



Witham

town council

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MINUTES

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

Date: **6th December 2022**

Present: Councillors

S	Hicks	(Chairman)
K.	Atwill	
J	Goodman	
C.	Lager	
T	Pleasance	
S	Black	(Witham and Countryside Society)
S.	Brailey	(Witham Tree Group)
B.	Fleet	(Tree Warden)
J	Palombi	(CPRE)
H	Andrews	(Deputy Town Clerk)
S	Dyer	(Operations Manager)
S	Smith	(P.A to the Council)

21. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr S. Ager, J Casement and P Shuttleworth.

22. INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

23. MINUTES

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

24. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no public present.

25. CONSIDERATION OF WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS

No written representations were received.

26. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's report was received by Members. It was noted that the ongoing water issues at Ebenezer Close was being reviewed and quotes for recommended drainage work being obtained. A tree survey had also recently been completed on the River Walk, and priority work recommended was being reviewed.

Members were informed that a London Plane tree had been planted during National Tree Planting Week, for the Queen's Jubilee as part of the Queen's Green Canopy. It was noted that consultation continues with National Highways with regards to the A12 widening project and the implications for Whetmead Nature Reserve with a further meeting proposed early in the New Year.

Members **AGREED** to receive the report

27. OPERATION MANAGER'S REPORT

The Operations Manager provided an update and confirmed that a new member of staff had joined the Operations Team who was working well and had already passed their brushcutter training qualification. On the River Walk, hedge cutting had been completed for the season, and leaves were continuing to be cleared from paths. It was noted that the water issues near Ebenezer Close was continuing but temporary measures were in place until a permanent solution was finalised.

It was noted that the team were continuing with thinning the tree canopy at James Cooke Wood and improvements were due to be made by replacing the car park fence with bollards.

At the Closed Churchyard the team have carried out general maintenance, including weeding the wildflower trial and adding more Yellow Rattle seeds. Wildflower plugs are due to be planted next year to continue the trial.

The team regularly visited the allotments and reported no issues.

Members thanked the Operations Manager for his report and extended their thanks to the whole team for the hard work that they do. Members informed the Operations Manager that one of the planters had been damaged at the railway station.

28. RIVER WALK FOOTPATHS

The Clerk informed Members that following a walk of the River Walk in August, a report had been received by Full Town Council on 21st November 2022 regarding resurfacing and restructuring the footpaths and cycleways on the River Walk. Priority tasks had now been agreed and it was noted that this was a long-term project over several years.

Members **AGREED** to receive the information.

29. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members were updated on the Essex Wildlife Trust rewilding project where some local parishes had been receiving advice on wildflower planting from advisers at the Trust.

Members discussed the potential benefits rewilding could have on the de-trunked A12 once the widening project had been completed.

Members commented that the land by Lidl and Churchills had been left in an unacceptable state by developers. The Clerk informed Members that complaints had also been received from the public and enquiries were currently being made with Braintree District Council regarding landscape plans for this area.

30. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Sub-Committee would be 14th March 2023.

Meeting concluded at 2.55pm

HA/SS/08.12.2022

Signed by Chairman.....