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## MINUTES

Meeting of: **Environment Committee**

Date: **Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

Present:	Councillors	J.C.	Goodman	(Vice Chairman in the Chair)
	Mrs	S.	Ager	
		J.C.	Bayford	
	Miss	C.	Jay	
		M.C.M.	Lager	
	Mrs	S.C.	Lager	
		C.S.	Livermore	
		P.M.	Ryland	
	Miss	M.L.	Weeks	
Also in attendance:	Cllr	P.R.	Barlow	
Essex County Councillor		J.	Abbott	Witham Northern
	Mrs	H.	Andrews	(Assistant Proper Officer)
	Mrs	G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

And three members of the public.

### 1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S.E. Hicks and Mrs A. Kilmartin who had previous engagements in their capacity as Members of Braintree District Council.

### 2. **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### 3. **INTERESTS**

No interests were declared.

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

Mr Ian Lucas wished to speak on the item relating to parking in The Paddocks. He explained that he had been a resident since 1993 and there was an increasingly serious parking problem with commuter parking. It was suggested that these motorists work at nearby offices rather than commuting via the rail station parking vehicles in the morning and then returning later in the day to move vehicles during the present one-hour parking restriction. The parking was causing an obstruction near the junction with The Avenue and sometimes the cars are on both sides of the roads causing congestion. There had been a good response to an initial survey issued by the Town Council to ascertain if there was support from the public to alter existing traffic regulation arrangements, with residents recognising the problems.

The Chairman thanked Mr Lucas for his comments.

**5. REPORT(S) FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

Councillor James Abbott gave his report. He spoke about the Town Council's desire to acquire the Blackwater Rail Trail and was prepared to talk to the Cabinet Member to progress the matter. He had spoken to the Town Clerk and advised on LED street light replacements. He was keen to support the Town Council in the Highways Devolution Pilot and hoped that the scheme would be successful. He stated that there were ongoing highways line painting issues following the increased parking restrictions in Avenue Road and Janmead recently implemented.

It was stated that the next Local Highways Panel would meet on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and would be open to the public adding that the LHP budget had been reduced from previous years. Councillor Abbott reported that a proposed pedestrian crossing in Rickstones Road was now undergoing a survey process and could potentially be funded by Section 106 monies. He said that the County Council was now doing a 'Top 5' repairs to footpaths and verges and he was seeking clarity on the criteria. He advised that the County Council had refused the planning application on three strong grounds for the increased stack height at the Waste Transfer Facility at Rivenhall. He said that he had spoken to the Town Clerk regarding the Forest Road 'pond' as the willow tree needed to be taken out and that the late Councillor Evans' memorial tree appears to have died.

Members asked about the criteria for resurfacing materials used on roads as there had been a number of complaints about Spa Road which had been tarred and shingled. Councillor Abbott explained that in urban areas roads are usually just tarmacked but this issue had already been pursued. In answer to a question he added that roads cannot be resurfaced if the correct weather conditions were not present.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Abbott for his comprehensive report.

**6. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

The Town Clerk's report was received.

Members agreed that Councillor Abbott should be asked to assist with regard to the acquisition of the Rail Trail. Councillor Abbott agreed to do so and added that following the strengthening of the Catholic Bridge in Colchester Road, steps are needed to access the Rail Trail and this was being pursued.

It was suggested that a letter should be sent to the District Council thanking them for securing the River Walk from unauthorised encampments.

**RESOLVED** That the Report be received and a letter of thanks sent to the District Council.

**7. ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE BUDGET**

The Environment Committee budget details were received.

**RESOLVED** That the Environment Committee budget details be received and noted.

**8. BUSINESS PLAN**

Members were asked to consider a Business Plan for 2019/2020.

The suggestion was that the current Business Plan should be updated to include details of the budget for maintenance of the River Walk bridges and cycle paths. In the Open Spaces section work to James Cooke Wood should be included. Tree maintenance should also be included as this is a significant cost to the Town Council.

**RESOLVED** That the current Business Plan be revised accordingly.

**9. HIGHWAYS REPORT**

(a) The Highways Report on matters outstanding was received.

Members were informed that an email had been received from Councillor D. Louis explaining that a redundant bus shelter from Gershwin Boulevard could be utilised in Maldon Road.

**RESOLVED** That the Highways Report was received.

(b) Members were asked to consider carrying out a further survey of residents of The Paddocks.

Members agreed that a further survey should be carried out and discussed the best questions to be asked to get a definitive response.

**RESOLVED** That a further survey of the residents of The Paddocks be carried out asking if they would agree to a further one hour parking restriction and if so at what time.

Councillor P.R. Barlow left the Meeting.

**10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND TRANSPORT SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Minutes of the Planning Applications and Transport Sub-Committee Meetings held 18<sup>th</sup> March, and 1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> April 2019 were received.

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

**11. OPEN SPACES MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

The recommendations from the Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee Meeting held 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019 were received.

- (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.

Members were puzzled by the recommendations as the trees had recently been surveyed and that cycleway signage would be part of the maintenance of the footpaths and cycleways which would be undertaken in due course.

It was agreed to go back to the Open Spaces Management Group which would meet on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019 to seek clarity and if necessary the matter could be discussed further at Town Council.

**RESOLVED** That the recommendations be received and clarity sought from the Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee.

**12. HIGHWAYS DEVOLUTION**

Members were informed that the Town Clerk had been to a meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2019 and a dedicated point of contact had been given. The grant is still awaited but the Town Clerk is continuing to make enquiries as to when payment would be received by the Council.

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

**13. 1,000 TREES PROPOSAL**

A report was received regarding a request by Councillor P.M. Ryland to make a commitment to plant 1,000 trees in the next four years of this Administration.

Members agreed the importance of tree planting but recognised the difficulties with logistics. It was suggested that further investigations should be carried out with involvement of the Tree Group.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and accept in principle and a business case be considered in conjunction with the Tree Group.

**14. TREE GROUP**

The Minutes of the Tree Group Meetings held 5<sup>th</sup> February, 12<sup>th</sup> March and 9<sup>th</sup> April 2019 were received.

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

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.48 p.m.

Councillor \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

GK/3.6.2019