

**REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 11th SEPTEMBER 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 M Green, S Watkins.

There were four members of the public present.

12/48 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

12/49 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest:

12/50 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the minutes of Open Spaces Committee held on the 3rd July 2012 and the minutes of the Extra Ordinary meeting held on the 7th August be approved as true and correct records.

12/51 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising.

12/52 FINANCIAL COMPARISON YEAR END STATEMENT 2012/13

In response to a question from a member the Clerk confirmed that two grants were still expected, one would be at the end of the year and the second for the maintenance of the Parish Paths would be split into two parts, one invoice submitted now and one at the end of the maintenance season.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the statement.

COMMON & GROVEWOOD

12/53 REPORT OF THE PARISH RANGER

The Chairman expressed the thanks of the Committee for the usual very comprehensive report

Laying down of Gravestones – Members asked whether the Church made a contribution towards the laying down of gravestones that failed the stress tests and were advised that it was the responsibility of the Parish Council but that a mutually agreeable arrangement was usually reached. The new vicar was now in place and a meeting would be held between the Parish Office and the Church Office in the next few weeks to discuss how to lay down the stones and a number of other matters.

Butterfly Survey: Mr Hyde, a member of the public present at the meeting and now involved with the Butterfly survey was invited to update the Councillors on the handover of this survey from Mr Bill Cattle who has undertaken this for a number of years. Members were advised that Mr Cattle had been tutoring a small group who had been round the Common on three occasions so far and were becoming more proficient at identifying the different species.

Ragwort: A Further ragwort pulling session had been undertaken by Railway Field in the past week.

Cut and Lift: This was in progress at the time of the meeting.

Apprentice: Members were advised that the new apprentice was now in post and was very keen and fitting into the team well. He was on a trial period of 4 – 6 weeks, the Clerk meets with him weekly and the Rangers provide regular reports on progress. The apprentice would be presenting a project to the Committee at a future date.

Groewood: A member advised that a number of yellow signs had recently appeared in the Groewood area advising how to get to The Grove and a large advertising board had also appeared. It was believed that the yellow Grove signs were believed to have been part of a recent filming exercise that had been taken place and should be removed. The advertising board was a different issue and was taken as an issue by the Chairman of the Planning Committee.

Roses in the Cemetery – The Clerk drew Member's attention to the situation with the standard roses in the Cemetery and requested that consideration be given to removal and replanting of these in an alternative location which was agreed to. It was noted that the remaining roses may not survive the replanting. The Apprentice would be bringing proposals for replacement of the roses back to a future meeting.

The Committee
RESOLVED
To note the report

12/54 CHORLEYWOOD COMMON GRASSLAND SURVEY

The Chairman commented on another very comprehensive report which had been undertaken by Mrs Harold from the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Society and was discussed by members. It was agreed that the report would be put on the Website once the Latin names had been translated to the more commonly used names which would make the report more readable.

Surveys were discussed in general and members advised that paper and electronic copies were held in the office as well as copies sent to the Herts Biological Records Office and will be put onto the website. The Council are not obliged to undertake surveys but it was considered good practice to do so. It was suggested that a calendar of surveys be put on the Website. Members were also advised that the RSPB had been approached and are interested in doing a survey.

The Committee asked that the Clerk convey the very grateful thanks of the Open Spaces Committee to Mrs Harold for undertaking the Grassland Survey.

The Committee
RESOLVED
To note the report.

12/55 CARPENTERS WOOD GREEN SPACE ACTION PLAN 2012 - 2017

The Committee
RESOLVED

To note the action plan which would be undertaken by a combination of Three Rivers District Council who own the land, Countryside Management Services who advise TRDC and the Friends of Carpenters Wood.

12/56 PROPOSED LOW VOLTAGE UNDERGROUND ELECTRICITY CABLE INSTALLATION ON CHORLEYWOOD COMMON

The Committee discussed the proposed revised route along the track which would have the least environmental impact and were advised that a wayleave would have to be granted to do the work. Concern over possible disruption to access for properties in Artichoke Dell would be covered by UK Power Networks.

The Committee
RESOLVED

To accept the use of the track for the voltage cable in principle subject to the necessary Section 38 approval for works on the Common and an agreed sum for the wayleave.

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

ALLOTMENTS

12/57 OCCUPATION

The Committee
RESOLVED

To note the occupation of the allotments.

12/58 WAITING LISTS

The Committee
RESOLVED

To note the report.

LAWN CEMETERY

12/59 INTERMENTS

The Committee
RESOLVED

To note the Report.

12/60 ALLOTMENTS AND CEMETERY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Allotment Rentals -Members were advised that the last outstanding rental had now been paid complete with the two bank charges that had been incurred.

Tree works – Members were advised that some tree works that had been identified earlier in the year would be carried out in the coming months by the Rangers at all the allotment sites.

Dog Kennel Lane Water: It was evident from the receipt of water bills for all three sites that there was still an issue with the supply at Dog Kennel Lane. Although the situation had been monitored over the summer there were no obvious leaks visible. It was felt that the only way to resolve the issue would be to re-lay the water supply and a quote would be sought for this. It was suggested that it may be possible to fund this with the grant if it came thorough from Veolia Water for the Bore hole on the Common. It was possible that the Rangers may be able to do some of the trenching but this would be evaluated as part of the investigation into the work required

Deposits for new allotment holders – The idea raised by the Dog Kennel Lane Allotment representative of introducing deposits for new allotment holders which could then be used offset the work required to bring an abandoned plot back to a good state when given up was discussed but Members agreed that such a system would not be workable and would not therefore be introduced.

Notices of CCTV Cameras in operation at Dog Kennel Lane – this idea, again raised by the Dog Kennel Lane Allotment representative, was discussed and agreed would be unlikely to be effective in deterring theft from the allotments.

Memorial Plaques: A report back to the next meeting would be made on the action being taken by the Foundry to address a small number of issues with plaques.

Walkabout of the Cemetery and Allotments: It was agreed that a walkabout of both the Cemetery and Allotments would be organised in the near future for any Councillors wishing to see the work that had been undertaken and the winning plots in the recent allotment competition.

PARISH PATHS

12/61 PARISH PATHS GRANT FUNDING

Members noted that the grant application for a small number of replacement signs for 2012/13 costing between three and four hundred pounds had been confirmed by Herts County Council. Members were reminded that the idea had been that once the signs were completed a map of the paths would be produced. It was suggested that this would be part of the grant funding application for the following year

GENERAL

12/62 FOUR YEAR VISION

The Open Spaces elements of the four year vision were updated:

Butterfly Survey had been covered earlier in the meeting and could therefore be updated.

Allotment Water Harvesting – a visit was being planned to look at the allotments at Croxley Green where water was harvested.

Signs and Lecterns – this would be followed up later in the week when the Chiltern Conservation Board Representative would be present at a Commons Day that the Clerk and Rangers would be attending.

Hollybush Hall would remain at Priority 6 until the Halls Committee had completed their work on this item.

12/63 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

There was nothing to report.

12/64 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 agenda item 17 and they are instructed to withdraw.

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Jarrett, seconded by Cllr Mrs Lantree and carried unanimously

Before leaving one member of the public asked that anything appropriate to be released into the public domain was done so. The Clerk advised that anything in this category would be minuted .

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

12/65 TO CONSIDER THE LEGAL OPINION RELATING TO CHORLEYWOOD COMMON

The Council are still committed to grazing and are looking at ways of safely and legally facilitating grazing on the Common for nature conservation purposes. Until these investigations are completed, no grazing is planned to take place. Once the Council has agreed a way to proceed, further information would be made available.

12/66 CLOSURE

The meeting having commenced at 8 pm closed at 10.15 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.....