

**REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**  
**HELD ON 19<sup>th</sup> MAY 2015**

**MEMBERSHIP & ATTENDANCE**

**Chairman:** \* Barbara Green

**Councillors** Jo Clark  
Barbara Dickens  
\* Tony Edwards (ex officio)  
\* Raj Khiroya  
\* Jill Leeming  
\* Alison Preedy  
Martin Trevett  
Jane White (ex officio)

\* Denotes members present

**Officers present** Yvonne Merritt – Clerk  
Claire James - Deputy Clerk  
Laura Hamilton – Admin Officer  
Andrew Goddard – Parish Ranger

There were eight members of the public present.

**15/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were apologies for absence from Cllrs Jo Clark, Barbara Dickens and Martin Trevett. Cllr Jane White was absent from the meeting

**15/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

Standing orders were suspended to allow a Member of the Public to address the Committee.

Greg Hill - Chairman of Friends of Chorleywood Common spoke on Agenda Item 11 Defences of the Common, Agenda item 12 Location of the History Lectern and Agenda Item 10 Public Spaces Protection Order (TRDC)

Standing orders were re-instated at the end of the address.

**15/03 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The Committee  
RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015 which had been discussed at Full Council with no changes made, be approved as a true and correct record.

**15/04 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**14/69 14/61 Letter from Rural Payments Agency:** The Deputy Clerk updated Members with the information that the Rural Payments Agency had advised of a further extension to their planned response date to the issues raised and a response was now expected by the 26<sup>th</sup> May.

**14/71 OPEN SPACES OFFICERS REPORT – Trees next to the Railway Line** Members were advised that the work to coppice the trees had to be submitted for Conservation Area Planning Consent which was now in progress.

**14/71 OPEN SPACES OFFICERS REPORT – Re-surfacing works.** Members were advised that the short term works were now completed. The need for a longer term solution within the constraints of the legislation covering the Common was discussed. It was noted that DEFRA had the power to close the permissive parking area if the wrong materials were used which would be more of an issue than those caused by the current surface of the parking area. It was noted that the Council had a Duty of Care to the residents of Chorleywood to inform them of the limitations that applied. It was agreed that an article would be put in Chorleywood Matters which could be expanded on in an article for the website. It was further agreed that this was probably the start of more information being made available to parishioners to help understand the legislation surrounding the Common. In response to a question from a Member, the Clerk advised that the tarmac ramps leading up to the War Memorial permissive parking area were actively being progressed by Highways and were not covered by the Common legislation.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That options for resurfacing works within the guidelines for works on the Common would be investigated with a view to options being presented to the first Open Spaces Committee in the New Year.

**14/77 FITNESS CLASES ON THE COMMON** - Members were advised of the recent progress that had been made with location and invoice issues and the Deputy Clerk was hopeful that they would be resolved shortly.

**14/80 POND CREATION** – The Parish Ranger advised that Cllr Jackie Worrall had provided some very useful maps from the Flood Alleviation plans that showed a pond creation plan for Darvells Pond. Although there are still problems with the presence of fish in Darvells Pond, in his view this was the best way to move forward as a pond under restoration. The next steps are to speak to Natural England and liaise with the Open Spaces Society which the Committee were happy for the Ranger to progress.

Standing orders were suspended at 8pm to allow Mr Christian Koefoed-Nielson who had registered to speak but had arrived late to address the Committee on Agenda item 6 Open Spaces Officers Report – Play Area shortlisted site 15 on the Common.

Standing orders were re-convened at 8.07pm

Three members of the public left the meeting.

## **15/05 FINANCIAL COMPARISON STATEMENT 2014/15**

The Clerk advised that due to her recent absence the end of year accounts had only just been closed and would be audited at the end of the month. The Accounts for this year were now open and the system would be updated in due course.

## **15/06 OPEN SPACES OFFICER'S REPORT**

**Parking Ticket Machine at Shepherds Bridge** – Members were advised that this had now been re-installed at a cost of £250 following it being knocked over by an unknown vehicle.

**Easter Event** – The Clerk advised that the Woodlands Crafts and Scavenger Hunt organised by the Officers in the Easter School Holidays had been an excellent event and that Members should be proud of their talented Rangers. She had visited the event and experienced a brilliant atmosphere and felt that it was both educational and enjoyable for the members of the public that visited. The items made by the Rangers had been sold and raised in the order of £300 which would be earmarked for the Common. She encouraged the Committee to consider it as an annual event. Members were advised that it was not advisable to run such an event in the Summer as the protective clothing that the Rangers are required to wear when using chainsaws would be too hot in the summer. The Chairman suggested that a couple of the Committee Members should work alongside the Officers to help plan further events. As not all members of the Committee were present at this meeting, she would email everyone following the meeting.

**Cattle** – it was noted that the cattle were back on the Common.

The Committee  
RESOLVED  
To note the report.

## **ALLOTMENTS**

### **15/07 OCCUPATION**

**Bees at the Swillett** – The Allotment Administrator advised that the bees had settled in well at the Swillett with no issues being reported to her by either the bee keeper or allotment holders.

**Tenancy Renewals** – Quite a few allotment holders have given up this year but there have also been a number of new enquiries so it was hoped that by the next meeting quite a different picture of occupancy would be seen. It had been observed that many more payments had come in on time with only a few likely to incur the late payment charge that had been introduced this year.

**Copmans Wick** - The Clerk advised of the significant issue of fly tipping at Copmans Wick Allotments that long term could potentially become a fire risk. There was also a long standing issue with the boundary fence between the allotments and TRDC land. It was agreed that a date would be set up for members of the Committee to visit Copmans Wick allotments and establish a plan to undertake a major clearance operation and secure the perimeter. It was also suggested that some tree work may need to be undertaken. The meeting would be set up with Committee members and Officers prior to the next Open Spaces Committee meeting.

The Committee  
RESOLVED  
To note the occupation

### **15/08 WAITING LISTS**

The Committee  
RESOLVED  
To note the details on the waiting list.

## **LAWN CEMETERY**

## **15/09 INTERMENTS**

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the number of interments that had taken place.

## **COMMON AND GROVEWOOD**

### **15/10 PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDERS (TRDC)**

Members were informed that this had been a long time in development at TRDC. It was felt that some sort of regulation should be in place although it is a minority of dog walkers that do not keep their dogs under control or clear up after their dogs. It was acknowledged that the survey undertaken by TRDC had perhaps not been as far reaching and clear as it might have been but the Committee wanted to support the spirit of the orders. The Clerk advised that the Council has had an issue with dog fouling on the Common for many years but that as a Parish Council we are not able to legislate without the District delegating their powers. Also, if these orders were brought in and did not include Chorleywood Parish, it could not be added at a later date. It was also felt to be important to have continuity across the District. The Parish Council do not want to penalise people but the Council needed to be mindful of their responsibility not only to users of the Common but also to Officers who have to work in areas where dog fouling is prevalent. The Ranger advised that he sees the detrimental effect of dog fouling on the Common and that to have a means of dealing with it professionally would in his view be of benefit.

It was agreed that there was an educational aspect to this and that publicity is required. The Council had previously responded to suggestions for new locations for bins and already spent thousands of pounds on the free provision of dog bags. It was felt that if the act comes in that leafleting should take place advising of the changes before penalty notices are issued and a number of options were suggested for this. Again it was felt that people needed to be made aware of the issues and the resolution.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To recommend that Chorleywood Common be included in the orders with the caveat that the Chairman and the Clerk would meet with TRDC officers to discuss the application of the PSPO further.

This was proposed from the Chair by Cllr Barbara Green and carried unanimously.

### **15/11 DEFENCES OF THE COMMON**

Members agreed that a strategy needed to be in place for dealing with any future events. Officers involved in the recent occupation of were praised for their handling of the situation which had gone beyond the call of duty. It was felt that if agreements with TRDC and a better understanding of the Police role had been in place, swifter resolution may have been possible, given the byelaws that are in place for the Common. The Clerk suggested that the appropriate Service Level Agreement/ Memorandum of Understanding be progressed with TRDC initially at Officer level with Members being involved at a later stage if agreement cannot be reached at Officer level. Officers would also progress a meeting with the Police to discuss their role on such occasions.

With respect to any further barriers to entry by vehicles being put in place, it was felt that deterrents were present within the confines of the Common regulations and whatever was put in place would be moved if sufficient determined. Given the current rare occurrence of such occupations, any further effort at this time would be wasted. If such events became more frequent then clearly the subject would be revisited.

**15/12 LOCATION OF THE HISTORY LECTERN**

Members considered the content of the letter of complaint regarding the siting of the history lectern on the Common together with the additional information and photograph that had been provided on request from the Office by the resident. It was agreed that over time the lectern will weather and become less obtrusive. The maintenance requirements of this area were also noted which would be affected if the lectern was to be relocated. The Health and Safety issues that had been raised by the resident were considered. It was noted that a nearby bench had been in place next to the air raid shelters for many years without any reported incidents. It was also noted that the lectern is concreted in place and its removal would be costly as new oak posts would be needed.

The Committee  
RESOLVED

That the lectern should stay in its current location and that a letter be written to the resident explaining the Committee's decision.

This was proposed from the Chair by Cllr Barbara Green and carried unanimously.

**GENERAL**

**15/13 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Members noted that there was nothing to report

**15/14 CLOSURE**

The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm closed at 9.10pm.

Signed .....Agreed by email .....Date .....21/5/15 .....

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

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