



GRAZING PROGRESS



In September 2006 the owners of Colney Heath, Chorleywood, Bricket Wood and Nomansland Commons, together with the Herts Countryside Management Service, formed the South Herts Commons Grazing Group to investigate the feasibility of re-introducing grazing. All these Commons are highlighted in "A Biodiversity Plan for Hertfordshire" as being areas where the re-introduction of grazing is strongly recommended

The Commons in the group are all managed by cutting with machines. While this preserves the open areas, it does not replicate the system that created the habitats on these Commons and their biodiversity is declining as specialist plants and animals become increasingly rare. The grasslands found on common land are ancient habitats that have evolved through centuries of grazing and, to conserve them, we need to return to the system that created them.

As part of their investigations for this project, representatives of all four Commons took a trip over to Epping Forest in October last year to see how things had progressed there since the wardens had begun re-introducing cattle to areas of the Forest in 2002. We were able to meet the grazier and his cattle, which are English longhorns. The advantages of this ancient breed are that they are hardy, people friendly (we walked among them with no problems), not easily spooked and sufficiently large to deter most dogs. They also not only graze grass but also browse young shrub and tree growth. About 50 cattle have been re-introduced to the Forest and graze in small groups across sites covering about 350 hectares. The wardens hope to increase the number of cattle to about 150 by 2012 and extend the area of grazing to around 800 hectares of the Forest, not just grassland areas but also woodland pasture.

We saw areas where grazing had greatly improved the biodiversity and structure of the grassland habitat. We also looked at the post and rail fencing used on the road verges in the Forest, with squeeze gaps at frequent intervals to allow easy public access and gates for horses and buggies. Set in the edges of the woodland, the fencing merged seamlessly into its background with very little visual impact. The warden and the grazier both confirmed that in Epping Forest there has been great enthusiasm for the return of cattle and good public support for the grazing strategy.

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A New Roof for the War Memorial Hall

Many of you will have noticed the scaffolding around the War Memorial Hall before Christmas. Due to an ever increasing problem with the roof, that was not only affecting the Ladies changing rooms and rear of the stage, but was also allowing water to cascade down into the British Legion Hall, the Council had to set aside funds to renew the roof. With carbon footprints being a strong talking point we looked at the ways in which we could reduce the amount of carbon emissions. The roof is now fully insulated with a system called a "Warm Roof". This allows the heat from the sun to infiltrate into the hall and also retains the heat generated inside. Three Rivers District Council generously donated £10,000 towards the cost and we have already had to reduce the thermostat by four degrees, making an approximate 10% saving in energy usage overall.



Chairman of the Council Cllr Rodney Kipps and District Councillor Martin Trevett with year old Emilija Hobbs at Tumble Tots.



The Sportsman Footpath

Those of you who have been supporting the battle to get the right of way through the grounds of the old Sportsman Hotel made official will be pleased to hear that Herts. County Council have issued a modification order under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Section 53. The effect of this order would be to modify the Definitive Map and Statement for the Chorleywood area by adding to them a footpath leading from Common Road through Betjeman Gardens for approx. 100m then continuing generally south west to join Station Approach. However, before this order can be confirmed, it will be the subject of a local inquiry, which will be held at 10am on Tuesday 8th July at the Chorleywood War Memorial Hall. It is important that all those who have an interest in the proposed footpath attend this inquiry.

Damage to Common

Many of you will have seen and heard about the destruction of the Common at the Station entrance. Contactors working for Metronet made an error when ordering ballast and instead of 20 tonnes, 20 40-tonne lorries were ordered. They all arrived at the same time and created total chaos. Fortunately this was resolved with the help of Highways and the Police. The Clerk and Senior Ranger have had subsequent meetings with Metronet and a plan of re-instatement has been agreed, which will be carried out when the work on the line is completed in mid July.

VILLAGE DAY

A reminder that Village Day will be held this year on July 12th in the first fire ride on the Common. Stallholders wishing to reserve a site should contact Diane Horwood at the Parish Office as soon as possible.



News from our PCSOs

Nicki Angell has left Chorleywood to become a schools PCSO in the St. Albans area and we wish him all the best in his new post. In his place we welcome Marc Ringland who has been serving in the Three Rivers area for the past 18 months. Before becoming a PCSO Marc was a Special Constable. Marc joins Lindsey Catlin who has been working with us for the last 8 months.

Over the past year the police have been concentrating more manpower on theft from cars and this has proved very successful. They are also concentrating on groups who are targeting high value cars, which are stolen and shipped abroad within 24hrs. Thieves identify cars left in driveways or on the street and break into houses to obtain the keys. There will be a higher police presence in the area, both in marked and unmarked cars to spot thieves who are looking for likely targets, so do not be alarmed should you be stopped. And, if you usually leave your car keys on the hall table or somewhere equally exposed, change your habits and start putting them somewhere safe and out of sight.

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Our late night shopping evening, run in partnership with Chorleywood Business Association, was again very well attended. Fortune favoured us and we got the only dry evening that week. A large number of local organisations ran attractive stalls and the shops, particularly the food shops, did a roaring trade. Our congratulations to the Peace Hospice Shop, who won the Council's cup for the best dressed window.



FLYING KITES

Red kites have been seen circling over the Common recently and we are hoping that this may be the year that they decide to settle in with us. Our commonest bird of prey in the 17th century, red kites had entirely disappeared from England by the end of the 20th. A plan to re-introduce them into the Chilterns began in 1989 and has been so successful that there are now more than 200 pairs breeding in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. They are seriously big birds with a wingspan of about 5ft but they are basically scavengers, unlike hawks; i.e. they do not hunt and kill their food but live off dead animals. Road kill provides an excellent food source for them.

Should they settle on the Common, the Chilterns Conservation Board asks that you should not put out food for them. Please! It is, of course, wonderful to be able to watch red kites

swooping over your lawn but pet food, table scraps or butcher's meat is very bad for them. They need to eat whole dead animals, flesh, bones, skin and innards, otherwise they do not get what they need to keep healthy and their chicks will not grow properly.

And keep an eye on your washing line. Several pairs of ladies' knickers have been found lining kite nests, not a new occurrence, apparently. "When the kite builds, look to lesser linen" (William Shakespeare, The Winter's Tale).

GEORGE WILSON

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of George Wilson, whose many years of service to this community cannot be underestimated. George served on Chorleywood Urban District Council for four years from 1968 and was a long-serving member of the Chorleywood Residents' Association, but it is as Honorary Secretary to the War Memorial Hall Committee that those of us on the Parish Council remember him, a post he held for some ten years. His knowledge of Chorleywood and local affairs was invaluable to the Committee and the Council and his common sense, calm in the face of crisis and ever-present good humour made him a pleasure to work with. Chorleywood will miss him greatly.

Rickmansworth Waste Disposal Site

The site in Riverside Drive is now back in use after many months of work by TRDC to improve and extend it. It is now approximately double its previous size. It is at present open from 8am to 4pm but additional lighting is being installed and, when this is in place, the site will remain open until 6pm.

SW Herts. Transport Strategy Review

Herts. Highways is currently reviewing the existing Transport Strategy for SW Herts. A Stakeholder Consultation Document describing the review and anticipated outcomes is lodged at the Parish Office, where anyone interested may view it.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The Council are again holding their annual photographic competition, which will be judged by the chairman at this year's Village Day. There are two categories, for the 18 and unders and the over 18s. Winners will receive a £50 voucher and have their photos published either on the website or in this magazine. If there are sufficient entries of a good quality and subject matter, the Council may consider publishing a Chorleywood Calender for 2009! For Further information, please contact the Parish Office.

...and finally

The Council have set the precept this year at £314,5000. This is an increase of 5.12% on last year and equates to costs of £52.58 per annum on a band D Property, Your Council and all its facilities cost just over a £1.00 per week!