outcome: To ensure that the inconvenience encountered by residents due to the multitude of highways issues, including the ongoing problems of parking, prevalent in the town is kept to a minimum.

Action(s): To continue to listen to, and support, the concerns of residents. To continue to lobby the appropriate authorities such as Essex County Council and the North Essex Parking Partnership in support of those concerns.

Financial implications: None attributable to Witham Town Council.

Street Lighting

Outcome: To ensure safe passage for residents and visitors at night when using footpaths and alleyways in the town.

Action(s): Given that throughout the town street lighting is owned and maintained by more than one authority, to give consideration to entering into dialogue with Essex County Council in order to ascertain as to whether ECC would be prepared to take responsibility for street lighting currently owned by the Town Council.

Alternatively, to investigate the replacement of existing lighting with more cost efficient LED lighting.

Financial implications: costs for the next Civic Year estimated at £6,500.00 and thereafter for the following year with a modest rise for the Civic Year 2020 / 21. However, such costs are contingent upon the outcome of one of the above actions.

Town Park WCs

Outcome: Continued provision of a necessary facility within the Town Park.

Action(s): Although the Town Park is owned by Braintree District Council, the WCs were installed by the Town Council and it remains the responsibility of the Town Council to maintain and repair these facilities.

Financial implications: costs maintained at £9,000.00 over the next two Civic Years with an anticipated modest increase in 2020 / 21.

Devolution of minor works by Essex County Council to Town / Parish Councils

Outcome: An overall tidier environment for residents and visitors actioned in a more expeditious manner at a local level with particular regard to minor issues such as the removal of unsightly vegetation resulting in safer passage and improved sight lines.

Actions(s): At a meeting of the Full Town Council on 4th March 2019 it was resolved that Witham Town Council would enter into a Grant Agreement with Essex County Council in order to take part in a Pilot Study relating to the devolution of certain tasks to the Town Council. The Grant Agreement would commence on 1st March 2019 and run until 29th February 2020.

It now falls as part of the remit of the Environment Committee to ascertain as to which tasks are within the scope of the Town Council's manual resources given the size and the limitations of its Open Spaces Team.

The signing of the Grant Agreement with Essex County Council effectively replaces any reference made to a Lengthsmen Scheme and a Minor Highways Scheme in previous revisions of this Business Plan in January 2018 and November 2018.

Financial implications: These had previously been costed at a nominal figure of £500.00 for the Civic Year 2018 / 2019 and rising to £2,000.00 per annum over the following two years. However, under the terms of the Grant Agreement with Essex Council there are now no financial calls on the Town Council as it will receive a grant of £17,268.35 for the period of the Grant Agreement.

Circular cycle path (taken from The Town Plan and agreed on 18.3.2019)

Lobby for free parking (taken from The Town Plan and agreed on 18.3.2019).

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Agenda Item 9(a)

Witham Town Council Environment Committee: Parking & Highways Report.

HIGHWAY / PARKING ISSUE	RAISED	FIRST RAISED	CURRENT STAGE	MIN. REF
Avenue Road Parking Restriction Timings	ENV	25.07.2017	Changes in progress	22.25/07/2017
Janmead Parking Restriction Timings	ENV	25.07.2017	Changes in progress	22.25/07/2017
Lawn Chase White Access Lining & Yellow Lines TRO	PA&T	21.08.2017	Resubmission due June 2019	61.21/08/2017
Chipping Dell Parking Restrictions	ENV	19.03.2018	TRO submission due June 2019	89.19/03/2018
Maldon Road Bus Stop Shelter & Seating	PA&T	29.10.2018	LHP Bid submitted 21.05.19	128.29/10/2018
Newland Street Bus Stop Seat (Former Police Station)	PA&T	29.10.2018	LHP Bid submitted 21.05.19	128.29/10/2018
Paddocks parking survey	ENV	28.05.2019	<i>To be considered by the Committee</i>	

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Officer Report: THE PADDOCKS**Issue:**

Minute 109(c) of Environment Committee Meeting held 18.3.2019 refers.

Complaints have been received from residents of The Paddocks regarding commuter parking. To get any change in Traffic Regulation Orders it is necessary to seek agreement from the residents and therefore at the beginning of the year a survey was sent out.

The result of the survey was as follows –

- Implementation of double yellow lines on both sides of the street – 2 for
- A resident's only parking permit scheme – 3 for
- Increase in parking restriction times – 14 for
- No changes – 7 for.

At the March Meeting Members thought a follow-up survey should be undertaken narrowing the options but because of purdah this would not be possible until after the local elections. It was therefore resolved that the new administration should take this matter forward.



Photo of parked vehicles on the entrance to The Paddocks

Advice:

Members now need to decide whether to take this issue forward.

It could be that the main problem relates to vehicles parking near the entrance to The Paddocks but if double yellow lines were introduced in that location the parking would just move further down the road so therefore an holistic approach in relation to the whole road needs to be taken.

In view of the results of the survey it is suggested that if Members wish to proceed that residents be asked if they would support an increase in parking restrictions times, i.e. two sessions of parking restrictions, one in the morning and an additional session in the afternoon to deter commuters.

GK/22.5.2019

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Officer Report: 1,000 TREES PROPOSAL
Issue:

Councillor P.M. Ryland has suggested that this administration should commit to planting 1,000 in the next four years.

There will be a number of issues to consider –

- (a) Locations for planting
- (b) Costings
- (c) Planting and Watering
- (d) Future maintenance of trees.

Locations – A decision has been taken to no longer plant trees on the River Walk otherwise it will become a wooded area rather than have swathes of open parkland. James Cooke Wood is also well planted and in need of active management. Land at Whetmead is poor quality and might not be able to support tree planting but there is an opportunity to strengthen the boundary with the A12 using whips (although any planting could be thwarted once the new A12 route is finalised). Advice could be sought from the Tree Group concerning appropriate locations. If the trees are not planted on Town Council land there is the added problem of seeking permission and location of utilities.

Costings – Depending on size and variety of the tree, costs could be a serious problem. There is £1,000 in the budget for tree planting and this normally is given to the Tree Group towards its planting programme. Councillor P.M. Ryland has suggesting setting up a Tree Planting Trust to carry forward his ideas.

Planting and Watering – This would be a massive undertaking and not able to be carried out by the Town Council's Open Spaces Team. Trees would need to be watered in the first few years after planting. Much would depend on the weather and how the trees are thriving. Advice from the Tree Group could be sought regarding how many trees they plant in one year.

Future Maintenance of Trees – The Town Council last year had a full survey done on all its trees and a three year programme of planned maintenance was agreed. £15,000 had to be vired last year and £15,000 found for this year's budget and next.

Advice:

The idea of planting a large number of trees is an environmentally good scheme however there are a number of issues which would need to be addressed. Members should therefore consider whether this scheme is viable taking into account the number of problems which would need to be solved.

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Agenda Item 14

Present : Ken Davies, Graham Wingrove, Jane Noble, Eric Teverson, Stanley Brailey, Allan Waight, Richard Hawkes, Barry Fleet.

- 1 **Apologies** - none;
- 2 **Minutes** of the meeting of 8th January 2019 - agreed;
- 3 **Matters arising** - Eric will check if any cages damaged on the green adjacent to Asda;
- 4 **2019 planting**
 - First planting went ok, although extraction of previous dead tree roots was challenging;
 - Approval received from utility companies for Spa Road, Cuppers Close , Maldon Road junction and Epping Way sites;
 - Discussion as to suitable sites for next few weeks; decision will be made just before each planting day;
 - Possible sites for holm oaks purchased by Stanley - edge of Humber Road estate to replace dead tree; greensward by Bramble Road [beyond plane tree];
 - Possible whip planting, Gershwin Boulevard area, defer to March meeting;
 - Replacement of Bramble Rd play area dead trees, could use Aegon volunteers, but awaiting further information from Shaun.
- 5 **WW1 memorial planting** - defer to March meeting;
- 6 **Tree damage** - awaiting news from Shaun re replacing tree on green adjacent to Asda;
- 7 **Spa Road scheme** - we understand that the scheme being installed by BDC involves shrub planting, a fir tree, liquidambers, gleditsias; not in the originally planned locations, presumably because of underground services; we have been advised that original trees had to be removed because they were ' diseased ' - however, we saw no evidence of this, so wonder if this was actually correct ; apparently the new trees will be watered for one year only - in our experience, this is unlikely to be sufficient;
- 8 **Town centre** - to be discussed again with Shaun;
- 9 **Finances** - bank balance of £1762.99; £120 received from HRECI for supply and maintenance of plane tree on Humber Rd estate; £120 due to Stanley for purchase of holm oaks; £206 due to Barry for renewal of public liability insurance [Zurich/TCV, i.e. Conservation Volunteers]; Barry will do paid invoice to Ken re plane tree; future funds - discussion re possible fund raising through Tesco's bag scheme [Ken familiar with the application procedure] and Coop Bank [who gave us a grant when the Group was set up] ;
- 10 **Website** - photos of latest planting added to the site;
- 11 **Open Spaces Committee** - Stanley is now our representative on the committee [in addition to Barry, whom sits as tree warden for Witham Central]. Currently, most work is on reviewing the River Walk management plan;
- 12 **Any other business** - Richard will survey our previous whip planting in the sedge bed area and advise appropriate action;
- 13 **2020 planting** - we will need to establish the WTC budget for the municipal year 2019/20 and plan accordingly; agreed that Allan, Eric & Stanley will consider our original survey of the town and suggest suitable sites; may include Greenfields owned land, e.g. Allectus Way, Forest Road, so we would need to make recommendations to them and seek their agreement in good time.
- 14 **Next meeting** - **Tuesday, 12th March, 8.00 p.m., White Horse function room.**

Minutes for 12/3/19 as follows:

Present : Allan Waight, Shaun Taylor, Eric Teverson, Stanley Brailey, Richard Hawkes, Jane noble, Graham Wingrove, Barry Fleet.

- 1 **Apologies** - none
- 2 **Minutes** of meeting of 5th February accepted.
- 3 **Matters arising** - 3 trees along Forest Road have been removed for flood prevention work, Shaun was unaware of this so will investigate; it was also noted that trees off Bridge St have been removed to create space for an access road to the planned Lidl store, and replacements are to be planted.
- 4 **2019 planting**
 - Latest plantings discussed;
 - It was felt necessary to commence watering the new trees immediately, rather than later in the year;
 - Bramble Road play area where a number of 'liquidamber' trees have died - Shaun has five field maples and it was agreed that they would be delivered to Eric for us to plant on 28th March; Shaun will also supply compost;
 - We also requested an oak to replace the one that died in Bramble Road and a London plane to replace the dead oak in Greenfields, which we would plant on BDC's behalf, and water thereafter;
 - The holm oaks obtained by Stanley have been planted along Spa Road to replace dead BDC owned trees;
 - Shaun advised that the removed tree on the corner of Trent Rd. & Highfields Rd is to be replaced, possibly with a 'chanticleer' pear;
 - Re possible whip planting along Gershwin Boulevard, Shaun will check the ownership;
 - It was agreed that we would move the excess trees in the River Walk sedge bed on 14th March;
 - Re planting on the 28th March, Barry will provide details to Aegon [Cofunds] seeking volunteer support;
 - Epping Way & Cuppers Close to be planted - 4th April ?
- 5 **World War 1 Memorial planting** - we believe that 84 men were lost [will check on the war memorial] so we will need 84 small trees [preferably] or whips; to be planted in a fenced off area alongside the hedge between Bramble Road & Honeysuckle Way ; could involve schools to assist with planting ?
- 6 **Tree damage**, green by Asda - Shaun will order a chestnut to replace the one believed to have been destroyed by BDC's contractors.
- 7 **Spa Road update** - new trees have been planted near the shops, protective fences to be added; the watering contract is only for one year [so may not be sufficient].
- 8 **Town centre** - Shaun advised that his colleague Nicola Murphy should have the services information we need. Stanley knows Nicola as they have been in contact re Spa Rd development so he will contact her.

9 **Financial report** - assumed to be unchanged from February; Eric may need to buy some more support posts.

10 **Website** - photos of planting continue to be added; general tree related articles can be added too.

11 **Future planning**

- Review protective cages after watering season;
- Re watering this summer, Eric is away 16th August to 5th September;
- We will consider Scots pines for future planting as evergreen;
- It is agreed that we would seek to plant on the Allectus Way estate - Allan, Stanley, Eric & Jane to update our original survey;
- Possible planting site along Cressing Rd, near the courts - Allan will check services;
- NB - green by junction of Maltings Lane & Howbridge Rd is difficult because of underground services;
- Howbridge estate - has a number of ash trees, so these will probably need replacing in due course because of ash dieback disease.

12 **Any other business**

- It was noted as the alder trees planted as part of the BDC ' £45k ' in Town End Field area no longer need their protective cages as they have grown so well, the cages are likely to be removed soon;
- It was suggested that BDC be asked to consider creating a shrub bed on the green on the corner of Grove Rd by Maldon Rd, depending on the ground condition [as we have been unable to plant trees there] .

13 **Next meeting - Tuesday, 9th April, White Horse function room, 8.00 p.m.**

Meeting of 9th April 2019:

Present : Shaun Taylor, Allan Waight, Stanley Brailey, Jane Noble, Richard Hawkes, Graham Wingrove, Eric Teverson, Barry Fleet.

Thanks to Eric for hosting the meeting at short notice following the double booking of the White Horse function room.

1 Apologies - Ken Davies

2 Minutes of meeting of 12th March - accepted subject to item 11, should read Rickstones Road not Crossing Road ;

3 Matters arising - it was confirmed that a number of young trees in the sedge bed on the River Walk had been moved as agreed ;

4 2019

- The recent planting at the Bramble Road playground was discussed, where we replaced failed 'liquidambers' with field maples on behalf of Braintree District Council. We had support from two Aegon employees;
- The planting at Cuppers Close was also discussed; the assistance of Essex & Suffolk Water in identifying where water and other utility services ran was noted;
- We have three trees left to plant [2 'William Caldwell' field maples, 1 sorbus whitebeam]; agreed that we would plant at least two of these to add to the Bramble Road green site, the other possibly to replace a dead BDC tree off Pasture Road, to be planted 11th April;
- It was agreed that Shaun would arrange for the removal of the dead oak in Bramble Road and will supply a replacement for us to plant;
- Shaun would also supply a London plane for us to replace the dead oak on the green on the Greenfields estate, along with a new horse chestnut for the 'Asda' green, hopefully to be planted 18th April;
- Whip planting discussed - Shaun suggested along near the railway line behind Forest Road. As the soil may be poor, he said a line may need rotovating first. Aim would be to plant during National Tree Week [late November/early December].

5 World War 1 Memorial planting

- We know that there are 80+ names on the memorial but of course all those who fought have now died so perhaps we should seek to plant more;
- Shaun suggested c. 100 containerised trees at £5/£6 each, which we would then plant & water;
- They could be planted in scallop shaped beds along the Bramble Road/Honeysuckle Way hedgeline, in 4 groups of 25 or 5 groups of 20;
- Shaun asked us to indicate what tree types we would like to plant;
- The British Legion would probably wish to be kept informed.

6 2020

- Allectus Way estate to be surveyed by Allan, Eric, Stanley & Jane, probably 3rd May; Greenfields Housing Association provisionally support additional planting;

- Cressing Road - land alongside road owned by who ? BDC maintain. Shaun will send us a map to confirm ownership; Allan will check services;
- Howbridge estate - has ash trees but believed to be 'manor' ash, which may be less liable to ash dieback disease although they tend not to be long lived anyway. June is probably the best time to conduct a survey.

7 **Watering** - need to water 2018 & 2019 plantings; possibly 2 bowser runs per week, to start 2nd May after Eric's holiday.

8 **Town centre** - Stanley has obtained services maps from Nicola Murphy [BDC]; passed to Allan to identify potential sites.

9 **Website**

- Weekly 'blog ' of planting;
- Allan will do a report on Sunday Times article re tree groups nationally;
- It was noted that some local authorities budget for £700 per new tree whereas we plant for a fraction of that.

10 **Finances**

- Ken had advised no change to previous report;
- Eric owed for posts, will advise Ken;
- Coop and Tesco's could be sources of additional funding;
- Stanley has contacted Morrisons Foundation.

11 **Any other business**

- Bridge St tree felling - felled for access to Lidl store; willows had been suffering from honey fungus; 10-15 new trees to go in [hornbeam + others] in a landscaped plan with a 5 year maintenance contract;
- We have planted 32 trees to date, more than ever [25 bought from Barchams, 5 from Shaun, 2 holm oaks secured by Stanley] with 3 more to go;
- Barry will try to provide a report to the Annual Town Meeting on 23rd April;
- Whips stored at Olivers Nursery - Stanley will check on survival rate.

12 **Next meeting** - Tuesday, 7th May at the White Horse Function Room at 8.00 p.m. To include AGM.

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