

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

Cllr Jackie Worrall was also present for part of the meeting.

**Officers present** Yvonne Merritt – Clerk  
Claire James - Deputy Clerk

There were three members of the public present.

In the absence of the Chairman of the Open Spaces Committee Cllr Barbara Green, Cllr Martin Trevett chaired the meeting.

**15/31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Barbara Green.

**15/32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Martin Trevett declared a non-pecuniary interest in the allotments as an allotment tenant.

**15/33 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The Committee  
**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015 which had been discussed at Full Council with no changes made, be approved as a true and correct record.

**15/34 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

Standing orders were suspended to allow two Members of the Public to address the Committee.

Greg Hill Chairman of Friends of the Common addressed the Committee on  
Agenda Item 10 Four Year Vision – Nature trail,

Agenda Item 11 Request to use a Golf buggy on Chorleywood Common,  
Agenda Item 12 Signage on the Common  
Agenda Item 13 Request for seating outside the Old Shepherd Pub.

Billy Chuter Landlord of the Old Shepherd Pub addressed the Committee on

Agenda Item 13 Request for Seating outside the Old Shepherd Pub

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

With the agreement of the Committee, Agenda Item 13 was brought forward in the agenda for consideration.

### **15/35 REQUEST FOR SEATING OUTSIDE THE OLD SHEPHERD PUB**

The Landlord had confirmed to the committee during his address that any seating, if permitted, would be removable and not fixed in any way. Cllr Trevett reminded the Landlord that as a District Councillor, he was a member of the District Council Licensing Committee and therefore he needed to make the Landlord aware that such a request would need to go to that Committee. Cllrs agreed that a precedent had been set with the Black Horse which had been allowed seating outside the pub. It was felt that the Landlord had been true to his word on all occasions in the past and many agreed that they would like to see the Old Shepherd continue as a community pub. Discussion covered whether the permission should be for the current landlord only and that if the licensees changed, the new licensee would need to come back to the Parish Council to re-seek approval.

The Committee

#### **RESOLVED**

To agree to the request for seating outside the Old Shepherd pub subject to it not being permanently fixed and on the basis that if any issues arose the benches would be removed. This was for the current Licensees only and if the licensees changed, the new licensee would need to come back to the Parish Council to re-seek approval

This was proposed from the Chair by Cllr Martin Trevett and carried unanimously.

### **15/36 FINANCIAL COMPARISON STATEMENT 2014/15**

The Committee

#### **RESOLVED**

To note the report.

### **15/37 OPEN SPACES OFFICER'S REPORT**

The Common Ranger provided further information on the finding of the species Eyebright on the Common mentioned in the report. A local botanist had looked at it but could not identify the specific species. Trevor James, the County Botanist had then identified it as a near threatened species.

The Ranger also advised that he had now seen a Clouded Yellow butterfly which brought the number of recorded species of Butterflies and day flying moths to twenty-seven.

In response to a question from a Councillor regarding sightings of yellow parakeets, he advised that he had seen them fly over the Common but did not believe them to be nesting on the Common.

Discussion then took place on the recent incursions onto the Common by Travellers. Cllr Barbara Dickens recorded her thanks to the Officers yet again for the way the incidents and issues had been dealt with. The Clerk advised that the Process Server wanted to address the Council in their role as Employers about the Health and Safety aspects. There was some disappointment expressed with the Police attitude to the incidents and it was suggested that a meeting needed to be held with District and Hertfordshire police. It was agreed that the specific pieces of land needed to be identified and there was a need to work with the District. The Committee was advised that this was on the agenda for the Joint parishes meeting with the District in October.

**Recommendation 1 Travellers: To consider whether further measures need to be taken, including the installation of a height restriction barrier at Christchurch, beyond the extra measures taken, to deter further incursions of travellers onto the Common.**

Members were advised of the possible way of working of the barrier with the school and Church taking responsibility for the locking and unlocking of the barrier in the same way that the barrier operated outside the Parish Office. It was agreed that any such barrier would need to be off the road and further negotiation was required with both the School and the Church. Recent Filming on the Common would pay for the barrier, it would not come from the public purse. It was agreed that officers would find out if it was a viable proposition with both the school and the Church and if so, obtain quotes.

The Committee

**RESOLVED**

That Officers should investigate further and report back with quotes to agree funding at the next meeting

This was proposed from the Chair by Cllr Martin Trevett and carried unanimously.

**Recommendation 2 PONDS: To consider whether quotes are now sought based on the revised specification following consultation for the cleaning of the Top Common South Pond.**

The Common Ranger described the revised specification in response to a question from a Councillor.

The Committee

**RESOLVED**

That quotes are now sought in line with the revised specification.

This was proposed by Cllr Tony Edwards, seconded by Cllr Alison Preedy and carried unanimously.

**Recommendation 3 PONDS: To consider whether CMS are engaged to consult on the proposed location for the new pond adjacent to Darvells Pond.**

The Committee

**RESOLVED**

To agree to the recommendation as written

**Recommendation 4 Allotments: To consider whether the fly tipping at Copmans Wick is addressed and cleared and a robust high fence put up in conjunction with TRDC (who own the land adjacent to the Allotment site) to prevent further fly tipping from taking place.**

The Committee

**RESOLVED**

That Officers discuss with TRDC how the issues could be addressed.

**Recommendation 5 Allotments: To consider at what date, if any, the allotment rental be reduced for new allotment holders taking on a plot over half way through the year and if so, by how much the rental should be reduced.**

The Committee

**RESOLVED**

That the allotment rental be reduced by 50% for new tenants taking on a plot after the 1<sup>st</sup> November of a municipal year.

This was proposed by Cllr Jane White, seconded by Cllr Raj Khuroya and carried unanimously.

In response to a question from a Councillor on the future of the log piles on the Common, Members were advised that a list of alternative saw mills had been provided to the Officers and that these would now be followed up.

The Committee

**RESOLVED**

To note the report.

**ALLOTMENTS**

**15/38 OCCUPATION**

Cllr Martin Trevett raised the difficulty of opening one of the padlocks at the gates to the Swillett and was advised that new padlocks were on order. Cllr Tony Edwards advised Member's that he had presented the Allotment Competition Winner's prizes at the recent Horticultural show. Horticultural Society Members had expressed their thanks to the Chairman that the Hall had been ready in time. He advised members that one of the Officers, Michelle Putman, her son and the Caretakers had worked hard on the Friday previous to the show to ensure that the hall was ready for the show.

Discussion took place on allotment plots not being maintained to the required standard. It was suggested that if plots were given up around the perimeter of the allotment sites they should be returned to grass and mowed by the Rangers when the rest of the allotments common grass areas were cut. If they were dotted around the site this would be more difficult and time consuming and also the nature of what was left on the plot could cause issues with the machinery used. It was greed that it should be left to the judgement of the Rangers. It was noted that the Rangers save the Council a considerable amount of money in their care and maintenance of the machinery at their disposal. In response to a question from a Councillor, Members were advised that tenants were responsible for arisings on their plot, either by composting them on their plot or taking them away if composting was not possible.

The Committee

**RESOLVED**

To note the occupation

**15/39 WAITING LISTS**

The Committee

**RESOLVED**

To note the details on the waiting list, which stood at zero for all sites, a position that had not been achieved for some years.

## **LAWN CEMETERY**

### **15/40 INTERMENTS**

The Committee

#### **RESOLVED**

To note the number of interments that had taken place.

## **COMMON AND GROVEWOOD**

### **15/41 FOUR YEAR VISION**

It was agreed that the existing items should stay on the list and that the following be added:  
to establish a firm protocol and budget for dealing with Travellers.

Signage – welcoming legitimate visitors to the Common

Copmans Wick – to establish a budget and long term solution. A site visit would be organised by the Allotments Officer.

To consider putting a budget forward for surveys on the common be undertaken. It was possible that some surveys may be possible using local qualified people. The new mapping tool purchased would assist in providing visual displays of the survey data. It was agreed that the Clerk should speak to the Environmental records and Natural History Society and request copies of all the records they held. It was likely that a fee would be payable but they would provide a starting point for further surveys undertaken.

It was noted that the next meeting would be discussing revised estimate and budgets for the forthcoming year.

### **15/42 REQUEST FOR A GOLF BUGGY ON CHORLEYWOOD COMMON**

The contents of the report were considered along with a letter that had been received from the Golf Club. It was noted that to uphold the bye laws it was necessary to have a criteria in place to deal with any request on its individual merit and the Council would need to see some form of medical evidence. It was suggested that the Golf Club make this known to the clubs they play and that the Clerk be given the discretion for dealing with a request from a visitor to the Golf Club.

The Committee

#### **RESOLVED**

That upon medical evidence the Committee will consider every application on a case by case basis but that they would expect to see some form of medical evidence.

It was further agreed that permission was given personally to the individual making this request.

Councillor Jackie Worrall left the meeting at 8.50pm

### **15/43 SIGNAGE FOR THE COMMON**

It was noted that Cllrs Barbara Dickens and Allison Preedy had been going to go round cleaning the signs for the permissive horse track but before they did they had walked round and identified that a number of signs required replacement, a number were missing and some were provided for other purposes. It was further agreed that some areas needed better signage with Larks Meadow and also by the lectern at the back of the Black Horse quoted as examples. The need for getting advice from the British Horse Society as an independent body was noted. If the route was not suitable, it was possible

that in some areas the track could be moved. It was further noted that the CLA would help with the legalities.

Signage had been looked at a couple of years previously but had not progressed due to lack of finance. It was agreed that there was currently a mixture of signs and the option of using wood from the saw mill to create new signage was discussed. It was felt that many used the permissive horse track as the circular walk and therefore the circular walk needed to be better signposted.

The Committee

**RESOLVED**

That the British Horse Society be asked to come out and advise on the Horse track and the associated signage before the next meeting.

This was proposed by Cllr Raj Khiroya, seconded by Cllr Martin Trevett and carried unanimously.

**15/44 WATFORD MENCAP 10K EVENT AND REQUEST TO LICENCE NORDIC WALKING ON THE COMMON**

The Clerk advised Members of two items that had come forward after the agenda had been issued:

Permission had been requested for a 10K run in aid of Watford Mencap to take place on the Common next year on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016.

The Committee

**RESOLVED**

To agree to this in principle subject to the route being agreed with the Parish Ranger and the Clerk

A further request to use the Common under licence to set up Nordic Walking for exercise under referral from the medical profession had also been made.

The Committee

**RESOLVED**

To agree to this in principle under licence subject to an area/route being agreed with the Parish Ranger and the Clerk

**GENERAL**

**15/45 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Members noted that there was nothing to report

**15/46 CLOSURE**

The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm closed at 9.12pm.

Signed    Agreed by email by Cllr Martin Trevett    Date 08.10.2015

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

Signed.....    Date.....