

HENFIELD COMMONS JOINT COMMITTEE (CJC)

Minutes of a meeting of the **Henfield Commons Joint Committee** held on **Wednesday 29th June 2022** at **9.30am** in the **Garden Room** of the Henfield Hall.

PRESENT

Mr A Sharp	Mr M Morgan
Mr J Potts	Mr R Noel
Mr P Crawford	Ms G Perry
Mr M Eastwood	Mr E Colgate

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr J Willis (Tree Warden)
Mrs P Grant (Clerk)
Dr J Coultas

Item Description

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR FORTHCOMING YEAR**

Mr Sharp said he will not be standing as a Parish Councillor next year and would be resigning and that as Mr Eastwood would also be standing down as Parish Council Chairman he proposed that subject to agreement there would be a joint Chairmanship between himself and Mr. Eastwood for the next 12 months. This would also allow a period of knowledge transfer to take place. This was proposed to Members and all were in favour.

2. **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN FOR FORTHCOMING YEAR**

Mr Noel proposed Mr Potts as Vice Chairman, this was seconded by Mr. Morgan and all in favour. There being other other nominees Mr Potts was duly elected. Mr Morgan was thanked for all of his support and hard work as Vice Chairman of the CJC.

Mr. Eastwood suggested appointing someone from Horsham District Council to be responsible for the ownership of an action plan for the Commons, for ensuring that various actions are completed in a timely manner, e.g. action Plans, Management Plans, financial planning, contractor appointments etc. He felt that we needed to put more structure around our plans, and an objective would be to produce a clearer single management plan for our Commons using Chesworth Farm as a good example. Mr. Noel felt this role should be an HDC Officer and was in favour of this although Mr Morgan said this had been attempted in the past which did not really work and as there had only been a few Members and a Clerk who looked after the finances, obtained quotes and dealt with correspondence. Mr. Eastwood would like to see an HDC Operations Manager appointed.

Mr Crawford said a Warden for Henfield could be appointed to help manage the Commons and would look into this and take it back to his Department. Mr Eastwood was hopeful that something could happen within six weeks and asked the meeting if members would be interested in this although the Co Chairman (Mr Sharp) said he was tentative about this and would like to see local input and for it not to become a `Friends of Henfields` Commons`. It was made clear that the decision making would remain with CJC and that the desire is that HDC become more involvement in the implementation. Members were happy for Mr Crawford to pursue this matter and agreed with this action. All in favour and it was agreed by the Members that Mr Crawford in conjunction with HDC Councillors would explore this proposal and report back within the next 6 six weeks.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

There were no Declarations.

4. **APOLOGIES**

Mr T Baker

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 24th MARCH 2022**

Dr Coultas referred to the Bye Laws and that horses were allowed everywhere.

Mr Colgate commented on what was said under Item 6 (iii) and would like to make it clear that when he described an incident relating to a horse and a child **that this did not occur on Henfield Common**. However, Dr Coultas was not happy with this and would like the appropriate wording deleted. Discussion took place about this emotive subject with Dr Coultas indicating the Minutes were emotive and against horse riders. Mr Morgan explained that minutes were a matter of fact and that they couldn't be amended other for matters of inaccuracy. It was also pointed out that the CJC are not against horse riding and that Mr Colgate was merely pointing out the risks.

6. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

Mr Willis enquired about who was responsible for Batts Pond as there was a tree in the pond and was advised this was the responsibility of Horsham District Council.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

7. **NEW GRASS CUTTING CONTRACT**

The Chairman proposed accepting PHB's quotation and Mr Morgan asked why there was no mention of Broadmare Common and was advised this was dependent on the outcome of the new Management Plan which will be available at the end of the year and the maintenance regime would then be discussed. Cutting of the bund would be taken out of PHB's quotation and would accept Grastex's quotation with concern being raised about the amount of grass left to lie if only cut twice a year. Mr Eastwood suggested seeing how the bund was affected this year. The Chairman said it is quite high now and a cut is due soon and then to see later on what the effect is.

8. **HENFIELD COMMON**

- (i) Parking at the entrance to Henfield Common North

The Chairman had contacted the Works Officer regarding installing bollards but he was on his own at the time and unable to do this. He indicated that there are a lot of vans, big and small, SUVs etc parked in the area, Mr Morgan agreeing this is a continual problem. Mr Eastwood said there is another Works Officer starting in August although there is a backlog of works and it was hoped that posts could be installed before winter and these would be placed on the left hand side of the entrance as this area gets muddy.

(ii) Grass cutting regime

The Chairman would like to cut the middle section of Henfield Common South leaving the edges as there is a good amount of common spotted orchids and will ask the grass cutter to avoid them. Ms Perry asked about the bracken bashing although the Chairman said this is not necessary at the moment. Mr Colgate confirmed that there were hundreds of orchids which was very positive.

(iii) Reed bed

The Chairman said the reed bed is a major problem and reminded the meeting a contractor has quoted to remove the willow and its rootballs and to put them in the woods although our grant application for funds had been turned down as had our request to pay the contractor half from the last financial year and half from this one and that too had been refused. Further discussion took place regarding the best way of dealing with the reed bed which would be at vast expense although we did have easement monies. It was acknowledged the willows are getting bigger, and there is more bramble and was in danger of drying out. Mr Colgate had seen water flowing in the causeway ditches but the pipes into the reed bed were too high. Mr Willis said the loss of the reed bed would be awful particularly for birds. Mr Noel would like agreement to remove the larger willows and the Chairman agreed to go back to the original contractors for a quote. Dr Coultas said when the reed bed was cut down some years ago there had been many more butterflies in her garden. It was also agreed that HDC will explore funding for this work.

Mr Colgate was concerned about a lot of vegetation which is appearing to spread and this was found to be *pendula sedge*. Mr Eastwood said there is a large dead tree thought to be Scots Pine by the footpath to a residents' property which will have to be removed in the autumn.

Finally Mr Morgan referred to the Bye Laws which were in Draft Form and we need to find out if they become law.

Mr Morgan left the meeting at 11.25am

9. BROADMARE COMMON

(i) Management Plan

An ecologist has started on a Management Plan and had suggested cutting the flood plain.

(ii) Grass cutting regime

This will depend on advice in the new Management Plan.

10. TANYARD

(i) Grass cutting regime

The Chairman to contact the contractor regarding this.

Mr Willis expressed concern regarding a large badger sett near the gate which could cause accidents although this area is not used by the public. There are also masses of bulrushes and bramble which needs to be dealt with.

Ms Perry asked about the proposed Jubilee Oak plaque and there is also a Jubilee Oak on Broadmare Common and a Platinum Jubilee oak available. She also noticed that no path had been cut in the meadow this year which is usually done for the Gardens & Arts Weekend and asked that it be carried out next year as people have expressed that the meadow was a valuable asset. Mr Colgate was concerned that the grass cutting would be too close to the yellow rattle, the spindle tree and the Jubilee Oak and the contractor will be warned about getting too close.

11. CORRESPONDENCE

None apart from a resident wishing to ride a bicycle on the Common.

12. FINANCE

Current balance is £15,420 with two invoices relating to the Tanyard and Secretarial services expected at the end of this month amounting to £832.50.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Eastwood would like it noted that new development plans north of Deer Park showed there may be a fourth Common the adoption of which Horsham District Council Planning had turned down. Although Mr Noel and Mr Crawford were not aware of this approach. Mr Eastwood agreed to share the draft proposals although no actual planning application had been submitted by the Land Agent at this point.

Mr Eastwood suggested setting a timetable of future meetings to make it easier to manage diaries and suggested the last Wednesday in September, December and March at 9.30 am although an additional meeting before the end of September may be necessary.

14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

9.30am Wednesday 28th September 2022 Henfield Hall Garden Room.

The meeting closed at 11.50am.