

**REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**  
**HELD ON 18th JANUARY 2011**

**MEMBERSHIP & ATTENDANCE**

- Chairman:** \* Mrs M Jarrett
- Councillors** \* Mrs W Boatman  
\* T Edwards  
\* N Eve  
\* Mrs A Hayward (ex officio)  
\* R Kipps (ex officio)  
\* G Liley  
\* Mrs A Preedy  
\* S Watkins

\*Denotes members present

Also present were Cllr M Green and Cllr Mrs J Worrall and Mark Carter of the Countryside Management Service

There were five members of the public present.

**RECOMMENDATIONS -NONE**

**10/52 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

**10/53 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest:

**10/54 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The Committee  
RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2010 be approved as a true and correct record.

**10/55 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Updates were given on the progress on clamping at the War Memorial Hall and Shepherds Bridge permissive parking areas and on the changes to the entrance and exits at the War Memorial Hall permissive parking area.

**10/56 FINANCIAL COMPARISON STATEMENT 2010/11**

The Clerk drew the Committee's attention to the balance remaining for this financial year under Item 217 Grounds Maintenance. The Committee were advised that currently, when the Parish Rangers are

digging in the Cemetery or maintaining the ponds, etc., large sheets of plywood are purchased to place the spoil on and to protect the ground where the digger is being used. These boards are expensive, are easily damaged by the digger and deteriorate quickly. The Council had been offered some large, heavy-duty combined plastic and rubber mats at a discounted rate. These would last far longer and would offer efficiencies as, in the cemetery, they could be laid over memorial plaques, reducing the need to remove those in the area of a grave being dug. The Rangers have already had two small mats of this type in use for the past five years and are totally satisfied with them. The Ranger confirmed that there is room to store the large mats. Ten such mats were being offered with a guarantee of 15 years at a cost of £1,950 compared to the usual price of £2,760.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To purchase the ten mats on offer at £1950

This was proposed by Cllr G Liley, seconded by Cllr S Watkins and carried unanimously.

### **COMMON & GROVEWOOD**

#### **10/57 REPORT OF THE PARISH RANGER**

##### **Groveswood Management**

The Clerk advised that the work at Groveswood had gone well and that the contractors used had been very good.

##### **Parish Paths**

The Committee were advised that work on the parish path signage would run into the next year.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the Ranger's report.

#### **10/58 COMMON MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE**

The Chairman suspended the meeting at 8.10 pm to take a representation to the Committee from Barbara Dickens on the topic of the Common Management Plan update. The meeting was then reconvened at 8.14 pm under standing orders.

The Committee considered the comments received on the plan update from three sources, letter, comments facility on the website and comments forms left at the Library as part of the month long public display. The following issues were discussed:

- The Top Common ponds to be renamed Top Common Pond North (that nearest the road) and Top Common Pond South to distinguish between them
- Provision of a map giving the location, numbers and names of the ponds
- Provision of a glossary of terms used in the Management plan update, to include the following terms
  - "Lookering" as someone checking cattle as they passed by
  - "Croming" as the process of removing weeds with a large rake.
- The term "Secondary woodland" should be explained.
- Control measures were already in place as approximately one third of the Common is left untouched.
- It was agreed that the reference to the use of the horse track be removed.
- Reference to the possible grazing with sheep to be removed.

The Committee was advised that a table of all comments received, with all personal details removed and with responses to the points made would be published on the Website in due course.

It was suggested that the existing plan, to which the Update had been made, should be scanned and put onto the website (with a warning given of the size of the document) to make it more generally available. It was noted that copies are available in the Office. It was agreed that the dates of updates to the plan since the original should be added. The plan update was then reviewed page by page.

In the response to the misconceptions that had arisen which had taken up considerable Officer time to address, it was confirmed that the Parish Council does not propose doing anything with the permissive horse track other than improvements to the signage and therefore the whole sentence would be removed from the update to prevent any further misconceptions being formed. It was emphasized that the fencing for the grazing does not cross the Horse track at any point and that there are no plans for it to do so.

One Councillor made a statement on the whole issue of the misconception re the horse track stating that he defied anyone to find anything in the Draft plan update that suggests the Parish Council are removing the horse track and the comments would have cease. It was suggested that if people wish to comment then they must read the plan first. In his view there appeared to have been an organised campaign based on this misconception and he implored those present to go back to the riders and spread the word that the Parish Council have no plans to interfere with the horse track.

The Committee was disappointed that people obviously did not feel able to come to the Parish Council to check out such rumours.

Mark Carter responded to a question regarding the criteria used to assess whether the grazing had been successful. It was explained that a species list had been made before grazing has taken place in Larks Meadow. A full baseline ecological study could not be undertaken each year due to the prohibitive cost of over £1200 per annum but that perhaps the Friends of the Common could be engaged to undertake surveys and/or fixed point photography each year. The Committee were reminded of the new species that had been found in the area last grazed by the cattle.

Amendments to the Management Plan update were noted and the document will be re-issued with these updates taken on board. The format of the document was discussed with suggestions that the maps needed to be larger with key roads identified.

#### **10/59 REQUEST FROM THE CRICKET CLUB FOR WORK TO BE CARRIED OUT ON THE LIME TREE ON CHORLEYWOOD COMMON**

The Chairman suspended the meeting at 9.25 pm to allow Owen Edis of the Cricket Club to speak and explain the background to the request. The meeting was then reconvened at 9.30 pm under standing orders.

The Clerk was asked to get the Tree Preservation Officer's view, obtain an estimate and report from a tree surgeon and send to TRDC with a request for permission to get the work carried out. It was noted that the Lime tree is a Chorleywood icon, much loved by everyone including the Cricket Club and all wanted to see the tree remain and kept healthy. It was suggested that the work on the tree should be paid for by the Parish Council. The Clerk would go ahead and get the report and the next stage will be dealt with at a future meeting.

#### **10/60 REQUEST FROM VEOLIA WATER TO CONTRUCT A BOREHOLE ON CHORLEYWOOD COMMON**

The Committee was advised that the reason for choosing the Common for such a borehole was that it is one of the highest points in the area. The specific location proposed was confirmed not to be in the

flood alleviation area. The question of payment was raised which had in turn been raised within HAPTC. Concern was expressed that, if it was considered to be a structure on the Common, then permission from DEFRA may be required, even though it is DEFRA that are asking for this water monitoring to be undertaken. In response to concern regarding possible noise to residents during construction of the bore hole it was stated that a schedule of conditions would be put in place.

The Committee  
RESOLVED

To give their agreement in principle and that the Clerk should progress matters with Veolia Water

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Preedy, Seconded by Cllr Kipps and carried as follows:  
Five in favour, two against and two abstentions.

#### **10/61 BUTTERFLY AND FUNGI SURVEYS ON CHORLEYWOOD COMMON**

The Committee  
RESOLVED

To note the reports and to write to both Bill Cattle and Friends of the Common thanking them.

#### **ALLOTMENTS**

#### **10/62 OCCUPATION & WAITING LISTS**

The Committee  
RESOLVED

To note the occupation of the allotments and the current waiting lists.

#### **LAWN CEMETERY**

#### **10/63 OCCUPATION**

The Committee  
RESOLVED

To note the occupation of the Lawn Cemetery noting the increase in interments since the last report.

#### **10/64 ALLOTMENTS AND CEMETERY ADMINISTRATORS REPORT**

The Committee  
RESOLVED

To note the Allotments and Cemetery Administrators report.

#### **PARISH PATHS**

**10/65** The Committee noted that work continues on the 2010-11 Parish path signage for which the grant of £1000 had already been received with further signs to be paid for by Herts County Council

#### **GENERAL**

#### **10/66 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT**

The Committee  
RESOLVED

To note the Health and Safety report.

**10/67 CHILTERN COMMONS PROJECT – BID TO THE HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND**

The Clerk gave further details on the funding available for the items in the report.

The Committee  
RESOLVED

To go ahead with 50% cash match funding..

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs A Preedy, Seconded by Cllr Mrs W Boatman and carried as follows:

Seven in favour and two abstentions

**10/68 APPLICATION TO REGISTER LAND IN CHORLEYWOOD AS A VILLAGE GREEN**

Comment was invited on the formal application to register land in Chorleywood as a Village Green, previous discussion having been on the principle for planning purposes.

The Committee  
RESOLVED

That the Parish Council has no objections to this application.

**10/69 PRESS STATEMENT FOR THE WEBSITE**

The Chairman read out a statement that would be placed on the website correcting the misconception regarding the Permissive Horse Track. The statement was agreed by all present.

**10/70 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Committee  
RESOLVED

That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest, that the press and public be temporarily excluded for a urgent item they are instructed to withdraw.

This was proposed by Cllr G Liley, seconded by Cllr N Eve and carried unanimously

**PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**

**10/71 FENCING ON THE COMMON**

**10/72 CLOSURE**

The meeting having commenced at 8 pm closed at 10.00 pm.

Signed ..... Date .....

These minutes were agreed as a true and correct record at the Open Spaces meeting and signed by the Chairman.

Signed..... Date.....