

HENFIELD COMMONS JOINT COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Minutes of a meeting of the **Henfield Commons Joint Committee** held on Wednesday **4th January 2023** at 9.30am in the rear of the Garden Room, Henfield Hall.

PRESENT:

Mr M Eastwood (JC)	Mr A Sharp (JC)
Mr M Morgan	Ms G Perry
Mr P Crawford	Mr E Colgate
Mr T Baker	Mr R Noel

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs P Grant (Clerk)

One member of the public

1. Declarations of Members Interests

There were no Declarations

2. Apologies

Dr J Coultas. Henfield Common North resident Mr P Dendy attended in her absence.

3. Approval of Minutes of 28th September 2022 Meeting

These were agreed by Members and signed by the JC Eastwood.

4. Matters Arising

- Henfield Common residents site visit and matters arising - JC Eastwood & Cllr Morgan

JC Eastwood reported on a constructive meeting with Henfield Common North residents which was very useful in agreeing responsibilities with several items being discussed including the large pothole which was agreed this was the responsibility of West Sussex County Council but as yet had not been dealt with and was getting worse because of the weather, parking etc.

Action: JC Eastwood to contact West Sussex County Council to enquire when this will be done. Cllr Perry also commented on a raised area of tarmac which needs to be flattened.

There are worn out parking signs. Residents have replaced at their expense (with thanks to Mr Dendy) and have accepted responsibility. One road sign has already been replaced by HDC as it has faded to nothing. Mr Dendy will take responsibility for repainting the yellow markings on the road, excluding the parking area which is not Henfield Common North Resident responsibility.

Parking is still a major problem and discussion took place about various options, e.g. ditches, bollards (which would have to be sturdy and with reflective markers) and/or legal options. Mr Crawford was asked what happened in other areas and he said they have car parks available. Cllr Noel said we should perhaps formalise an area as a car park including the grass triangle closes to the high street although after discussion it was agreed that this would ruin the view of the Common. In any event Secretary of State permission would have to be sought. It was agreed that something must be done about the excessive car parking on the Common and the blocking of access to Henfield Common North with restrictions, contact with residents, fewer

vehicles allowed to park, fencing/bollards/signage etc. After discussion it was agreed that stout high wooden posts with suitable reflectors would be a key ingredient.

Actions : 1. **JC Eastwood will ask the HPC Works Officers to remove parking permit signs as there is no formalised parking scheme.**
2. **Horsham to consider writing to residents after consultation with their Legal Department.**

- 2023/4 Budget and Funding - JC Eastwood & Cllr Noel

The Parish Council have agreed to re-designate one of their Reserves to become a Tree & Commons Restoration Reserve and an amount of £4000 is therefore available if needed. It will be the Parish Councils Recreation & Open Spaces Committees responsibility to determine use and priorities of the spending of these funds. Cllr Noel said it has been made clear that HDC are happy to provide extra funds but that they have to submit a budget in two months time for 2023/24. JC Eastwood asked how much would be requested and stressed the need for it to be increased to the £18500 shown in the draft budget. JC Sharp asked if our annual expenditure budget had been increased and Mr Crawford confirmed it has been increased to approximately £19,000 but this will be confirmed.

Actions: Mr Crawford/Cllr Noel to confirm the budget amount that is being requested.

- Commons Newsletter - JC Eastwood

JC Eastwood has produced a newsletter and would like to do this every quarter, a test of its success being that by informing residents about planned works, not many complaints were received, and it was agreed to include other Commons. Mr Colgate however would like to see it more user friendly language being used and it was agreed he would collaborate with JC Eastwood.

- Pendular Sedge & Water Dropwort - JC Sharp

JC Sharp reported Hemlock Water Dropwort had been cut in the marsh area near the reed bed but it will grow back. There is sedge in the woods by the path and because of wet conditions may spread north but can be cut back by our Works Officers. Mr Colgate was shocked by its spread and would like action to remove it. JC Eastwood replied we will keep on eye on this and assess its impact then talk to the Works Officers about options to cut it back.

Action: JC Eastwood to talk to Works Officers

- Henfield Common debris area - Mr Baker will arrange to work with the Chairmen to identify appropriate areas for a contained debris area to be established, either near the cricket club or where the reed bed debris was spread.

Action: Mr Baker to arrange site visit and agree what is needed/location.

- Tanyard additional grass cut - JC Sharp reported that this additional cut had not been possible because of the inclement weather.
- Chasing of outstanding invoices - Secretary has been doing so and will escalate to the Chairmen if there isn't sufficient progress by end January.

Action: Secretary to continue chasing all outstanding invoices.

- 5. **Open Forum** - no members of the public wished to raise any items.

6. Henfield Common

- Action Plan 2022/3 progress - JC Eastwood went through the 2022 Action Plan items and said that good progress had been made with the removal of the willows, the cutting of around one third of the reeds, the sculpting of edges and thinning of woodland near the reed bed, and the creation of a new glade. Brambles on the southern edge of the Common North have been flailed to prevent encroachment on to the grassland and Mr Willis had completed an audit of the health of the ash trees on Henfield Common. JC Eastwood asked about tree inspections and Mr Crawford said that this was an HDC responsibility which he would look into. We have also established a budget requirement for 2023/4.

Action: Mr Crawford to investigate Tree Inspection regime.

- Action Plan 2022/3 outstanding items include Fixed Point Photography (**Action: JC Eastwood to talk to Mr Ainscough**). Yellow Rattle test planting on Bund (**Action: JC Eastwood to talk to Mr Willis**).
- Action Plan 2023/4 plan items were agreed by members although the number of grass cuts will be determined by weather and the dominance of the stronger grasses.
- Dam recommendations and ensuring sufficient water supply in marsh area - Mr Baker talked about the recommendations from Sam Buckland from SWT. It was agreed that the volunteers could construct the leaky dams. However the treatment of the causeway ditches to get water into the marsh area would require contractor spend. Mr Crawford agreed to discuss these with Jake Everitt who had previously agreed to visit the site and consider what to do (**Action: Mr P Crawford**).

7. Broadmare Common

- To consider Management Report recommendations - JC Sharp. There are some major, costly works required particularly on the ponds and surrounding grassland.
- Proposed site visit when there is better weather. Provisionally booked for 8th February 9.30am meeting at Henfield Hall after to discuss action plan (**Actions all to note 8/2 meeting at Broadmare and Secretary to book meeting room for say 11am**).
- JC Sharp report he is meeting James Cox from Southern Beeches re removal of trees encroaching on telecoms cables.

8. Tanyard Field JC Sharp reported the pond which he feared was drying up or leaking is now full following the rain

9. Oreham Common - we will consider commissioning a Management Report toward the autumn 2023. Considering what to do to support the nightingales population and some volunteer pond work/bull rush removal are the main priorities.

10. Correspondence - none.

11. Finance - Secretary provided a useful summary.

12. Succession arrangements for the retirement of Committee Secretary - it was agreed that we will seek to recruit locally.

Action: Secretary and JC Eastwood to draft a job advert and advertise locally.

13. Any Other Business - none.

14. Dates of 2023 Meetings

- Proposed 8th February (Broadmare visit), 22nd March (possibly at Henfield Club), 5th July 2023 & 4th October 2023