

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 20th
JANUARY 2015 AT 7.30PM AT THE TOWN HALL, HIGHAM FERRERS.**

PRESENT:

Cllr Mrs S Mantle (Chairman)
Cllr R Gell
Cllr Mrs V Newbery
Cllr G Whiting
Cllr P Tomas
Cllr Mrs K Dunn
Cllr A Dunn
Mr A Stanton (Higham Ferrers Angling Association)
Mr S Tuffnail (Higham Ferrers Angling Association)
Mr R Dexter (Parish Path Warden)
Mrs S J Mitcham (Town Clerk)
Mrs D Edwards (Administrator)

IN ATTENDANCE:

A member of Public
Tamsin Dennis (East Northamptonshire Council)

1. **APOLOGIES**
Cllr Mrs C Ingram
2. **SPEAKER ON TREE WORKS**
Tamsin Dennis from East Northamptonshire Council gave a talk on her role as a Tree Officer.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
None
4. **MINUTES**
RESOLVED:
That the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 16th September 2014 be signed by the Chairman as being a true and correct record following the addition of Mr S Tuffnail in Apologies.
5. **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT**
The Town Clerk reported the following, at the last meeting of the Grounds Maintenance Consortium in December it was confirmed that East Northamptonshire Council will continue to lead the consortium. A timetable for the procurement process has now been produced.
By the 6th February 2015 prospective bidders will have had to return their pre-qualification questionnaire. At the beginning of April the bidders that have been shortlisted will have received their tenders which are to be returned by 22nd May. The contract will have been awarded by the end of July.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

6. **STORM WATER DRAINAGE WITHIN AREAS OF OPEN SPACE ON KINGS MEADOW LANE.**

Cllr R Gell gave the following report on the future maintenance of storm water storage within open space on Kings Meadow Lane following a meeting with Andy Wright, from the Environment Agency.

“This was a very helpful walk looking at all our responsibilities. This included weed and plant growth in the ditch alongside Kings Meadow Lane and weed and plant growth in the ditch/stream between Parker and Blackwell. We also had an extensive look at the flood alleviation areas below Phases 5 & 6. I was pleased that my concerns about our future maintenance of these areas were lessened, although we will need to carry out regular maintenance. As long as we keep all the inlets and outlets clear and the main channels kept clear of shrubby growth there should be no problems.”

RESOLVED:

That in 2015 the following actions be taken:-

1. Locate and clear round all the storm water inlets and outlets in Phases 5 & 6.
2. Look along the other side of the A45 embankment to check where the storm water flows under the road. (Just to clarify where the other ends are).
3. Roughly clear the main channels along the whole length from KML to south of the pumping main.
4. Consider what work is needed to the length of the KML ditch alongside Phase 4 Public Open Space.

RESOLVED:

That in future years the following actions be taken :

- (a) Some vegetation alongside the narrow channels should be trimmed back to maintain visible channels.
- (b) Encroaching brambles within the retention area should be trimmed back and kept in check.
- (c) Willows should be coppiced on an ad hoc basis to prevent them overwhelming the area.
- (d) Plants in the central ditch/stream between Parker and Blackwell should be thinned on a third at a time basis. This will preserve the wildlife value whilst preventing it impeding the flow of water.
- (e) That further work is considered after meetings with Natural England and The Local Wildlife Trusts.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That expenditure of up to £250 in this financial year from the Park Maintenance budget to enable works in connection with the Storm Water Drainage on Kings Meadow Lane to be carried out.

7. **RIVERSIDE PARK LEASE**

A Report from the Town Clerk was received as negotiating.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That in principal the Council agree to a new lease including the liability for the bridges at a peppercorn rent (£10), on the proviso that there is no requirement to put the bridges in a better state of repair than the current condition.

8. **TO CONSIDER RESPONSE REGARDING POSSIBLE DIVERSION OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH VC24**

Background notes and a map had been circulated.

RESOLVED:

That the council object to the proposed diversion for VC24 and propose creating a link between VC23 and PH6.

9. **WEED CLEARANCE AT FISHING PLATFORMS**

A report was received on proposed works to clear the weeds around the fishing platforms.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That Higham Ferrers Riverside Park Anglers be granted permission to carry out weed clearance at fishing platforms along the lakeside and the side of the Old River Nene, as agreed with Nicola Orchard and Chris Haines, subject to Barry Spencer informing the Town Clerk and Cllr Gell with the dates when work will be done.

10. **TRANSFER OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AT KINGS MEADOW LANE PHASE 5**

RESOLVED:

That the Town Clerk continues to pursue this with Sue Scott at East Northants Council the David Wilson Homes.

11. **TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM HFRPA TO SITE A SMALL STEEL SITE CONTAINER AT THE RIVERSIDE PARK**

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That Higham Ferrers Riverside Park Anglers be permitted to site a small steel site container in which to store a small boat and tools for maintenance purposes subject to planning permission being obtained if required.

12. **REPORTS**

To receive reports from:-

12.1 **The Friends of Higham Ferrers Riverside Park.**

NONE.

12.2 **Higham Ferrers Riverside Anglers Association.**

Mr A Stanton reported that the AGM will take place on Monday 13th April and that the membership numbers are down by 60, currently at 111 and they have been carrying out regular litter picks. He also reported that trees are being vandalised.

RESOLVED:

That the attached report & map be noted.

12.3 **Parish Path Warden.**

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That the attached report be noted.

The feeder pillar on the High Street area of the Greenway and the badly lit bollard in the Kings Meadow Lane area of the Greenway will be looked into further by the Town Clerk.

12.4 **Parish Tree Warden.**

Cllr Gell gave the following report:-

“Since our last meeting I have looked at various tree and hedge problems for the Town Clerk, in particular in the Cemetery and the Church Yard. I have studied the Rushden East Landscape Character Assessment and Capacity Study which runs to 137 pages. I found it to be a very well researched document which should lead to the protection of most of the hedgerows and trees and also improve or create green corridors within the development. I will walk the area in the summer when the hedges and trees will be at their best and I will note any concerns to bring back to a committee meeting in the summer. I have also been informed of the need to fell the Walnut Tree on the former Combined Rubber Site and have been consulted on work to the trees at the Midland Road Development, On both of these I have worked with Tamsin Dennis.”

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

13. **ITEMS TO REPORT.**

Cllr R Gell reported that the works have been carried out at Phase 6 and that they are of a good standard.

14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING.**

Tuesday 7th April 2015

Chairman

Date: