

HENFIELD COMMONS JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the **Henfield Commons Joint Committee** held on **Monday 12th July 2021** in the **Garden Room of the Henfield Hall at 7pm.**

PRESENT

Mr A Sharp (Chairman)	Mr M Morgan
Mrs E Goodyear	Mr R Noel
Mr E Colgate	Ms G Perry

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr P Crawford (Horsham District Council)
Mr D Nye
Mr J Willis
Dr J Coultas
Mrs P Grant (Clerk)

Item Description

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

There were no Declarations

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 14th April 2021

These were approved and signed together with those previously agreed but unsigned.

3. APOLOGIES

Mr C Simmonds, Mr J Potts

4. CHAIRMAN`S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman would very much like to reward Mr P Hudson, who had retired from this Committee, for serving so faithfully and well for 20-25 years, with a suitable picture of Broadmare. Mrs Goodyear will see what she can do.

OPEN FORUM

Mr Noel appreciated concerns raised may be discussed later but would like to look at the Management Plan in greater detail in light of matters raised by Mr Colgate. Mr Morgan suggested a special meeting to discuss the Plan. Other matters concerned cattle grazing/fencing, spread of species and it was agreed to approach Kate Ryland who compiled the Plan to come to Henfield Common review it in the morning and to meet with us in the afternoon to discuss it in say a month. Mr Nye also added that his group would have another go at the clearance of the cherry laurel and burning it which was also in the Management Plan.

5. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Oreham Common

Cutting regime/boundary

The Chairman has asked the contractor to do an early cut when it is not so wet and to remove the cuttings.

Mr Noel asked about the nightingales but the Chairman had not had chance to go at night. It was believed that Woods Mill had heard them.

The Chairman would like to talk about boundaries as he thinks that the golf club had erected a rustic gate which needs to be checked and Mr Morgan offered to do this and will report back, Mr Noel said he had experienced difficulty in getting through the undergrowth.

(b) Broadmare Common

(i) General position

The Chairman has asked the contractor to cut alongside both sides of the path and remove cuttings but not the flood plain as this is deep with meadowsweet. The Chairman reported that recent damage etc seems to have died down

(ii) Cutting regime

Mr Nye reported he had tried to cut around the seats but found that there is a lot of willow which hides one.

Mr Colgate said that the meadowsweet seems to be taking over and would like to see some removed to allow other species in, the Chairman indicated there are good and bad years for different species. Mr Crawford said if the meadow is not cut regularly according to the Plan it will become dominant with the Chairman confirming the flood plain had not been cut for some years and hoped that Officer Jake Everitt could visit and advise. Mr Morgan said as the BTCV was a big group they could attend and the Chairman said he would check to see if they were still operating while Mr Noel asked if Mr Crawford could contact a volunteer group which he had used too.

(iii) Bridge repair

The Chairman reported this had been rebuilt and Ms Perry felt it was a lot safer.

Mr Colgate had circulated information about ash die back and should we do something although the Chairman did not think there was a danger to the public and just be left with Mr Willis agreeing the trees should not fall but could be trimmed as ash was important to wildlife

(c) Henfield Common

(i) Memorial trees/Tree works

The Chairman reported he had received a request from a resident about sponsoring a tree although Members were generally not in favour of this. Ms Perry suggested contacting WSCC who look into this and are more expert

(ii) Cutting regime

The Chairman has asked our contractor to do a full cut to the north Common but not the southern part as there is a lot of knapweed and orchids there and this area can

be cut later but the fairground area has been cut and collected in readiness of their arrival. He had asked the contractor to leave strips of about two metres round the edge of the common sections. The borders would be cut so as to leave areas of grass 1,2 and 3 years uncut. This would in time create a greater variety of habitats. Mr Noel suggesting letting the public know this as the strips may look messy. Mrs Goodyear said this information could be publicised.

(iii) Funfair

The Chairman confirmed it had arrived today to open from Friday.

(iv) Memorial bench

This has been discussed at a previous meeting to be placed by the cricket pitch although the person wanting the bench did not want it there. Mr Noel reiterated his concern over too many benches around the Common. Ms Perry said some on the Lydds looked poor with the Chairman saying there are no benches near the Sandpit Field, Mr Nye added laying a concrete base there would be difficult.

(v) Hemlock Water Dropwort

This is now becoming very dominant at the western edge of the reed bed suggesting the contractor go in and cut it before it seeds but the weather has to be dry although Mr Crawford indicated that the seed bed is already there but that if it is cut twice a year this would weaken it. Finally Mr Colgate said he had seen hops growing in the reed bed.

(vi) Parking/Access from A281

There is a problem with overparking at the start of Henfield Common North leaving the A281. There are 8 parking spaces for inhabitants of Alma Terrace. They have 7 cars so are not causing a problem. It is not clear who is Any proposed action would be difficult to enforce. There are also still problems with speeding vehicles with mileage signs damaged or not visible. It was reiterated that the Common access is for residents only but people from outside still park there. Mr Morgan said parking enforcement is very difficult and Ms Perry suggested barrier posts. Dr Coultas, who resides on Henfield Common North said the 10mph sign is barely visible. Mr Morgan said there should be mileage signs and a `private road` sign. The Chairman suggested he would like a review of the signs. Finally Ms Perry had seen fencing which had been put up at the end of the road although Mr Morgan had checked and this was acceptable.

(d) Tanyard

(i) Cutting regime

This will be cut when ready with Mr Nye finishing off then the Henfield Conservation Group will remove the hay

Mr Nye reported that the southern pond had dropped a lot lately and was worried that children may wade in. A pipe may be broken which leads to the middle pond and beyond and the Chairman asked Mr Nye to investigate with dye.

6. **COMMONS BOUNDARIES**

The Chairman indicated that he was worried about neighbours encroaching on all three commons and he would like more definitive borders. Mr Colgate indicated the early tithe map showed the area and boundaries although Mr Morgan said lines now are so thick you could be out by feet and exact measurements are very difficult although the Chairman would like to see exact boundaries because of residents building outside their boundary and a local surveyor could be contacted. Mr Crawford indicated he would report this to Horsham District Council who could look into it. Mr Noel thought it important to set a precedent or set of principles, Mr Colgate added we should register a complaint to the householder as it would affect a future sale and may deter actions by other households.

Dr Coultas also commented on households leaving logs etc in front of their properties which get damaged by tractors as well as the land being damaged by turning vehicles, Mr Crawford will contact the Property/Legal Departments and to confirm Land Registry plans but that they are not perfect, Ms Perry suggested writing to Common residents reminding them of their responsibilities with Mr Crawford adding we should set precedents on mowing/tree planting etc which Mr Noel agreed with. Mrs Goodyear said she would talk to Sussex Wildlife Trust about their policies and Dr Coultas who does talk to new residents said a set of rules would be useful.

7. **FIXED POINT RECORD**

There was nothing to report.

8. **HENFIELD CONSERVATION GROUP**

The Chairman indicated the Group is thinking to merge with Sustainable Henfield 2030 who could carry out work during the day rather than at weekends. The Chairman responding to a query from Mr Crawford who said his Group is covered under Horsham District Council's insurance although Mr Crawford recommended caution with regard to whom they work with – Horsham District Council/Parish Council for example.

9. **CORRESPONDENCE**

1. Concerns regarding Hemlock Water Dropwort

2. Cutting/mowing outside April Cottage

The Chairman had responded to Horsham District Council's query on behalf of a resident that the bulk of the south side is cut once or twice a year but margins would be cut less to encourage variety of the ecology and that unplanned mowing should not be done.

3. Tree sponsorship

Mr Nye reported that there had been the loss of a silver birch on the Kings Field which could be replaced and asked the Clerk to follow this up.

4. Permission to fish in Tanyard pond

This was refused but that a sign saying `no fishing` would be useful.

10. **FINANCE**

The Clerk reported our budget is unchanged at £15,780. 4 Invoices have been received and sent on to Horsham Accounts Payable, also notifying Parks Services. Current balance is £13,886.58. The Chairman asked that the current position be made available when the Agenda is sent out.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Dr Coultas thanked the Committee for the horse trail signs but asked that some be moved to the end of the trail although seeing Mr Colgate who had she should not have come out of the woods onto the Common. Discussion took place regarding extra horse signs, and riders` access and where to ride and the Chairman would like to see a map of the horse trail. Dr Coultas said riding mainly takes place in the summer because paths are churned up in the winter. It was agreed this item would go on the next Agenda together with a map.

Mr Nye said a bank in Blackgate Lane had been seeded and the Chairman thought it looked great.

Mr Noel would like to see cattle grazing on Henfield Common and asked if this had definitely been ruled out and the Chairman confirmed because of possible panicking onto the road by cattle that it had although Mr Noel suggested alpacas.

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be confirmed and to be about Henfield Common only.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.