

HENFIELD COMMONS JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Henfield Commons Joint Committee** held on **Tuesday 26th January 2021 via Zoom Conferencing at 7.00pm**

PRESENT: Mr A Sharp (Chairman) Mr M Morgan
Mrs E Goodyear Mr. R Noel
Ms G Perry Mr E Colgate
Mr P Hudson

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs P Grant (Clerk)
Mr P Crawford (Horsham District Council)
Mr T Rickard (Henfield Parish Councillor)
Ms J Coultas (resident of Henfield Common North)
Mr J Willis (Tree Warden)

Item Description

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

There were no Declarations

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 27TH OCTOBER 2020**

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

3. **APOLOGIES**

Mrs S Matthews, Mr C Simmonds, Mr J Potts.

4. **CHAIRMAN`S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman had no Announcements.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

There was no Open Forum.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

(a) **Oreham Common**

(i) **Ponds**

No work is being carried out at the moment due to Covid 19, but they do need some work to remove bulrushes.

(ii) South west strip

This is the strip which used to have nightingales present, but it is now unattractive to the birds which have moved to the scrub edge on the northern meadow.

(iii) Management Plan

The Chairman said there is no Management Plan for Oreham Common but agreed this would be useful. Mr Hudson asked if we had the money for one and the Chairman said this would have to be next year. Mr Morgan said Management Plans do cost money and we should have the funds for them. Mr Crawford said there is a new template for Management Plans, the old ones go back to the 1970s and things have now moved on. He suggested coming out with an Officer in the summer and Members considered this would be useful. However Mr Noel did warn there may be a future credit crunch at the District Council but Mr Crawford thought this may be a couple of years off.

(iv) Drone flight

The Chairman said he hoped these would be carried out before trees came into leaf and once a licence is received.

(b) Broadmare Common

(i) Ponds

The Chairman said ponds are very full and will need a lot of work when not so full: bulrushes and rushes need removing. Mr Hudson enquired regarding overhanging willows and the Chairman said those by Pond House have been removed and the stream seem to be flowing. The willows overhanging the Black Pond do need cutting back. This would need to be done by the Works Officer with the Conservation group removing the cut branches.

(ii) Management Plan

See Oreham above

(iii) Drone flight

These will be carried out before leaf growth.

Ms Perry had visited the Common and had noticed one of the bridges looked a bit wobbly. This was noted: the Works Officer will be contacted and other bridges will be inspected.

(c) Henfield Common

(i) Henfield Oak

The Henfield Oak – a magnificent Park oak – was reviewed from the ground by a professional tree group who suggested that nothing need be done except support for two or three lower limbs. To be on the safe side an aerial review was also carried out. Recommendations were consequently made either to carry out considerable expensive and possibly disfiguring pruning, or to surround the tree on the drip line with a suitably labelled fence.

The committee agreed as follows:

- a) To arrange for professional support for the lower limbs
- b) To surround the tree with a professional fence
- c) To put professional signs on the fence warning of the danger of falling branches
- d) To put up a professional notice informing people about the tree.

(ii) Causeway – clear western ditch

The Chairman said the ditch was cleared last year on the eastern side and would now like the western side to be cleared. The meeting agreed with this and hoped the contractor would be on site shortly.

(iii) Wyn`s bench

A solution is ongoing for the best way forward.

(iv) Bench for Denise Butlin

The Chairman indicated there is a proposed location for this new bench which was to the east of the causeway path. Mr Morgan was concerned about two seats being too close together but the Chairman did not see a problem. Mr Noel also expressed concern about the number of memorial seats and was not in favour of there being too many and they should be limited as not to look like a municipal park, the Chairman reminding the meeting any new bench needed our approval anyway. Mr Colgate proposed the Parish Council be approached regarding benches on the Memorial Field to watch the cricket and members agreed with this. Mr Morgan suggested the Parish Council's Recreation & Open Spaces Committee be approached. Ms Coultas, who had approached the Committee regarding this new bench on behalf of another resident, confirmed no flowers would be required and any site would be appreciated.

(v) Land survey – in particular north-eastern edge

The Chairman was concerned about the lack of correct maps outlining the edges of the commons. He was worried about neighbours gradually encroaching on the commons, in particular the north eastern corner of Henfield Common and the edge of 1, Mill Drive.

Mr Morgan will investigate these two specific cases and the Chairman will contact Mr Tom Cowley at HDC to obtain accurate maps.

Ms Coultas said that the storage barn by Swains Farm buildings had been sold and it was agreed to monitor this as a planning application may be made.

(vi) Drone flight

This will be carried out shortly once the licence is received and before trees are in leaf.

The Chairman noted that there are now more cars and vans parked in the spaces at the entrance to Henfield Common and concern was raised regarding encroachment onto the grass and access by emergency vehicles together with the safety of walkers by speeding delivery vans. Ms Perry had also noticed damaged signs. It was agreed enforcement is difficult to achieve even with bollards and Ms Coultas reminded members this is a private road for access to properties. The Chairman said he would talk to residents of Alma Cottages.

The Chairman said the grass cutting may be carried out in different years to create wildlife zones although it would look untidy.

Ms Perry said that professional horse trail signs would be good and Ms Coultas said warning signs regarding dogs and horses are also needed.

Finally Mr Rickard said there is a very muddy area nearer Swains where people need to go around it. The Chairman agreed the trail is muddy and woodchips have been laid. It was agreed this should be better in the summer.

(d) Tanyard

(i) Southern pond level and repair

The southern pond had lost a considerable amount of water recently, although the loss has now stabilised. The Chairman proposed a quote from PHB for £2344, to fix the undercut bank, tidy up the pond edge and hopefully find the source of the leak. This was not accepted

Mr Colgate said the water level is higher than last year when he had seen moorhens and ducks and that water from other areas may not

have gone into the pond. Mr Morgan suggested cutting off the overhang to make the pond bigger which would save money which Mr Noel agreed with and the Chairman indicated he would speak with the Works Officer.

(ii) Rats

The Chairman said there are rats also down in the dogleg and will talk to the Works Officer re treatment,.

(iii) Entrance gate

This action was deferred but now heavy work was not due to be carried out on the pond edge it could go ahead.

(iv) Long term – lay internal hedge and cut back holly

We planted a hedge on the eastern side of the Tanyard when the hedge layer said he could not lay holly. Blackthorn was planted and plans made for the holly to be taken down, but this action will be deferred for another year while the blackthorn grows before its laying.

(v) Sewage drain cover

No action taken as yet, Southern Water said it is nothing to do with them and would be happy for us to do something.

(vi) Drone flight

This will be done soon, see above.

There is a gap in the hedge on the Red Oaks side and the Works Officer will be consulted. Ms Coultas said as this is a bridleway it needs to be 3m wide and the Chairman assured her it would not be made narrower.

6. **FIXED POINT RECORDING**

As we are now in a third lockdown this item is deferred.

7. **HENFIELD CONSERVATION GROUP**

The Chairman said there are plenty of jobs which we are unable to do. Mr Willis did say there will be an article in the BN5 about Henfield Common and the Chairman said it is a good article.

8. **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

9. **FINANCE**

(i) **Budget position**

The Clerk had previously circulated the expenditure breakdown showing a balance of £6732.76 and an extra invoice for £500 had been received that day. The Chairman indicated there may be further invoices including causeway clearance, works to the Park Oak and other incidental works adding that the current Covid pandemic is preventing some works.

Mrs Goodyear queried if we could put some reserves into the Parish Council for future works and then draw on it. Ms Perry suggested two items with Mr. Morgan suggesting the strip clearance on Oreham Common and the Chairman suggesting horse trail signs and fencing around the Henfield Oak. Mr Morgan would like to see quotes obtained and works carried out and invoiced as soon as possible.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms Perry expressed concerns over interest in the Sandpit. Mr Hudson thanked Mr Crawford for his attendance at our meetings and Members also expressed their gratitude.

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm