

REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 8th NOVEMBER 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

There were nine members of the public present.

RECOMMENDATIONS -NONE

11/63 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Mrs Hayward.

11/64 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest:

11/65 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Committee
RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee held on 13th September 2011 be approved as a true and correct record.

11/64 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Yellow lines outside the War Memorial Hall: The Planning Committee had noted that the double yellow lines outside the War Memorial Hall were now operational.

11/65 FINANCIAL COMPARISON STATEMENT 2010/11

In response to a query on Expenditure Line 228 Members were advised that the Council had agreed at the beginning of the year to pay additional money as money will be coming back for signage and lecterns on the Common. A query on Expenditure line 203 would be taken up outside the meeting.

The Committee
RESOLVED

To note the statement.

COMMON & GROVEWOOD

11/66 REPORT OF THE PARISH RANGER

The Committee complimented the Ranger on his excellent and very informative report. The Clerk advised Members that the Rangers were always available outside of meetings if members needed information on any particular aspect of their work.

The Clerk advised the Committee that a plan of action for the part of the flint wall at Christchurch, which had recently been repaired with sand and cement rather than the correct lime mortar, had been agreed with the Church, the Contractors and the Conservation Officer at Three Rivers District Council. Contractors will brush away the surface and re-point with lime mortar. This will be done when the weather conditions are right and the work may therefore not be completed until the Spring.

Members were advised that the Goldfish recently caught were being put in the Fire Pond at Chorleywood House Estate.

The Committee
RESOLVED
To note the report

11/67 PLAY AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Play Area Advisory Committee updated Members on the various meetings and findings to date of the Committee. There was to be a further meeting on the 22nd November to formulate a proposal to Council which was within the Committee's remit.

The Clerk advised that consultation on a Play Area in Chorleywood by Three Rivers District Council was not due to commence until after April 2012 and confirmed this by reading out an extract from the notes of the recent Local Area Forum. Procedural matters regarding the Terms of Reference of the Play Area Advisory Committee were discussed together with concerns over the inclusion of some planning and legal matters that were felt to be outside the remit of the Committee. The Committee was also reminded that as an advisory committee it had no budget and therefore could not spend anything which the Chairman confirmed had not happened. It was confirmed that any future meetings of the Committee would be advised to all Councillors with formal agendas being issued and circulated.

The Committee
RESOLVED

That the Terms of Reference for the Play Area Advisory Committee revert back the Terms of Reference used in the minutes that originally tasked the committee

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

11/68 GRAZING UPDATE

The meeting was suspended at 8.32pm to allow two members of the Public to address the Committee and the meeting was reconvened at 8.38pm.

Discussion then took place on how the Committee should move forward with the Grazing with the benefits of grazing being confirmed. It was suggested that a decision should not be made at this meeting but that members of this Committee investigate and report back. It was felt important to ensure that people in favour as well as against the grazing have the opportunity to have their points of view heard. A map of the common was displayed to clarify the fencing issues. The Clerk advised that whatever decision was made on a Section 38 application, it would be limited to ten years. If at any time the

Council ceased grazing, the application would cease. In response to the question of whether members of the public would be included in any working party set up, the point was made that the working party can request members of the public to come to speak without having them as members of the working party. It was further pointed out that the Council are guardians of the Common and as such work for the benefit of the Common and consultation did not have to be negotiation. The Clerk asked that the Rangers be involved to advise and help as appropriate. It was felt that a key lesson to be learnt was that the Council had to communicate better with the residents of Chorleywood. Some of the criticism was justified and the Council had to be seen to have taken this on board.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That a Working Party be set up with members of the Committee, with powers to consult with members of the Public both for and against grazing, with the remit to verify the area to be grazed, to understand the cost implications and to make recommendations on the way forward for the Grazing Project

This was proposed from the Chair by Cllr Mrs Jarrett and carried with seven in favour and one abstention.

It was agreed that the Working Party be formed of Cllrs Mrs Worrall, Mrs Jarrett, Watkins and Edwards with the idea of getting it going as soon as possible.

The Clerk advised that the application for Higher Level Stewardship that would bring in up to £50K over the next ten years, had been made when grazing had been taking place and was due to commence in April 2012. A decision would therefore need to be made on whether the Council is going forward with a new Section 38 application by April 2012.

The publication of the Common Management Plan was raised as this had reference to the grazing as part of the plan. It was felt that as the Council were committed to grazing that the plan was still valid and could go to print. It was pointed out that the Management Plan was not set in stone but gave recommendations for the way forward. If circumstances changed so did the plan.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Management Plan be sent to print following a review of the maps contained within the document.

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Worrall, seconded by Cllr Watkins and carried by seven votes for to one vote against.

11/69 TREE WORK ON CHORLEYWOOD COMMON

The Clerk advised that all three contractors were known to the Council. She also advised that work would not be able to commence until after 14th December, as members of the public still had time to ask for the trees at The Kennels to have a Tree Preservation Order placed on them.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the contract for the work be given to Company A

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

11/70 WORK TO THE OLD SHEPHERD AND ARTICHOKE DELL PERMISSIVE PARKING AREAS

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the work to re-level both areas be done at the price quoted of £420.00 plus VAT.

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

11/71 QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE BEACONS

The approach from the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire raising the idea of lighting beacons on the Common in celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee was discussed. Whilst the idea was good, it raised significant Health and Safety issues and created staffing, insurance and financial implications. It was also pointed out that the Council had already considered doing something more permanent to mark the occasion.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To say no to the placing and lighting of beacons on the Common.

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

11/72 PROPOSED WINTER WORK FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

The meeting was suspended at 9.27 pm to allow a member of the public to address the committee on the winter work proposed by the Golf Club and the meeting was reconvened at 9.30pm

The Committee

RESOLVED

To agree to the winter work proposed by the Golf Club.

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

ALLOTMENTS

11/73 OCCUPATION & WAITING LISTS

The Committee

RESOLVED

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

11/74 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ALLOTMENT USERS MEETING

The allotment users had raised concerns about trees overhanging the allotments and the fencing surrounding two of the sites allowing non allotment holders into the sites. Members were advised that this would be addressed by the trees and fencing at all allotment sites being surveyed by the appropriate Officers and a report put to the next meeting of Open Spaces. To assist in the task for Copmans Wick, Cllr Mrs Worrall would provide a map which clearly showed the boundaries of this site.

LAWN CEMETERY

11/75 INTERMENTS

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the interments that had taken place at the Lawn Cemetery with the number of interments of Ashes in section E noted as six not one as quoted on the agenda.

11/76 ALLOTMENTS AND CEMETERY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

The Committee noted that the replanted flower beds in the Cemetery were looking good. Those members who had attended the recent walkabouts of the Lawn Cemetery and Allotments advised that they had found them very useful and informative.

Pet Ashes in the Lawn Cemetery: With respect to a recent interment that had included pets ashes which the Council had not been made aware of prior to the interment, Members were advised that legislation did not cover this and it was therefore not covered in the Cemetery rules. It was also noted that the Lawn Cemetery was not licensed to take pet remains and that a letter would be written to all Undertakers that the Office has dealings with to make this point. The issue of the plaque containing the reference to the pet was discussed with a view that the Council did not want to add to the distress of family and friends

The Committee
RESOLVED

That inclusion of the dog's name on the memorial plaque be refused but that a dog motif could be offered as an alternative.

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Sutherland, seconded by Cllr Edwards and carried unanimously

Memorial Plaque Charges 01/01/2012 to 31/03/2012: The foundry used to provide the memorial plaques for the Lawn cemetery had advised their price increase which would be effective from the 1st January 2012.

The Committee
RESOLVED

To approve the increase in memorial plaque charges for the period 1/1/2012 to 31/03/2012.

PARISH PATHS

11/77 2011-12 Signage

The Committee noted the current position on the Parish path signage.

GENERAL

11/78 PROJECT UPDATES

Dog Fouling: Members were advised that a meeting had been arranged to discuss the issue of dog fouling and whether the two applicable acts can work in parallel. It was also noted that changes to PCSO responsibilities would allow them to issue penalty notices when appropriate. It was felt that a suggestion to change the byelaws to limit the number of dogs walked would not be easily enforced.

Benches on the Common: It was confirmed that the benches on the Common were replacement not additional benches and that the total number of benches on the Common was not increasing overall.

Signage: it was hoped that facts and figures would be available for the next meeting.

Volunteers: The meeting was suspended at 10.05 pm to allow a member of the public to address the Council and was reconvened at 10.07pm

11/79 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Nothing to report.

11/80 CLOSURE

The meeting having commenced at 8 pm closed at 10.07 pm.

Signed*Agreed by Cllr Margaret Jarrett Via Email*..... Date28.11.11.....

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

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