

MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of Kingsmead Parish Council Parks and Environment Committee
held on Monday 10th March at 7:30pm

Present: Cllr Logan, Cllr Reed, Cllr Swift (Chair), Cllr Weltman
Also present: Mrs W Maddock (Clerk & RFO) and seven members of public

The meeting started at 7.31pm.

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| 238 | <p>Apologies Cllr Hoey (medical), Cllr Jewitt (work)</p> |
| 239 | <p>Declarations of Interest No declarations of interest were made.</p> |
| 240 | <p>Public Forum</p> <p>Four members of public attended the meeting to express their concerns about the measures taken by the parish council to block off an informal short-cut at the end of Earl's Way that was being used to access the top path. The residents explained that the short-cut is used often by some residents of Earl's Way and also Castlemead Walk (in some instances, it was suggested, since the adjacent houses were originally built). These residents felt that blocking-off the short-cut, by planting shrubs around the fence to stop people climbing over and by allowing a fallen tree to obstruct the path, was unnecessary and potentially dangerous as the tree was seen as a trip hazard. They asked why the parish council did not consult residents prior to taking this action, as the short-cut has been used regularly, without permission or causing nuisance and therefore it could be claimed as a right of way by "presumed dedication". Three other members of the public objected to the short-cut being used and expressed support for blocking it off since it is not and never has been a public right of way and pointed out that there are other paths nearby that clearly provide unimpeded and safe access to the top path. Concerns were also expressed about distress caused by dogs not being controlled properly by some using the short-cut, potential security issues and a safety hazard because there is no footpath on Earl's Way to safely access the short-cut. The Chair of the Committee thanked the residents for their comments and several members of public then left the meeting.</p> |
| 241 | <p>Maintenance & Landscaping</p> <p>241.1 To receive resident's feedback and other information about blocking off a short-cut at the end of Earl's Way and to approve further actions as appropriate.</p> <p>The committee noted the comments made by the attending members of public. Feedback from the CWaC Public Rights of Way Officer was discussed and it was agreed that the short-cut does not currently constitute a public right of way as there has been no "Distinctive Map Modification Order" made; a presumed dedication might be claimed under Section 31 of the 1980 Highways Act, but only after a DMMO procedure has been followed. It was also noted that the 1981 Countryside Act makes it a criminal offence to damage woodland. The committee members discussed that it has a duty of care to manage the woodland areas around Kingsmead and that good stewardship is required to preserve the nature of the estate. It was clearly never intended that there should be an access route at the end of Earl's Way (demonstrated by the fence, the bunded boundary and the planting of trees/shrubbery on the bund). Furthermore, there are safety issues associated with access to the short-cut and the very steep slope that forms part of the route to the top path.</p> <p>Resolved – to make the following recommendations to Full Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> That the short-cut at Earl's Way is blocked off. That new planting is undertaken to make the blocking off permanent and any damage caused to the planting is treated as criminal damage, which should be reported accordingly. That a review is carried out of other short-cuts along top path and a decision made about whether they should also be closed off. <p>241.2 Countrywide Grounds Maintenance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To receive any reports and updates. |

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| <p>Noted – the works carried out during February, which the committee commented were to a very high standard. The clerk was asked to pass on the committee’s thanks to Countrywide.</p> <p>b) To approve if grass cutting can be started early (w/c 10th March), at no additional cost to KPC, if weather conditions are favourable</p> <p>Resolved – that grass cutting could be started early this month as long as Countrywide felt it would not be detrimental to the grass surfaces; this was to be explicitly outlined.</p> <p>241.3 To receive initial feedback from LCC regarding a review of the grounds maintenance contract and to approve any actions:</p> <p>a) Investigation of potential costs for segregating some services, e.g. bin emptying and play inspections.</p> <p>Noted – that an initial discussion has been had with LCC regarding the contract and a site visit will be carried out by the consultant on 25th March. The contract review is likely to be finalised in time that any tender process could be completed ready for a 1st September start date. The committee felt it was sensible to allow Countrywide to complete the second year of the contract extension; with tendering being carried out before the end of the year.</p> <p>Resolved – that soft market testing be carried out for segregating the bin emptying and play inspections.</p> <p>241.4 To receive an update about installing solar powered lights on the Kingsmead wall opposite SJD college and to approve, if appropriate, a quote of £1500 from Kingsmead Electrical for the works.</p> <p>Resolved – to defer a decision about the installation of solar lights pending an update from Kingsmead Electrical about the feasibility of the project.</p> <p>241.5 To note information from United Utilities about the following:</p> <p>a) The discharge from the sluice pond to the River Weaver b) Crown hedge roundabout sub-structure c) Investigation of a possible leak from a pipe under Leftwich Farm d) The exposed pipe between Monarch Drive and Duke’s Way</p> <p>Noted – that a meeting was held with two representatives of United Utilities, three councillors and the clerk, where the above items were discussed as follows:</p> <p>a) The raised section of path between the sluice pond and the river is simply a trough (no chambers or other equipment are present). The water from 2x 900mm surface water drains and the water from the sluice pond enters the trough before exiting to the river; this has the effect of reducing the water velocity to that permitted by the water authority. Without the trough in place and under the right weather conditions, the water would exit with such force that it would most likely hit the opposite bank. This trough is designed to be self-cleaning and therefore little maintenance is required. However, it is regularly inspected (at least annually) using the manhole covers clearly visible on the tow path. KPC is responsible for maintaining the sluice pond and keeping the grille clear, which is done as part of the Ponds Maintenance contract.</p> <p>b) Network pipes run under the roundabout and there are manhole covers on top of the grass mound; there is likely to be other equipment under the roundabout but this wasn’t identified.</p> <p>c) The possible pipe leak will be reported for investigation by the clean water team.</p> <p>d) The pipe does not belong to United Utilities.</p> <p>241.6 To consider any other updates and to approve actions as appropriate. There were no further updates to note.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>242 AOB</p> <p>Items to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. Cllr Weltman requested that the litter pick is added as an agenda item for the Full Council meeting; she is unable to attend on the 30th and somebody else will need to manage it if the litter pick is to go ahead.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="49 1688 1546 1868">243</td> <td data-bbox="153 1688 336 1868">Next Meetings</td> <td data-bbox="336 1688 815 1738">Full Council Meeting</td> <td data-bbox="815 1688 1546 1738">Monday 24th March at 7.30pm in Kingsmead School</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td data-bbox="336 1738 815 1787">Finance Committee</td> <td data-bbox="815 1738 1546 1787">Monday 7th April at 7.30pm in Kingsmead School</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td data-bbox="336 1787 815 1836">Parks & Environment Committee</td> <td data-bbox="815 1787 1546 1836">No meeting in April</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td data-bbox="336 1836 815 1868">Full Council Meeting</td> <td data-bbox="815 1836 1546 1868">Monday 28th April at 7.30pm in Kingsmead School</td> </tr> </table> | 243 | Next Meetings | Full Council Meeting | Monday 24 th March at 7.30pm in Kingsmead School | | | Finance Committee | Monday 7 th April at 7.30pm in Kingsmead School | | | Parks & Environment Committee | No meeting in April | | | Full Council Meeting | Monday 28 th April at 7.30pm in Kingsmead School |
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The meeting closed at 8.53pm.