

## **HENFIELD COMMONS JOINT COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Henfield Commons Joint Committee** held on **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020 via Zoom Conferencing at 7.00pm**

**PRESENT:** Mr.A Sharp (Chairman) Mr M Morgan  
Mr J Potts Mr R Noel  
Mrs E Goodyear Mr C Simmonds  
Mr E Colgate Mrs G Perry

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr P Crawford (Horsham District Council)  
Mrs P Grant (Clerk)  
Mr J Willis  
Mr D Nye  
Three members of the public

Item Description

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

There were no Declarations.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 22<sup>nd</sup> JULY 2020**

These were agreed by the meeting and will be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

3. **APOLOGIES**

Mr P Hudson, Mrs S Matthews

4. **CHAIRMAN`S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Announcements

**OPEN FORUM**

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

*Item (c) (iii) was brought forward.*

**HENFIELD COMMON**

(c) Wynn`s bench

A complaint had been received about the bench being on a plinth unlike all others. The Chairman had explained how this arose and said the levels around would be raised diminishing the plinth effect.

Mr Agarwal asked to be allowed to plant flowers around the plinth which was not usually allowed. He would ensure that the bench looked attractive and cared for, for the rest of his life. Mr. Colgate, having suffered a similar bereavement said he understood the pain, and made an impassioned appeal for an exception to be allowed in this case.

After some discussion a compromise was agreed:

- flowers planted around the back and sides but not the front so that people are not discouraged from using the bench
- flowers will be native wild flowers and agreed by the Committee
- flowers will be allowed their natural life cycle (i.e. not removed immediately after flowering)

*The Chairman then brought forward item 8*

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

A member of the public sought to clarify the position on the upkeep of private roads across the Common. He was particularly concerned about the track on the far western edge of Henfield Common North but the position is of general interest. The Chairman clarified the position:

- The Committee is responsible for ensuring, as far as possible, unimpeded public access to the Common
- This covers individuals not vehicles
- The residents round the Common who have the right to drive across the Common are responsible for maintaining the tracks used
- Residents proposing work on the tracks should clear this with the Committee. This is primarily so that the Committee can minimise access restriction
- While the work goes on public liability will rest with the contractor or the appointing residents. Once the work is satisfactorily completed liability will return to the Committee
- This was agreed by all.

Another Henfield Common resident added there is a fund administered by the Residents Association (where most dwellings, apart from two, contributed) collected every year which goes to the repair of potholes

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

(a) **Oreham Common**

(i) **Ponds**

The Chairman said ponds are filling up with reeds which may need the attention of the Henfield Conservation Volunteers.

(ii) South west strip

This strip is on the south side which leads to dwellings and nothing had been done to it as it had been thought the nightingales used it but now much of this strip is unusable and he would like to look at starting to clear this area. Mr Willis said this area backs onto Woods Mill and he suggested asking them as not only nightingales may nest there.

(b) Broadmare Common

(i) Ponds

Again the Chairman said reeds are taking over and some should be cut back. Mr Morgan said this is a past problem and that we should use diggers as we have done. Mr Simmonds agreed and said we will get complaints as there would be a mess to start with but we should say the ponds are being choked and we need to keep on top of the reeds in future which the Chairman agreed with.

(c) Henfield Common

(i) Tree work – Oak House, Park Oak by carpark

There is an overgrowing willow by this house on the south side which should be pollarded. There is a park oak where a large branch had broken off and now another had snapped. The Chairman has asked the Tree Officer at Horsham to inspect as some of the branches are leaning to the south light and the Officer was not in favour of cutting back and he had approached our local tree surgeon to have a look who had submitted comments and quote. Mr Willis said this oak is a magnificent tree and that care should be taken to even it up and also to be careful when taking off limbs

Mr Morgan said we had met Tony Whitbread, then of Sussex Wildlife Trust about 10-15 years ago, who had suggested thinning out nearby trees to allow more light in and Mr Willis agreed with this suggestion again. The Chairman said the Conservation Group had done some thinning out in the past with Mr Nye saying a `halo` clearance plan 2 years ago had suggested this method and that because of dry weather then windy and wet trees were coming down. Mr Simmonds would like to see a decision made sooner and Mr Nye offered to attend with his chain saw. The Chairman indicated he would talk to the tree surgeon and Tree Officer to come up with a plan. The Chairman would not like to rush things by making a decision now and that a possible window before Spring would not be missed. Mr Morgan said he would like to know when the meeting is and to report back to Members.

The quote for the tree work by Southern Beeches was agreed.

(ii) Horse Trail

Contrary to an earlier suggestion that the Trail is not a new idea as when laying it out 3 Horse Trail signs were found which were 40-50 years old.

The Trail this is now operational and getting muddy in parts and that we need more woodchips, Mr Nye suggested that the tree surgeon should have plenty and he should be contacted.

A resident of Henfield Common and a horse rider said that the trail is being used extensively and the signs showing where to go are obvious although there will always be badly behaved riders and commented on the height of the barrier and would like to see another barrier erected on the other side to allow more access by other users. Discussion took place over lowering the barrier and the safety implications which could cause problems. The Chairman said the barriers could have striped tape against them.

(iii) Wyn`s bench

This item had already been discussed.

(iv) Seat – southside, bench by Headmasters House

This seat may have been by an old bus stop but is in a poor condition and was dedicated to the Henfield Ambulance Corp. Mr Colgate said the seat had been presented by the Old School. Mr Simmonds indicated he would replace the planks for free, the Chairman asked Mr Nye if he could remove them to see if they could be renovated. Mrs Perry said we should then think about moving it and this could be discussed when and if it could be repaired.

(v) Pigeon Croft track

The Chairman explained this is a track that leads from the farm to Pigeon Croft only with wastewater flowing over it when wet, the resident would like to repair this track having made some alterations. The Chairman has received a quote from PHB to carry out groundworks in the sum of £763.99 to divert water under the path. The meeting agreed to this expenditure and the Chairman will contact the resident owner.

(vi) Letter from Dick Nye

Mr Nye had addressed a letter to the Committee outlining his concern regarding the magnificent Park Oak having shed another bough and suggested `halo` clearance as contained in the Management Plan. He reminded the meeting of the creation of the glade which was much appreciated by the public and that after clearance of the cherry laurel and scalloping along the edge of the footpath there had been an abundance of new growth and wild flowers, Mr Willis confirmed that the show of foxgloves this year was magnificent although the laurel had started to regrow and should be kept down. Mr Nye would also like to see additional scalloping to open up the path, let in more light increasing diversity and a more pleasant experience, offering the serves of Council staff.

Concern was raised regarding retention of large heavy logs, as children had made dens from other branches, which the Committee was happy to see although Mr Simmonds would like to see removal of the heavier logs leaving the small ones, an action endorsed by Mr. Morgan. The Chairman indicated he and Mr Nye would look at this

(d) Tanyard

(i) Rats

Concern had been raised by members of the public and Mr Nye reported that after treatment there was a reduction in numbers.

(ii) Entrance gate

Concern had also been raised regarding dogs getting through the gate and Mr Nye suggested removal of the gate replacing it with a spring gate and no kissing gate. Mr Simmonds thought this a good idea which others agreed with. Mr Nye was asked to obtain prices for removal and installation of a spring gate.

(iii) Chestnut End dog leg

This dog leg on the north side is impenetrable with brambles and needs removing the brambles to get to the pond and apple tree which is also covered with brambles. Mr Morgan said this is an area which needs ongoing attention as does the stream.

(iv) Duck Island

The Chairman had received a suggestion to have a duck island in the middle of the pond which the Committee had previously rejected. Mr

Potts said he had an unwanted duck island would could be used and could donate it.

(v) Sewage drain cover

There is a main sewer running from Rayner Court to the northern part of the Tanyard which is surrounded by a broken concrete collar. The Chairman has taken photos and sent them to Southern Water and the meeting agreed with this action as it may be corrected professionally, Mr Simmonds said anything broken would pollute the area.

Mr Willis said next to the Barn is a water tank which is overflowing continually and looks like it is blocked. The Chairman said he would put that to the Conservation Volunteers.

***Notes on a meeting of HCJC on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020 at 10am in the Tanyard.***

Present: Andrew Sharp, Mike Morgan, Roger Noel, Eddie Colgate, Gill Perry, John Willis, Dick Nye

Discussed

1. The proposed entrance gate to the south pond was noted.
2. The low level of water in the South Pond was noted but no explanation obvious.
3. Excess bulrushes round the middle pond noted. Should be removed by the Conservation Group.
4. At the request of residents of No 9 Chestnut End the vegetation just south of their fence was reviewed.

Current position

----- Fence 6'  
Clear gap 2m  
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Hedge clipped to 2m  
Clear gap 2m  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Untrimmed scrub mainly blackthorn, Height up to 11m, width 3-4m  
\*\*\*\*\* Adjacent bramble 2-3m wide

Field – odd trees

**Agreed Action**

Works Officer to remove the bramble as soon as possible.

Once this has allowed access, contractor to reduce the height of the untrimmed scrub in such a way that it does not look like a trimmed hedge.

6. **FIXED POINT RECORDING**

As previously announced, the photographer had been shielding but hoped to take further photographs in November. The Chairman indicated he knows a professional drone owner who could do flights but needs to check current rules. Mr Crawford said he would investigate the position of using drones for site records.

7. **HENFIELD CONSERVATION GROUP**

The Chairman said the Group has a lot of work to do although some of his members were in the vulnerable group. Mrs Goodyear said that SWT has groups of six and Mrs Perry said these groups would help.

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

This item had been brought forward earlier.

9. **CORRESPONDENCE**

(i) **Request for memorial bench**

This had come via a resident of Henfield Common and Wynn`s bench had been much admired and may be of the same type and location., Mr Morgan said there could also be further requests to Open Spaces and around the Memorial Field has been suggested

10. **FINANCE**

(i) **Financial Position**

The Clerk has previously circulated to Members the up to date financial position. With receipt of the funfair`s contribution of £500 for rental of Henfield Common for the fair in July our current balance is £9294.25 with some outstanding works to be carried out and maintenance and salary payments with the Chairman estimating a balance of around £5000. She indicated that she now has to send invoices to Accounts Payable copying in Parks Services as they control our budget for them to deduct from the balance.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman indicated Parish Council Chairman Malcolm Eastwood had approached him regarding one of our Members volunteering for the Safe Routes around Henfield Mr Noel indicating he was already a volunteer as part of the Small Dole area. The Chairman asked Mrs Perry to go to the first meeting and report back about what is involved but did not want it to be too onerous. Mrs Perry also said there are plans to look at potholes from the Cricket Club to the oak but expressed concern about the hay bale by the gate

where the black plastic had come loose and asked if it could be removed. As this bale was placed there to deter travellers from moving onto the Common, as had been indicated but it was agreed that removal of the plastic could be done leaving the hay bale and the meeting was happy with this.

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be confirmed around mid January 2021      The meeting closed at 9.05pm