

**REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 22<sup>nd</sup> MAY 2012**

**MEMBERSHIP & ATTENDANCE**

- Chairman:** \* T Edwards
- Councillors** \* Mrs W Boatman  
\* Mrs M Jarrett  
\* R Khiroya (ex officio)  
\* Mrs V Lantree  
\* G Liley  
\* Mrs A Preedy  
\* Mrs L Sutherland (ex officio)  
\* Mrs J Worrall

\*Denotes members present

Also present: Cllrs N Eve, M Green, Mrs A Hayward, Miss P Howell, R Kipps, S Watkins, Mrs J White.

There were eleven members of the public present.

The Chairman of Open Spaces Committee opened the meeting by thanking Cllr Mrs M Jarrett for her hard work over her years as Chairman of Open Spaces and commented that her efforts had been very much appreciated.

Due to the number of members of the public present at the meeting wishing to speak, the Chairman explained that whilst under statute there was no opportunity for members of the public to address the Members at Committee meetings that given the interest in the Grazing Agenda item, with the Committee's agreement he would allow fifteen minutes for a public forum, with no person speaking for more than three minutes each.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**GRAZING**

Members of the public addressed the Committee voicing a number of concerns and views about the grazing project and information that had been circulated raised a number of questions. The public session was closed and Members then discussed grazing. In response to a question from one Member on the question of whether the Common was an Urban Common or not, Members were advised that legal opinion on this was still awaited. Members had been challenged on issues of fencing, security and the process.

The Committee

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

That following the recommendation of the Grazing Working Party the Council was committed to re-introduce grazing on Chorleywood Common.

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Worrall, Seconded by Cllr Mrs Jarrett and carried with eight votes in favour, one abstention and none opposed.

Members were advised that consultation with insurers and all other information gathered supported the fact that no party or individual would be financially at risk if there was to be a problem with the cattle. It was suggested that the main issues were largely to do with the type of fences and the number of access

points required.. Members were further advised that the Grazing Working Party had concluded that based on the environmental benefits and the costs of the different proposals, it was best if the original plan was kept to with temporary fencing and cattle present for no more than 12 weeks on the proposed area. If grass was not sufficient for this time period, the Council would not provide supplementary feed and therefore the cattle would be removed early if this was the case. It was confirmed that costs had come out of grants and bequests.

The Committee

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

That the Recommendation goes to Full Council

to proceed with the original plan subject to confirmation of costings and the legal position with respect to the status of the Common

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Worrall, Seconded by Cllr Edwards and carried with eight in favour and one abstention

**12/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

**12/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest:

**12/03 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Cricket on the Common Advisory Committee held on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2012 had been agreed at Full Council in April, the minutes of Open Spaces Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2012 and the Minutes of the Open Spaces Extraordinary Meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2012 be approved as a true and correct record.

**12/04 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**12/05 GRAZING**

See Recommendation

**12/06 FINANCIAL COMPARISON YEAR END STATEMENT 2010/11**

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the statement.

**COMMON & GROVEWOOD**

**12/07 REPORT OF THE PARISH RANGER**

Members were advised of an issue with the road works that had been taking place at the top of Common road next to Top Common Pond that had caused an excessive amount of water to enter the pond. This had potentially contaminated the pond which contained the Great Crested Newt which was a protected species. This had been raised with Veolia Water and the Contractor responsible for the work was

keeping the Parish Office aware of action that was being taken and the Office would update Members as and when further information was received from them. It was suggested that the Contractor be asked to carry out water quality testing after this incident.

The Chairman thanked the Rangers for the very comprehensive and well presented report.

The Committee  
RESOLVED  
To note the report

#### **12/08 ANNUAL PROJECTS WORK PROGRAMME 2012 - 13**

In response to a question from a member on the restoration of Christchurch Pond, the Parish Ranger present explained what was needed and advised that the Office was currently waiting to hear from the Environmental Agency regarding the course of action to be taken on the silt. Members were advised that a preferred course of action would be to break the drain going into the pond and create a French drain for the water from the road which would then act as a filter for the water. The areas of the grassland on the map were discussed with questions as to when the map was last updated. Given the scrub clearance and similar work that had been undertaken it was agreed that it would make sense to update the map which had not been done for two years. Mark Carter of the Countryside Management Service present at the meeting agreed to do this.

The Committee  
RESOLVED  
To note the Programme of work for 2012 - 13

#### **12/09 PLAY TRAIL ON CHORLEYWOOD COMMON**

Members considered the possible route for a play trail on the Common proposed by the Rangers. Views were expressed that it had been thought that it would be a longer trail and across more areas of the Common. Concerns were also expressed about the 'structures' and whilst it was acknowledged they would be created using natural materials queries were raised as to whether the Council was confident that they were not structures as defined by DEFRA. It was felt that clarification was needed that the Council do not need any permission from DEFRA. It was noted that the Health and Safety implications of such a play trail also needed to be covered. It was suggested that as this sort of trail is in place elsewhere that Councillors could go out and see examples.

#### **12/10 CAR PARKING OPPOSITE THE WAR MEMORIAL HALL**

Members were informed that the Council had written to the individual. It was confirmed that the slopes from the Permissive Parking area and the area in front of the War Memorial Hall were gritted. Members asked that clarification be sought on the potential change in law relating to responsibilities when clearing snow and/or gritting and also the position of the Council's new insurer on this subject.

The Committee  
RESOLVED  
To note the report.

#### **12/11 COMMON SIGNAGE**

Members discussed the different options of lecterns and notice boards covered in the report. In response to questions raised about marking footpaths, Members were reminded that the Clerk had advised them on a previous occasion that this was not possible on the Common as paths were desire lines and if they were defined by signage the implication was that people could only walk there which was not the case on the Common. It was felt that for the Horse track the Bridleways Association needed to be involved.

Another view was expressed that the Common should not be littered with signs. Funding for notice boards and alternative types of Boards or lecterns were discussed. The Parish Council Logo would need to be added. Ideas of involving local artists in a competition to provide the artwork for the lecterns were discussed along with the idea to seek input at Village Day.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the information provided in the report which would be discussed in more detail at the next meeting when a more detailed list of the signage would be provided by the Chairman working with an officer.

#### **12/12 REPLACEMENT OF MACHINERY**

The committee

RESOLVED

To accept the recommendation of going with Company A to replace the Topper and the ride on mower to be repaired.

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

#### **ALLOTMENTS**

##### **12/13 OCCUPATION**

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the occupation of the allotments.

##### **12/14 WAITING LISTS**

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the report.

##### **12/15 FENCING AND TREES AT THE ALLOTMENTS**

Members asked if the fencing was a safety issue and were advised that it was not at this point in time. Concern was expressed that it was significant sum of money and how it would be covered financially. Members asked that additional quotes be sought and that these and the existing quote be provided broken down into parts so that the job could be done in stages if the Council so wished.

#### **LAWN CEMETERY**

##### **12/16 INTERMENTS**

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the Report.

##### **12/17 ALLOTMENTS AND CEMETERY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Members discussed the letter from an allotment holder raising his concerns over the water charge that had been introduced this year. Members had been advised that the allotment holder had paid the due rental but had annotated his tenancy renewal with the statement that he expected the £10 water surcharge to be refunded. Members felt that the full price of £40 for a full plot (non pensioner rate) was a

reasonable charge and that there had been no real choice but to introduce such a charge given the rise in water costs and the Council's duty to recover costs. After due discussion Members agreed that a letter should go back to the individual with these points made and advising that there would be no refund.

The Committee  
RESOLVED  
To note the report

### PARISH PATHS

#### **12/18 PARISH PATHS GRANT FUNDING**

Members were advised that confirmation of funding for the current year was awaited.

### GENERAL

#### **12/19 FOUR YEAR VISION**

The current Four Year vision for Open Spaces was discussed and updated.

- **Hollybush Hall change of use to a Field Centre:** It was felt that the Hollybush Hall should be a priority 5 until the Village Halls Committee has done it's work on this item. It was anticipated that the cost would be high for this item. Members were also advised that the change of use would require planning permission.
- **Butterfly Survey** – Cllr Mrs Jarrett had spoken to Mr Bill Cattle who was willing to train volunteers if Friends of Chorleywood Common (FOCC) could find volunteers and Cllr Mrs Jarrett had emailed FOCC. Mr Greg Hill advised that he had delayed until Cllr Mrs Jarrett had approached Mr Cattle but he would now take forward with the Friends of Chorleywood Common.
- **Establish a ten year calendar of surveys to be undertaken on the Common** – Members asked that the Clerk consult with Countryside Management Services on how frequent surveys should be, what type of surveys should be done, the possible costs of such surveys and who should undertake them.
- **Investigation of an informal leisure trail on the Common** – Members asked that checks be made with DEFRA on the status of the natural 'structures' proposed, insurance liabilities and other commons that have such trails and structures be advised.
- **Allotment water harvesting** – Members asked the officers to look into options for this and that a representative of the water company be invited to come along to a future meeting to discuss water harvesting.
- **Signage** – Members agreed to add Common signage to the Four year vision.

#### **12/20 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT**

There was nothing to report.

#### **12/21 CLOSURE**

The meeting having commenced at 8 pm closed at 10.04 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.....