

HENFIELD COMMONS JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the **Henfield Commons Joint Committee** held on Wednesday **18th September 2019** at **7.00pm** in the Parish Council Office/ Henfield Hall Garden Room.

Present: **Mr A Sharp (Chairman)** **Mr M Morgan**
 Ms G Perry **Mr E Colgate**
 (Mr J Potts and Mr R Noel joined the meeting later)

In attendance: **Mr J Willis**

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

There were no Declarations.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 24th JUNE 2019

These were approved by the meeting and will be signed by the Chairman as soon as possible in the absence of Mrs P Grant.

3. APOLOGIES

Mrs P Grant, Mrs S Matthews, Mrs E Goodyear Mr D Nye, Mr C Simmonds, Mr P Hudson

4. CHAIRMAN`S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The newly co-opted member, Mr Eddie Colgate, was welcomed to the meeting.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM:

There was no Open Forum.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

5. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Oreham Common

- (i) Meadow cut: This was proposed and it was agreed to do the cut as soon as possible, given the current dry weather.

(b) Broadmare Common

- (i) Coggers field drain: The Commons Committee have received the quotation requested by residents for some additional drainage work. The figure was £795 +VAT. It was asked whether any actions on the Common had contributed to the current issues with flooding when there is heavy rain. Because there was no Commons action that could have caused or contributed to the problem, it was felt that HDC was unlikely to approve their share of this spending requested by

residents. It was agreed to share the quotation with the residents and say that we do not oppose the drainage water flowing onto Broadmare Common although the Committee are not proposing to pay for this work.

(ii) Bins

This situation has been remedied. All is remaining tidy in the bin area and HDC are happy with the solution that is being implemented.

(iii) Pond

HDC disputes that a pond belongs to a resident as claimed. A letter from HDC has gone to a solicitor on this matter.

(iv) Broadmare Common -Lane trim

A proposed trim would include trimming trees. A resident has offered that the Committee use the same contractor who will carry out the same work along Dagbrook Lane which is the larger part of the access road. After discussion, it was agreed that this was a sensible way forward to ensure that the verges are trimmed and we agreed to pay £200 towards this cost on the basis that it is explained that this will not set a precedent for any future maintenance of the verges, trees or roadway, and that the chairman has the opportunity to discuss the work with the contractor to ensure clarity on what is required before the job is done.

(v) Field cut

It was questioned whether there is any benefit to cutting the field at Broadmare as it has proved very difficult to remove the cuttings in the last few years. Leaving the grass uncut may prove better for increasing biodiversity. The question of whether brambles might grow if there was no cut was considered. At present there is little evidence that this could be a problem, but should be monitored. Agreed to trial not cutting this field this year, with results reviewed in one year's time. (September 2020)

The entranceway to Barrow Hill Farm now has some posts. It was questioned whether we have we seen the Deed of Easement? This will be followed up.

(c) Henfield Common

(i) Tree works

- i. Memorial trees John Willis will look at these trees in the next few weeks as requested.
- ii. Tree works were requested by members of the committee for areas on the South Side of the Common. The Commons Management Plan recommended that all trees on the south side of the common should be removed. Currently there are some saplings on the south side of the common along access paths that could get too big for straightforward management soon. The management Plan Tree management recommendations also apply to the willow saplings which are re-growing on the common opposite the end of Mill Drive. The Chairman agreed to talk this issue through with Kate Ryland (Ecologist who wrote the Management Plan) regarding which saplings should be removed.

(ii) Cows/Management Plan

There have been delays in contacting the right staff at HDC due to long term absence of a key staff member which has delayed discussion on possible fencing solutions. Mr Morgan said that now we should address Nicki Wise as a point of contact for the Common and also speak to Jake about the cows proposal. including the idea of temporary fencing . The Chairman will invite Kate Ryland to review this and other matters in a day tour of the common in the near future. It was noted that we can also ask her about the next steps of scalloping the pathways at this proposed visit.

(iii) Reed Bed cut

Dick Nye (Works officer) believes that the new Parish Council machinery will allow him and the works team to cut the reed bed. Propose to cut the south west quadrant, remove the cuttings and burn them. It was agreed that the Chairman will speak to the clerk about this use of the works officer's time. The Conservation Group could remove the cut reeds. John Willis advised doing this quickly because the weather is good for it now and therefore the ground is firm enough for the tractor.

Roger Noel and Josh Potts joined the meeting. 8.10pm

(iv) Meadow cut

It was agreed that this should been done as soon as possible while the weather is fine. Cuttings can be baled this year and will be taken away.

(v) Letter from St Peter's School, Henfield, requesting permission to run Forest School activities on the Common. The aims and likely activities of a Forest School activity were described. Councillors were very positive in principle with the use of the Common for this project and hoped to encourage it. Before agreeing it was decided more information on exactly what activities are proposed is needed, as there are by-laws about what is permitted on the common which need to be considered. Permission, if given, will be in the basis that none of these restrictions and by laws are broken.

(vi) Rabbits in the Common jeopardising the use of Memorial Field for sports.

The Parish Council Open Spaces Committee has revisited this issue since the last Commons meeting, bearing in mind the management plan for the common and all the advice they have been given, They have decided to use ferreting to reduce the rabbit population. This will be done by an accredited operator and there will be no need to close of an area of the common. This approach does not contravene the recommended approach to managing the scrub areas in the woods on Common around the Memorial Field.

(d) Tanyard

(i) Southern pond

The Chairman requested any ideas on how to make this pond less murky.

(ii) Chestnut End

Strimming of the field edge next to the neighbour's fences and repairs to the fencing will be done in near future by works officer.

(iii) Field cut

it was agreed that this should be carried out as soon as possible.

(iv) Bonfire Party

A proposal for a bonfire party has been received from a local community group. This was discussed in detail but the committee felt that it was not an appropriate use of the area which is a wildlife haven and not open for public use in the daytime. The Tanyard contains several ponds and very uneven ground which could be a risk to the public in the dark. The committee felt this was not good for the wildlife being fostered in the area. There was also concern that there should

be no precedents set for other uses of the Tanyard. Overall it was decided not to agree to this request.

6. **FIXED POINT RECORDING**

There was no access to this at the meeting

7. **HENFIELD CONSERVATION GROUP**

There has been much good work done recently. Liaison with the Works Officer of HPC has allowed the group to carry out some more ambitious projects in removing fallen trees but the weather and land conditions have not yet allowed the group to remove the fallen willow at Pond House.

8. **REVIEW OF ACTION PLAN**

Kate Ryland to be invited to meet us for a day to give advice and review the Commons Management Plan in near future. The Chairman to arrange a date.

9. **CORRESPONDENCE**

None was available

10. **FINANCE**

Not available at the meeting

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

1. Tour of the three commons and Tanyard: 9.30am on 10th October. Meet at the Cricket Club Car Park

2. Next Commons Committee meeting 7pm 27th November 2019.

The meeting closed at