

**REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 9TH SEPTEMBER 2014**

MEMBERSHIP & ATTENDANCE

Chairman: * Mrs B Green

Councillors * Mrs J Clark
* Mrs B Dickens
* T Edwards (ex officio)
R Khiroya
* Mrs J Leeming
* Mrs A Preedy
M Trevett
* S Watkins (ex officio)

* Denotes members present

There were four members of the public present.

14/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Cllrs Khiroya and Trevett.

14/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

14/15 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8th July 2014 which had been discussed at Full Council with no changes made, be approved as a true and correct record.

14/16 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

14/04 13/94 Parking Proposals: In response to a Member's question it was confirmed that the parking machines were fully operational.

14/17 REPORT FROM THE CRICKET CLUB REGARDING THE PROPOSED RENEWAL OF THEIR CRICKET PAVILLION

Standing orders were suspended at 8.10pm to take a presentation from the Cricket Club under Agenda Item 16 regarding the proposed renewal of their cricket pavilion. Notes are attached in Appendix 1.

The Chairman thanked the Cricket Club representatives for their helpful contribution and the two members of the public representing the Cricket Club then left.

The Chairman of FoCC then spoke on a number of items that would be covered in the course of the agenda.

Standing Orders were re-instated at 8.34pm

14/18 FINANCIAL COMPARISON STATEMENT 2014/15

In response to a Member's question the Clerk advised that the budget line 203 Travelling Expenses was close to budget due to Rangers travelling to care for the cattle. It was agreed that an amount could be moved from Salaries grazing budget to cover this increase. It was noted that travelling expenses would not continue at the same level as in the previous grazing period, as the cattle were not generally being put away at night which had previously necessitated the Rangers travel.

With respect to the grazing the Clerk was asked to provide a report to the next meeting on the annual cost of the grazing together with any additional capital costs. Members were informed that Natural England had advised that, as English Longhorn Cattle are being grazed, an extra £35 per grazed hectare would now be added to the grant.

The Committee
RESOLVED
To note the report.

14/19 OPEN SPACES OFFICER'S REPORT

Seed Harvest: Members were advised that the area of the Common offered for a seed harvest this year had not been species-rich enough to make a harvest economically viable, and seed with the required variety had therefore had to be purchased. It was estimated that the Water Company would require about 10 KGs of this seed for the re-instatement works at a cost of about £400.

Lawn Cemetery – Storage Compound: as the revised quote had not yet been received, this would be brought back to the next meeting.

Work to Top Common Pond: Members were advised that quotes would be obtained for the work required to Top Common Pond which was outside the capabilities of the Rangers. It was possible that some money could be recouped as a capital programme under the Stewardship agreement.

Electrofishing: The mechanics and reasons for undertaking electrofishing were explained.

Tree work to the rear of a property in Berry Lane

The Committee
RESOLVED

That the work required on Safety grounds be completed but the non-essential work to be covered by the resident for which he would need to seek permission from TRDC.

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

Litter Bins

The Committee
RESOLVED

That the Clerk purchase covered litter bins to the budget in place to use as replacement of the existing as a rolling programme.

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

The Committee thanked the Officers for a good and comprehensive report.

The Committee
RESOLVED

To note the report.

ALLOTMENTS

14/20 OCCUPATION

A number of Councillors had been out on a visit to the allotments earlier in the day and had found it to be a useful exercise.

The Council
RESOLVED
To note the occupation

14/21 WAITING LISTS

The Council
RESOLVED
To note the details on the waiting list

LAWN CEMETERY

14/22 INTERMENTS

The Committee
RESOLVED
To note the number of interments that had taken place.

14/23 CEMETERY CHANGE AND MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES

Members were concerned that a number of planting schemes in the cemetery over recent years had failed and it was suggested that an expert opinion be sought of possible plants that were appropriate for the soil and site, and unattractive to rabbits and other wildlife. With respect to the eight small flower beds along the pathway between Sections A and B, it was felt that they needed to be planted with something tall and a number of options were discussed. It was suggested that the Rose bed in Section B be replanted as a mirror image of the flower bed in Section C, and it was agreed that plants of a similar size needed to be planted. Box hedge was agreed as the most suitable for the children's section.

The Committee
RESOLVED
That

- The proposal to delineate the Children's section in the Lawn Cemetery.
- The replanting of the Rose bed at the end of Section B with a mirror image of the shrub bed in Section C,
- The replanting of the eight small square flower beds that line the path between Sections A and B
- The repainting of the gates and wall chains at the entrance

At a total estimated cost of £1,158 be agreed following consultation with an expert over possible rabbit proof plants.

The Committee
RESOLVED
To note the next areas of the cemetery to be occupied

14/24 CEMETERY PLAQUES

The Committee
RESOLVED

That the disposal of the plaques goes ahead after attempts have been made to contact the families, with any monies received to go towards planting and other improvements in the Cemetery.

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Preedy, seconded by Cllr Watkins and carried unanimously.

To facilitate this, the Clerk would set up two new budget headings to record income from the plaques and expenditure on the planting.

COMMON AND GROVEWOOD

14/25 NATURE TRAIL

Members were advised that the first submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the Nature Trail had failed, not due to the case itself but more about the funding available at the time of submission. The Clerk had spoken with the HLF and also with Countryside Management Services who deal with similar funding applications on a regular basis and helpful pointers had been given by both bodies.

The Committee
RESOLVED

That the Temporary Research Assistant be re-engaged for approximately 15 hours at a cost of £150 to work with the Clerk on a re-application for the Nature Trail to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

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

14/26 REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO RUN OUTDOOR FITNESS SESSIONS WITH EQUIPMENT ON CHORLEYWOOD COMMON

Members discussed their concerns of possible damage to the Common by the equipment being proposed, areas of the Common where fitness sessions should not be allowed, and experience from elsewhere of noise and disturbance to other users of the Common.

The Committee
REOLVED

To grant a trial period of six weeks with the caveats of

- Areas to be used to be limited to the Fire rides
- To exclude any equipment which is dragged along the ground eg. Car tyres.
- To limit the number of people in any one session to ten plus the trainer

It was also agreed that users be encouraged to use the Lorry Permissive Parking Area to minimise disruption to other users of the Common. It should also be advised that the Council reserved the right to give advance notice of any closures due to filming or ground condition concerns. All would be subject to the provision of suitable risk assessment, public liability and First aid documentation.

This was proposed from the Chair and carried unanimously.

14/27 REQUEST TO CREATE A FORMAL FOOTPATH FROM CEDARS VILLAGE TO THE A404

Members discussed the existing footpath which does not appear to be that well used. As legislation does not permit 'artificial' surfaces on the common it was suggested that closer mowing than was feasible by

the Rangers' machinery might help the Residents of Cedars Village. The area is mown by the Parish Rangers, but their machinery does not permit close mowing.

The Committee
RESOLVED

That the Cedars Village Groundsman be allowed to close mow a 1m width along the current line.

This was proposed from the Chair and carried unanimously.

14/28 REQUEST FROM RESIDENTS OF APPLETREE DELL TO REMOVE THE PARKING SPACES OPPOSITE THEIR PROPERTIES

A complaint had been received from residents of Appletree Dell about noise and nuisance from users of the permissive parking area opposite their property. This area is understood to be used by visitors to the Common and dog walkers. If this parking area was removed and the area at Cedars Village extended then the latter would have to be taken out of Stewardship. The principles of Common Land, the designation of the area in question as a permissive parking area for all users of the Common, and the fact that the Council cannot be partial, were discussed in relation to this request.

The Committee
RESOLVED

That after due consideration the request to move the parking spaces opposite properties in Appletree Dell be rejected.

This was proposed by the Chair and carried unanimously

14/29 REQUEST FROM THE BEAVERS TO USE THE COMMON TO DO A CYCLING BADGE

A number of members expressed concerns about mixed messages in relation to cycling on the Common. Members were advised that although cycling on the Common is prohibited under the bye laws, the Council is allowed to permit such an event as a one-off and it therefore does not set a precedent. It had been done before and the opportunity used to re-enforce the message that cycling at all other times was prohibited.

The Committee
RESOLVED

That the request from the Beavers to use the Common to do a cycling badge be permitted.

This was proposed by Cllr Watkins, seconded by Cllr Mrs Clark and carried with 5 votes in favour, one vote against and one abstention.

GENERAL

14/30 APPOINTMENT OF REPLACEMENT PARISH MEMBER TO THE CHILTERN AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) CONSERVATION BOARD

The Clerk advised that she had spoken to Margaret Jarrett who is standing down from the Chiltern Conservation Board who had provided some information.

The Committee
RESOLVED

To accept Margaret Jarrett's recommendation of Simon Deacon

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

14/31 REQUEST FOR A CATTLE RACE IN THE RAILWAY FIELD

The reasons for the request for a cattle race in the Railway field were discussed, with Members being advised of the current arrangements to deal with the cattle on site which involved the grazier bringing hurdles etc. to the Common for which the council was charged. It was agreed that the Rangers need to be able to safely deal with the cattle when the need arises, such as the replacement of a battery in the collars, and the construction of this structure would allow them to do this without the need to call out the grazier.

The Committee
Resolved

That the cattle race be constructed in the Railway Field at the proposed cost of £1280
This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Preedy, seconded by Cllr Mrs J Clark and carried unanimously.

14/32 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

The Clerk advised that the 14th November will be the 10th anniversary of the Common being designated a Local nature Reserve and asked whether members wished to mark this in any way. Discussion took place on the type of events that could be run either on the anniversary or over the forthcoming 10th anniversary year. A photographic competition, to be run over the year, with a calendar at the end of the year was suggested. It was agreed that there would be a launch in November publicising the anniversary with events, as yet to be agreed, to follow over the next year. FoCC offered to help publicise and seek volunteers as required.

14/33 CLOSURE

The meeting having commenced at 8.00 pm closed at 10.37pm.

Signed Agreed by the Chairman by email Date25/09/14.....

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

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

REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 9TH SEPTEMBER 2014

Members were advised that an Ecological Survey had been commissioned by the Cricket Club and the Clerk confirmed that all Councillors had received a copy. The Cricket Club advised that they were meeting with the Modular Building Company the following day to discuss the final design. Concerns were raised in several quarters over the proposed 15 – 20% increase in footprint and suggestions made that the possibility of two storeys be considered. Members were advised by the Cricket Club that as part of their pre-planning submission to Three Rivers District Council, Officers there had expressed concerns about the current proposed roof height which implied that they would not agree to a second storey. The need for disabled access to a second storey was also discussed. The Cricket Club also advised that a response had been received from DEFRA with regard to the issue of the potential larger footprint of the new pavilion. Three examples of cricket pavilion extensions on common land were cited and it was agreed that this information would be forwarded to the Clerk for distribution to the Councillors. The Cricket Club were advised that when they were ready to present their plans to the Council, they would need to be presented to Full Council, the next meeting being on the 14th October. The Cricket Club expressed their view that there was no point going for full planning permission without full support from the Parish Council, neighbours and other interested parties.

Friends of the Common (FoCC) represented by the Chairman of FoCC expressed interest in the plans and support for the Cricket Club in recognising better facilities being required to meet the standards now required by the English Cricket Board but hoped that all avenues would be explored before agreement was reached to increase the footprint of the building.