

HENFIELD COMMONS JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the **Henfield Commons Joint Committee** held on **Wednesday 6th October 2021 at 2pm** in **the Henfield Hall.**

PRESENT:

Mr A Sharp (Chairman)	Mr M Morgan
Mr C Simmonds	Mrs E Goodyear
Mr R Noel	Mr P Crawford
Ms G Perry	Mr J Willis
Dr J Coultas	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs P Grant (Clerk)
Mr. Mike Anscough
Mr Tony Baker (HCG/SH2030)

Item Description

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

There were no Declarations.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 12th JULY 2021**

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

3. **APOLOGIES**

Mr J Potts, Mr D Nye, Mr E Colgate. Mr Morgan indicated that Mrs Matthews had to resign owing to illness. The Chairman and meeting expressed great sadness and noted how positive her contribution to the committee had been over many years. In particular her work on the Tanyard.

4. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that Works Officer Dick Nye, who had been extremely helpful to this Committee with advice and actions, that due to personal circumstances needs to cut back Parish Council work but hoped that a friend of his could help although Mrs Goodyear said that this could be difficult and it may be necessary for him to be a Councillor and trained but will look into this. He also introduced Tony Baker who has taken over the running of the Henfield Conservation Group and also of Sustainable Henfield 2030 and Mike Anscough, a photographer who carries out fixed point recordings, to address the meeting.

Mr Anscough takes fixed point photographs and asked Members if they had any comments or suggestions for improvements. Mr Crawford said the aim is to compare any differences between the years of habitats and listed some examples. Mr Simmonds said in the past there had been some complaints about the Commons, e.g. trees, had taken photos which were put in a folder to show to the public. Mrs Goodyear said we could use the Parish Council's large television to show the photos as the file is very large, Mr Anscough added we could use a drone as well and list

the positions. It was agreed to hold a meeting to discuss this, as indicated by Ms Perry.

OPEN FORUM

No open Forum

5. REVIEW OF HENFIELD COMMON MANAGEMENT PLAN

This was discussed in great detail following a recent site meeting and summary prepared and circulated by Mr Crawford who said Horsham District Council is in the process of negotiations for a new grass cutting contractor and our Commons could be added in to a new contractor who could take away the cuttings rather than bale them but this would not happen until early next year. Discussions also took place regarding the introduction of grazing by cattle, and types, with Mr Simmonds saying the south side could also be fenced and grazed. The Chairman said cattle would need fencing, gates/grids and submission had to be made and granted by the Secretary of State plus a survey/consultation with the public would be necessary.

Mr Morgan did have reservations about introducing cattle although this was suggested in the Management Plan which we had paid for.

Dr Coultas had recently had another meeting attended by many Henfield Common North residents some whom had lived there for 60/70 years who did not have a problem with cattle on Henfield Common. Mrs Goodyear who was in favour of cattle grazing thought this was the right time to do this adding that having reed bed was now rare and considered it to be a jewel for the village although its condition was declining. Mr Crawford said it is this Committee's responsibility to do its best but appreciated not everyone would be in favour of it but added the Common is not just to walk dogs or play cricket.

Mr Morgan expressed concern regarding cost of fencing in and getting cattle. Mr Crawford explained there are schemes around which could pay for capital works. Mr Simmonds said we should go for it and try to get people on board by advertising via the BN5/website etc and that preparation has to be done before submission to the Secretary of State with Mr Crawford saying the District Council would support this. The Chairman summed up discussions and a public consultation to include maps listing potential areas, gates, history of the Common but Mr Crawford added that a public meeting may not be a good idea.

Mr Morgan felt we need to give Horsham District Council Officers time to put a statement together.

It was proposed by Mrs Goodyear and seconded by Mr Noel that the Committee approve the move to graze to retain/restore diversity of valuable and rare habitat. The proposal was agreed by those Members present. The Committee also supported Mr Crawford's timeline which was proposed by Mr Simmonds and seconded by Mrs Goodyear. Mr Crawford will begin the procedure.

The Chairman said the reed bed has not been cut yet and trees within it need to be removed and Mr Crawford agreed to approach Wilder Horsham for funding to pay for

tree removal this winter. He also recommended a tree survey be carried out soon as some need attention. It was agreed to ask the Parish Council's tree surveyor to do a survey of all the trees on the north side and those by the Park Oak area. Mr Noel had also noticed some fallen trees on the horse trail which need cleared.

6. **MATTERS ARISING**

(a) Oreham Common

There was nothing to discuss apart from the Conservation Group doing some pond work and cutting back some scrub.

(b) Broadmare Common

The Conservation Group will work on the ponds and have burnt the hay. Mr Baker said work needs to be done by the Works Officers' replacement. Mr Willis felt more work needs done includes removal of fallen trees and is concerned that this important site is not being managed. Mr Crawford recommended a Management Plan be done at some point which was agreed and we should proceed with this in the Spring.

(c) Henfield Common

(i) Reed Bed cut

This was discussed earlier.

Dr Coultas said she was still very concerned regarding entrance road into the Common but was advised this is the County Council's responsibility. She said cars were still parking on the road with bramble encroaching onto the road, this was usually dealt with by the Works Officer and Mrs Goodyear will check with the Parish Clerk to see if there is anyone else who could deal with this. Further talks took place regarding parking bays, bollards, signs etc. The Chairman said he will talk with the residents who use the parking bays to see if they would contribute to bollards as they do not contribute to the upkeep of the road.

Ms Perry said the Spiked Star of Bethlehem is now covered by bramble.

(d) Tanyard

(i) Southern pond

The Chairman was concerned the water levels seem to rise and fall for no reason with some wet areas although Mr Simmonds said wet areas are an alternative habit but the Chairman disagreed and said we should proceed with a dye and this was agreed by the meeting.

A complaint had been received by the District Council regarding a life belt although we did have one some time ago which had disappeared.

Mr Morgan was not aware of anyone falling in, the Chairman said a child had drowned in the past.

(ii) Northern pond

The Conservation Group has done some work recently but the Chairman believes it needs dug out and we should get in a small digger to do this.

(iii) Grass cut

The Chairman would like to do another cut as the grass is very lush and we should be able to get rid of the grass as there is no dog access and we will ask our contractor to do this.

7. **COMMONS BOUNDARIES**

The Chairman would like to get someone from Horsham District Council to check encroachment although Mr Crawford said there is no Officer for land encroachment.

8. **FIXED POINT RECORDING**

This was discussed earlier.

9. **HENFIELD CONSERVATION GROUP**

Mr Baker has partnered up his Group with the Biodiversity Group as although there is a good turnout for planting some physical work with tools is not.

10. **CORRESPONDENCE**

Mr Crawford showed the meeting a Notice of application for definitive map modification order from West Sussex County Council to upgrade a path to a bridleway on Broadmare Common.

11. **FINANCE**

As advised the current balance is £13788.46 with 2/3 invoices to come totalling £882.50, the grass cutting invoice from PHB is unknown at this stage

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

13. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be confirmed.

Meeting closed at 4.35pm.