

REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 24th MAY 2011

MEMBERSHIP & ATTENDANCE

Chairman: * Mrs M Jarrett

Councillors Mrs W Boatman
* T Edwards
* N Eve
* Mrs A Hayward (ex officio)
* Mrs A Preedy
* Mrs L Sutherland (ex officio)
* S Watkins
* Mrs J Worrall

*Denotes members present

Also present were Cllr Miss P Howell and Cllr R Kipps and District & County Cllr C Hayward.
There were twelve members of the public present.

RECOMMENDATIONS -NONE

11/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Mrs W Boatman.

11/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest:

11/03 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Committee
RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee held on 18th March 2011 be approved as a true and correct record.

11/04 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

10/82 Parking area opposite War Memorial Hall – The meeting was advised that if nothing had been heard regarding the meeting that had been held with Herts County Council Officers to discuss the parking outside War Memorial Hall by the next Planning meeting then the issue was to be put in writing.

10/78 Dog Fouling on Chorleywood Common – the legality of the leafleting had been confirmed but no leafleting would appear to have taken place to date.

11/05 PLAY AREA ON CHORLEYWOOD COMMON

At this point in the meeting the Chairman advised that there were several members of the public that wished to address the meeting under **Agenda Item 7 Play area on Chorleywood Common**. The meeting was suspended at 8.05pm to allow members of the public to address the Committee.

Two members of the public addressed the Council regarding the provision of a play area on the Common; both had circulated comprehensive material to all Councillors prior to the meeting for their consideration. The Chairman of Friends of Chorleywood Common spoke following the two presentations and the meeting was reconvened at 8.14pm.

The Committee discussed whether Chorleywood actually needed a new play area, the possible provision of a play area on the Common and the different locations that could be considered within Chorleywood, not just on the Common, and the different types of play equipment that were being suggested. The opinion was expressed that if something was to be put on the Common, a more natural solution would meet more approval than formal structures. The fact that it was a TRDC project, not a Parish one was discussed together with the fact that it was not clear whether the money was specifically earmarked for a play area and that there had been no communication as yet with the District Council on the subject. It was suggested that until the Council knew what TRDC's ideas for the play area were, discussion at the Parish Council at this stage was a little premature and a written report from TRDC on their intentions would be useful to ascertain the best way forward. It was further suggested that the Clerk forwards what had been presented by the members of the public to the appropriate officer at TRDC and request them to put in writing what their criteria are, ascertain what their plans are and whether the £96K being discussed was ring fenced for play equipment in Chorleywood or just an allocation at this time.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Clerk ask TRDC for a statement of intent which would be presented to the next Open Spaces Committee.

This was proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Watkins and carried unanimously.

11/06 HOLLYBUSH EDUCATION CENTRE

The Committee was advised that money was available for projects such as the redevelopment of the Hollybush Hall as an Education Centre as it was new, educational and aimed at all age groups including the very young and very old. However application for the appropriate grants would need to be made as soon as possible. The Clerk advised that the Council was getting an increased number of approaches for guided walks and similar activities and whilst the weather was fine this was not a problem but a base with toilets and classroom type facilities is needed. If the Hollybush Hall was converted it could become a multi use facility with existing users still being able to use it for the current classes and activities. The Clerk advised that in September the Council would be moving into a higher level of Stewardship which would allow funding for this so that the Council would be utilising something that is being underutilised at the moment at little cost to the community. This sort of facility could be linked in with walks and provide both formal and informal education facilities with guided walks for small children involving play activities, middle children being taught about flora and fauna and adults the biodiversity of the Common or walks that would incorporate all three age groups. It was felt that this was an important resource for Children doing GCSE and A levels exams and was an important resource for the Community.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Committee agreed in Principle to the idea of the Hollybush being converted to an Education Centre and asked that it be moved to the next Village Halls Committee for discussion and with their agreement to get costs.

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Worrall, seconded by Cllr Eve and carried unanimously

11/07 FINANCIAL COMPARISON STATEMENT 2010/11

Discussion took place on the line 205 which showed that Allotment Services had seen a 75% increase which was down to the water bill yet allotment charges had only increased by 5% and that perhaps this should be considered when setting charges next year. The Committee was advised that ideas of water harvesting were being looked at to try to reduce the expenditure at the allotments.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the statement.

COMMON & GROVEWOOD

11/08 REPORT OF THE PARISH RANGER

The Committee noted the good report as usual from the Parish Ranger. Discussion took place on the amount of duckweed that had been cleared from Christchurch Pond. It was confirmed that despite suggestions that the Parish Council was looking to repair the steps on the Common opposite the War Memorial Hall there had been no formal request to look at them and it had therefore not been discussed. It was confirmed that the sign at the Golf Club was as per the specification that had been agreed at a previous Open Spaces meeting. With regard to benches on the Common it was confirmed that the embargo on new benches on the Common had not changed but that some benches were being replaced but would not necessarily be replaced in the same place. A suggestion of notices by the ponds stating that no fish were to be released in the ponds should be considered and that it may be possible to get grant funding for these. If this was considered then it was suggested that the opportunity be taken to add the names of the ponds for greater visibility. Discussion on the moving of the water trough in the Cemetery confirmed that water was now available in both the old and the new sections. The Committee had advised that on a recent 'Meet the Cattle' session the Beavers had been taken in with the cattle and had enjoyed the experience. The Grazing was reported to be going well and the committee advised that a recent letter of complaint in the Watford Observer about the lack of flowers was slightly misleading as the flowers would not be expected until late June/early July. A comprehensive letter had been sent back to the complainant who had in fact thanked the Council for the information. The Clerk was asked to send this letter and pictures of the Beaver Scouts with the Cattle to the newspaper. The offer was made to all Councillors if they wanted to go with the Ranger to visit the cattle this could be arranged.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the report

11/09 SIGNAGE SURVEY ON CHORLEYWOOD COMMON

The Committee considered the report that had been produced regarding the signage on the common. Given the history of the issues of the permissive horse track and the fact that these signs were in the worst condition, these should be the first area to be addressed. It was confirmed that the horse riders had had some input to the signs and would continue to be consulted. The pattern for new signage was discussed with debate on the colours to be used. Whilst green signs blend into the background they are not very clear and members of the public would like dark green on white which show the dirt. Further ideas such as lettering burnt onto wood and the use of pictures instead of words were suggested. It was felt that signage had moved on considerably since the signs were put on the Common and the Clerk was asked to look at what is available and possible costings.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Clerk look at what is available and possible costings of different options.

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Jarrett, Seconded by Cllr Edwards and carried unanimously.

11/10 BOUNDARY OF CHERRY TREE DELL

The Committee

RESOLVED

To formalise the boundaries as per the report

This was proposed by Cllr Watkins, Seconded by Cllr Mrs Worrall and carried unanimously.

ALLOTMENTS

11/11 OCCUPATION & WAITING LISTS

The Committee

RESOLVED

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

LAWN CEMETERY

11/12 OCCUPATION

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the occupation of the Lawn Cemetery.

11/13 ALLOTMENTS AND CEMETERY ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the Allotments and Cemetery Administrator's report.

PARISH PATHS

11/14 2010- 11 Signage

The Committee was advised that the footpath signs were due to be installed later that week. With these in place it would now be possible to start work on the previously suggested brochure of footpaths in Chorleywood. The Committee was informed that at a recent meeting of the Rickmansworth Historical Society there had been considerable reference made to Chorleywood which would be something to follow up. It was also noted that we now have an up to date map provided by Herts County Council.

11/15 CHORLEYWOOD FOOTPATH 25 DIVERSION PROPOSAL

Discussion covered the reasons for fencing, the proposed width of the fenced in path by the Rights of Way Officer and the responsibility for maintenance of the path if it was fenced.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That no objections be raised provided the residents have no objections.

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Worrall, seconded by Cllr Watkins and carried unanimously.

GENERAL

11/16 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

The Committee
RESOLVED
To note the Health and Safety report.

11/17 REQUEST FOR A SPONSORED BIKE RIDE ON CHORLEYWOOD COMMON

The committee was advised that this was a bike ride that had been done before, along an organised route that was defined by hazard tape and a litter pick was undertaken after the event by the organisers. The council retained the right to cancel the event if the weather is bad and the ride would be detrimental to the Common.

The committee
RESOLVED
That permission be given with the caveat that a sign be erected saying that permission had been given for this activity by the Parish Council.

This was proposed by Cllr Watkins, seconded by Cllr Edwards and carried unanimously.

11/18 REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO HOLD TWO OUTDOOR PLAY ACTIVITY DAYS ON THE COMMON

The Committee
RESOLVED
That permission be given for the two outdoor play activity Days on the Common subject to suitable risk assessments and public liability documentation being received.

This was proposed by Cllr Watkins, seconded by Cllr Worrall and carried unanimously.

11/19 REQUEST FOR PERMISSION FOR TEMPORARY ERECTION OF A MARQUEE NEXT TO THE CRICKET CLUB ON TWO OCCASIONS

The Committee
RESOLVED
That permission be given for a marquee to be erected and remain overnight for one night only for each event at the owner's risk and subject to suitable risk assessment and public liability documentation being received.

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Hayward

This proposal was amended by Cllr Mrs Preedy to include the taking down of the marquee on the same day but was not seconded.

The original proposal was seconded by Cllr Watkins and voted for with six in favour and two abstentions.

11/20 CLOSURE

The meeting having commenced at 8 pm closed at 9.54 pm.

Signed*Agreed via email*..... Date19/6/11.....

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

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