

**SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting held at Champions Manor Hall
on Wednesday 16th March 2022 at 7.30pm

Present:

Councillor K Bentley (Chairman)
Councillor D Eley (Vice Chair)

Councillor Humphrey

Councillor Birch
Councillor Kelly

Councillor Shearring

In attendance: Acting Town Clerk, Town Mayor Murrough O'Brien, Deputy Town Mayor Bob Massey

E286 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence received from Councillor Lake, Wilson & Thompson.

E287 Dispensation considerations

No dispensation considerations received.

E288 Declarations of interest

No declared an interest received.

E289 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th November 2021 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

Proposed: Councillor Kelly

Seconded: Councillor Birch

Vote: Carried

E290 Public Questions

No members of the public present.

E291 Budgetary Position

The current budgetary position as of 10th March 2022 as attached to the agenda was **NOTED**.

E292 Hanging Basket & Planter Displays

It was **NOTED** that the Open Spaces Officer has applied for a license from Essex Highways for a floral display/signage on the gateways in town.

E293 The Fenn

- Committee considered two quotes attached to the agenda for repairs to the bridge and maintenance/removal of fencing around the perimeter of the Fenn.

Proposal: Tender B to complete the work at the Fenn.

Proposed: Councillor Shearring

Seconded: Councillor Eley

Vote: Carried

- Committee discussed starting items 1,4,5 & 6 with estimated costings attached with the Woodham Fenn Site visit report with Essex Wildlife Trust in February 2022.

Proposal: To move forward with the four items and discussions with Essex Wildlife Trust and for the Open Spaces Officer to enquire about the price of a new barn owl box.

Proposed: Councillor Bentley

Seconded: Councillor Humphrey

Vote: Carried

E294 Fenn Trees on Ferrers Road

It was **AGREED** to not continue with the agenda item

- The gradual removal of all the white poplar trees, situated on the Fenn along Ferrers Road, due to their height and replace them with suitable smaller native trees
- The replacement of two trees removed on the Fenn in January 2022 due to a Health & Safety risk and a fallen tree during Storm Eunice.

E295 RCCCT Meeting

- The River Crouch Coastal Community Team report on and cover all the Councils along the River Crouch and has a lot of influence and good discussion. Sea Walls was the major interest along the Crouch, the Environment Agency were in attendance and offered data on water quality and Councillor Shearring is awaiting a response. Essex County Council Flood Officer was in attendance. Councillor Shearring produced a picture of a resident's flooded garden in South Woodham Ferrers and confirmed Rob Haworth, Essex County Council Highway Ranger had also spoken to the resident on ways to protect his garden
- RAMS Birdaware project - Recreational Disturbance & Mitigation - were also attending the meeting. Chelmsford City Council are recruiting two rangers over the whole of the Essex coast. Councillor Shearring recommended that they come to a committee meeting to update. Contact details will be passed to the Open Spaces Officer.

E296 Public Transport

- The consultation of the Essex bus network was noted but it was mentioned that the consultation cannot be completed on a phone. The Open Spaces Officer will raise this concern with ECC.
- Currently only one straight through train is running to London from South Woodham Ferrers in the morning and one returning in the evening. Residents are driving to Wickford or other stations to access the C2C line to access a better service since our service is not currently fit for purpose. Wickford station is upgrading the station so there is currently no waiting room and therefore you need to use the stairs to access the London bound platform which is not acceptable for older residents. The service is presently appalling. With more local development there will be an increase in people using the trains. New housing to attract people to South Woodham Ferrers as a commuter town but then providing an appalling service. This results in more people using cars. Councillor Massey updated MP John Whittingdale who has his next surgery on 1st April 2022 so if the Town Council draft a letter send to committee for approval of content, then Councillor Bob Massey will make sure MP John Whittingdale receives the comments.

E297 Sea Wall Defences

Councillor Massey updated that he has had no formal response to date from Essex County Council parks department, footpath department or the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency states its priority is the protection of life and property. The Environment Agency will be speaking at the Annual Town Council meeting on

Councillor Murrough O'Brien joined the meeting at 8.20pm

E298 School Zones

Committee discussed how to proceed with this item. It was suggested a general consultation and talk to ECC highways and Chelmsford Planning regarding parking and speed limits and to speak to the head teachers at the local schools. Parking is a continuing concern around schools in SWF but working with the schools and trying to reduce speed limits and parking issues is a possible way forward. Residents living near schools have issues with school parking. A walking bus system was discussed which had been a successful scheme used previously in SWF. 3PR School Parking initiative is a scheme for schools around the County where children are encouraged to walk/scooter to school

Proposal: The Town Council to start a new campaign to encourage children to walk to school by engaging with local children and the wider community to obtain ideas and produce a plan. This will include the use of posters, social media and visits into schools to promote the campaign.

Proposed: Councillor Humphrey

Seconded: Councillor Shearring

Vote: **Carried**

E299 Street furniture

After a discussion regarding areas and new locations for public benches Committee **AGREED** to not continue with this agenda item.

E300 Town sign

The closing date for the Town Council sign competition is 31st March 2022. Committee discussed other options to upgrade on Town Council sign if required.

Proposal: To ask Councillor Humphrey to design three different options for a new town sign which will be voted on by the Environment Committee.

Proposed: Councillor Eley

Seconded: Councillor Shearring

Vote: **Carried**

E301 Friends of The Earth

It was discussed by Committee that any items of interest with the link below should be discussed at the Climate & Ecological Focus Group meeting and reported back to the Environment committee. Projects going forward will be brought to the new Finance and Projects Committee for discussion.

[20 actions parish and town councils can take on the climate and nature emergency | Policy and insight \(friendsoftheearth.uk\)](#)

E302 Climate & Ecological Emergency Focus Group

Councillor Bentley provided a verbal update of the last meeting on the 21st February 2022 attended by Chelmsford City Councillor Rose Moore who updated in and around Chelmsford. The tool kit is now produced in hard copies and Councillor Bentley and Eley will be visiting William De Ferrers School on Tuesday 22nd March 2022 to talk to staff and discuss the toolkit. The head teachers are keen to move forward and involve the children. The group are in the process of updating the toolkit in the next few months which will be ready in the Summer.

E303 Working Schedule

Working schedule as attached to the agenda was noted.

E304 Report to Council

Committee agree to report the following:

- Letter to Greater Anglian
- Town Council campaign 'Walk to School'
- Projects on the Fenn

E305 Media Coverage

Committee agreed the media release:

- Town sign competition until the end of March 2022.
- Engagement with schools

E306 Next Meeting

The next meeting date is 20th April 2022.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.28pm.

Signed.....

Date: 20th April 2022

Chairman of the Meeting