

REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 15th JANUARY 2013

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: Cllr M Green.

There were nineteen members of the press and public present.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. CHORLEYWOOD PLAY AREA

The meeting was suspended at 7.50 pm to allow Simone Tyson to address the Committee in favour of a play area on Chorleywood Common. The meeting was reconvened at 7.53 pm to discuss the item.

A number of Councillors had visited the areas under consideration. There was a conflict between the areas identified on the original Play Advisory Committee Map and the areas now covered by the Higher Level Stewardship. It was noted that in the agreement it was necessary for a buffer zone to be set aside of 200m from any of the ponds on the Common to protect the internationally protected Great Crested Newts and that therefore limited the areas that could now be considered.

Members expressed disappointment that the play area could not be sited near Christ Church but acknowledged the difficulties and therefore considered the proposed play area near Shepherds Bridge. Members expressed concern that access by foot to the proposed area was in main without a footpath and there was little parking available near the site for visitors by car.

The Committee

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL

that with suitable landscaping and implementation plan that Area 13 is the recommended site in principal subject to

- the nature of the scheme including the type of equipment proposed
- ongoing maintenance of the site
- consideration to the lack of parking and
- lack of a footpath

being responded to by Three Rivers District Council.

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

Seven in favour, one against and one abstention.

2. VIRTUAL FENCING

A number of Councillors had seen the virtual fencing under consideration in place. The Council had considered the views of local residents who were opposed to the visual aspect of any fencing. It was felt that until it was investigated further that the Council was not in a position to decide on the viability of virtual fencing for Chorleywood Common. Points relating to the collars worn by the animals, the layout of the fencing and the working of the fencing were discussed. Members were pointed to websites for Burnham Beeches and Epping Forest where such fencing is in use. It was also pointed out that virtual fencing had been in use for a number of years in Europe.

The Committee

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

that a site meeting be arranged for all councillors,
that residents are informed of what is going on and why original plans are on hold.

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

12/84 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence

12/85 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Liley declared an interest in Agenda Item 10 - Request to hold a classic and super car show on Chorleywood Common.

12/86 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the minutes of Open Spaces Committee held on the 13th November 2012 be approved as true and correct record.

12/87 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising.

12/88 PARKING ON THE COMMON AFFECTING RESIDENTS OF HILLVIEW AND RUARDEAN COTTAGES

With the agreement of the Committee this item was brought forward. The meeting was suspended at 7.35 pm and the Committee was addressed by Mrs Barbara Conway regarding the parking problems at Hill View Cottages, the meeting reconvened at 7.38pm

It was observed that the parking problems appeared to have happened since the new parking scheme had been introduced in Chorleywood Bottom by Three Rivers District Council. The view was expressed that the Council must protect its land and take legal action if necessary. Taking legal action would cost and take time. An alternative approach would be to put in locking posts. The Clerk outlined the legal position advising that it is illegal to park on common land without the owners consent, owners consent is via easements. These can only be given to those properties which have their boundary on Common Land with no off street parking within the curtilage of their property. It was also stated that the Parish Council is not obliged or able to provide off street parking.

In an effort to be reasonable it was suggested that in the first instance a legal letter is sent giving 14 days to remove the vehicles illegally parked but that if no response was made the car could be removed at the owner's expense.

The Committee
RESOLVED

That a Solicitor's letter be written to warn of the action that will be taken i.e. removal of the car if no response is made to the letter. Meanwhile the cost of locking posts would be investigated.

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

12/89 FINANCIAL COMPARISON STATEMENT 2012/13

The Committee
RESOLVED
To note the report.

COMMON & GROVEWOOD

12/90 COMMON, ALLOTMENTS AND CEMETERY REPORT

The Clerk advised the Committee that the Parish Rangers and the Allotment and Cemetery Administrators reports had been combined and would probably be moved down the agenda at future meetings for the sake of continuity.

Grounds Maintenance of Swillett Allotment, and the Common

Details of the quotes received for the work in the Parking areas, Alms Houses and Allotments were discussed, noting the different treatment of VAT on each quote which together with the detail of one quote vs the other made comparison difficult. It was noted that other companies had been approached for quotes but were not interested in quoting on this occasion. The Committee were advised that Company A was used to working on the Common and was sensitive to it and in response to a question from a Councillor, Members were advised that Company A were also the Ranger's choice and was the cheaper of the two quotes.

The Committee
RESOLVED

That the quote from Company A be accepted with the qualifier that if the Company undertaking the work on behalf of Herts County Council on the Footpath leading to the Swillett Allotment are approached and offer a lower quote as plant and machinery is on site, they would undertake the Swillett Allotments element only.

That the work would be carried out in this financial year, weather permitting.

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

Christchurch Cemetery

The Committee
RESOLVED

To approve the contract for the maintenance of Christchurch Closed Churchyard for the next three years at the stated fee, plus any annual inflationary increase in line with the Parish Councils Budget strategy.

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

It was also noted that work to the cemetery wall would take place in the spring/summer of 2013.

12/91 REQUEST TO HOLD A CLASSIC AND SUPER CAR SHOW ON CHORLEYWOOD COMMON

The meeting was suspended at 8.41 and Cllr Guy Davies addressed the Committee. The meeting reconvened at 8.43 pm and the proposal was then discussed by the Committee. Last year the event had been held in Christchurch School and Church grounds and had been very successful in raising a good sum for charity. The request was for the event this year to be held on the Common around the cricket square. The Cricket Club advised that they were happy with the proposal and had cancelled all fixtures for the proposed date. Several Councillors supported the proposal providing the ground conditions allowed. The usual caveat should be applied that any damage be restored, a full Risk Assessment be undertaken and adequate public liability insurance to be in place. With respect to the charities being supported at this year's event the Chairman expressed the view that if the event is successful perhaps the Council's own charity the Chorleywood Village Halls Trust could be considered

The Committee

RESOLVED

That permission be given for the Classic and Super Car Show on Chorleywood Common on the understanding that ground conditions are acceptable, any damage is restored that a full risk assessment be undertaken and that details of the Public Liability insurance of the event be provided to the Parish Council prior to the event.

This was proposed by the Open Spaces Chairman Cllr Edwards and unanimously approved.

12/92 FUNGI SURVEY RESULTS COMMISSIONED BY FRIENDS OF CHORLEYWOOD COMMON

After a brief discussion on the report, the Committee formally thanked Friends of the Common and Herts & Beds Fungi group for undertaking the survey and providing a record of the species found on the Common.

The other surveys that were taking place or were planned were discussed and Members were advised that fixed point photography had started with photographs being taken once a month. This would continue for twelve months.

12/93 RESTORATION OF CHRISTCHURCH POND

Members were advised that the work on Christchurch Pond as detailed in the report needed to take place within the next ten weeks before the newts came out of hibernation and entered the pond. The Clerk explained the background to the work and the results of the analysis of the silt that had been carried out. After approaching a number of different official bodies, Three Rivers District Council Environmental Health had finally offered advice and a way forward.

Members were advised that Herts County Council had been approached to fund the work given the pollutants likely source from the main road. Whist HCC would not accept any liability a sum of £2,000 had been offered as a gesture of good will towards the renovation of the pond. Chilterns Conservation Board had agreed to fund £1900 towards the project and with remaining money would be taken from the Common Maintenance budget. It was made clear that the pond will not be attractive in the short term and parishioners need to be made aware of this.

The Committee

RESOLVED

1. to agree to the work being carried out to restore Christchurch Pond
2. to agree to additional work being carried out to divert the drainage pipes away from the pond to ensure that it is not polluted again in the future.

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

ALLOTMENTS

12/94 OCCUPATION

The Committee
RESOLVED
To note the occupation of the allotments.

12/95 WAITING LISTS

The Committee
RESOLVED
To note the numbers on the waiting lists

LAWN CEMETERY

12/96 INTERMENTS

The Committee
RESOLVED
To note the Report.

PARISH PATHS

12/97 PARISH PATHS GRANT FUNDING

The Committee
RESOLVED
To note the report

GENERAL

12/98 BUDGET 2013-14 INCLUDING PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES

Fees and charges were covered first as part of the 2013 -14 budget. The view was expressed that the allotments still represented good value for money.

The Committee
RESOLVED
To accept the Fees and Charges as stated in the report and discussed:
Lawn Cemetery fees and charges increase by 5%
Allotments fees to increase by 10% with no change to the Water, New Tenant Admin and key charges
Common Licence fee increase of 10%

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

It was agreed to change the Grants budget heading to the HLS Grant of £5,800 and Grants with a zero budget which would then allow any other grants received during the year to be more visible

The Committee
RESOLVED

that with the split of the grants budget heading as described the proposed budget for Open Spaces be accepted.

This was proposed by the Open Spaces Chairman Cllr Edwards and carried unanimously.

12/99 RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Committee
RESOLVED
To note the report.

12/100 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Nothing to report

12/101 FOUR YEAR VISION

Allotment Water Harvesting and storing: The Open Spaces Chairman reported on a visit to Croxley Green Allotments to assess the water harvesting scheme in place there. The next step was to cost out such a scheme of the Chorleywood Allotments.

Hollybush Hall - Change of use to an education Centre With respect to the use of Hollybush Hall by schools in and around the area, Cllr Worrall reported that transport from schools further afield was an issue to these schools coming to the Common. Members were advised of a charity called Roundabout which arranges transport at a minimum charge. It was suggested that as payment from the HLS would be received for such educational visits by schools perhaps the Council could consider paying towards the transport costs. It was noted that Chilterns Conservation Board wish to hold their Commons Day this year on Chorleywood Common.

Investigation of a leisure trail : Members were advised that TRDC had just completed a nature trail in Oxhey Woods with play equipment made from timber on the site. An idea was voiced to seek sponsorship of a leaflet if a play trail was introduced on the Common.

Butterfly Survey: It was noted that Bill Cattle was to continue with the tutoring of the Volunteers

12/102 RESTRUCTURE OF THE RANGERS POSTS

The Committee
RESOLVED

That the Rangers posts be restructured as outlined in the report to employ a temporary member of staff on a casual fixed term contract for the next financial year. This would maintain the Council's ability to offer the full range of services performed by the Rangers to ensure continuity of service to the public in the key service areas and continued maintenance of the Common under the HLS agreement whilst fully discharging Health and Safety responsibilities .

This was proposed by Cllr Liley, seconded by Cllr Khuroya and carried unanimously

12/103 CLOSURE

The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm closed at 9.54 pm.

Signed ...Agreed by Chairman Open Spaces Cllr Edwards by email Date ...23/1/13.....

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

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