

HENFIELD COMMONS JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the **Henfield Commons Joint Committee** held on **Monday 16th December 2019** at 7.00pm in the Parish Council Office.

Present: Mr A Sharp Mr M Morgan Ms G Perry Mr J Potts Mr R Noel Ms E Goodyear Mr C Simmonds

In attendance: Mr D Nye

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

There were no Declarations.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 18th September 2019**

These were approved by the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

3. **APOLOGIES** : Mr E Colgate Mrs P Grant, Mrs S Matthews, Mr P Hudson, Mr J Willis

4. **CHAIRMAN`S ANNOUNCEMENTS** There were none

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM: There was none

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

(a) **Oreham Common**

(i) Meadow cut: All Commons. Dick Nye (WO) Andrew Sharp and Peter Booth (contractor) to meet next year to make a revised regime of cutting and leaving. Cut may need to be done earlier. Bales are not to be left at Broadmare or Oreham in future. The group will consider cutting old bales open to allow better decomposition.

(b) **Broadmare Common**

(i) Coggers Field drain: works were carried out by residents but needed to be completed so drainage worked properly. This was carried out by Henfield Conservation Volunteers at the weekend.

(ii) Bins: Position not bad and likely to remain,

(iii) Pond claimed by Mrs Cort: HDC legal and property departments are continuing to work on this issue.

(iv) Broadmare Common -Lane trim: Andrew Sharp has agreed the works to be done by Mark Streeter when he does Dagbrook Lane.

(v) Field cut: Review in 2020. WO to keep paths and benches clear

(vi) WO and HCV to coordinate to remove fallen willows from Pond House Pond. Southern Beeches contracted to remove more difficult trees.

(c) Henfield Common

(i) Tree works

Memorial trees: PC Works Officers are gradually completing this work as specified by Mark Pullen, HDC tree officer and John Willis, Local Tree Warden. Works to trees on causeway (as specified in Commons management plan) have been carried out and it was agreed that this was a great improvement. Tree works on the South Side of the Common have also been completed as per the Commons Management Plan. Further recommended tree works to create halos round the specimen oaks and to thin smaller trees in south and north woodlands will continue to be carried out, but all prior to bird nesting season next spring. Keeping the public informed on the progress of this initiative will be key, but so far the works officers reported support from public who have seen the works being carried out.

(ii) Cows/Management Plan:

Kate Ryland (ecologist) has now reviewed progress on implementing the plan and was very positive about what has been achieved in the last year. Her recent report detailing her findings was considered and further recommended actions discussed.

- a. Whips have been removed from the reedbed and some small trees encroaching on the eastern end of the bed have been removed to protect this rare habitat by HCV.
- b. A digger will be used to deepen some areas of the reedbed in future to give the required diversity of levels recommended in ecology report
- c. Cows on the common. A quotation has been received from Boviguard, which gives a broad idea of the costs involved. We discussed the safety and management concerns that may arise in using this system on a small area bounded by roads, and agreed to continue researching by speaking directly to the HDC Rangers' cow specialists, who supply and manage the cows at Warnham Nature reserve and to also to view the system in operation at Ashdown Forest and other local places. The importance of getting risk assessments and insurance quotes before making large investment of time and money were discussed.

(iii) Reed Bed cut: Sections are being cut in rotation when it is dry enough. In future they will be cut by PC Works Officers and collected by Henfield Conservation Volunteers (HCV) at the same time as easier to collect them when they are dry.

(iv) Meadow cut: see item above under Oreham Common

(v) Arun's Commemorative bench: it was agreed that the proposed bench will be acceptable in the location suggested (just south of bollards on footpath).

(d) Tanyard

(i) Southern pond: concern that the water level is very low despite the water table being extremely high. Further investigation needed. It was

suggested that the spring may have moved or that a bung in an inflow pipe may need to be checked.

- (ii) Chestnut End – works have been completed
- (iii) Field cut: as other areas
- (iv) Gate post is missing currently- had to be removed due to rot. The area has been made safer with warning tape and post and gate will be replaced asap.

6. **FIXED POINT RECORDING:** There was no access to this at the meeting. Elaine Goodyear reported that uploads occur automatically once Mike Ainscough has taken the pictures. It was agreed to check if they are still being done quarterly or annually. The usefulness of historical aerial photographs of the Commons held by the parish was also discussed. Drone footage may be obtained but our contact is in process of getting a licence for this.

7. **HENFIELD CONSERVATION GROUP:** There has been much recent work completed and the next session will be joint work with the PC works officers at Broadmare in January.

8. **POSITION OF UPKEEP OF PRIVATE ROADS ON COMMONS**

A resident next to Henfield Common has recently requested that potholes in his access road are fixed.

A resident using Broadmare Common road suggested the HCJC set up and contribute to a fund to maintain the road.

All the commons have private roads or tracks across them and the committee has no budget to maintain them.

It is urgent to establish what responsibilities we have for these roads. Mike Morgan will pursue HDC legal and property departments to clarify the situation.

Another resident has recently resurfaced some of the roadway and added some posts without seeking the permission of the Joint Commons Committee. **The committee confirmed that no works should be done on the Common without the authority of the Joint Commons Committee.**

9. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None was available

10. **FINANCE:** It was resolved to seek quotes for clearing the East side of the Causeway on Henfield Common as there will be enough funds to complete this recommended work in current balance.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** None

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** 7pm Wednesday 5th February 2020