

Nomansland Common Joint Management Committee**Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday 20 October 2016, 19.30h, No 2.**

Held in the Hewitt Room,
The Memorial Hall, Wheathampstead AL4 8AY.

Present	Councillors	John Newton-Davies David Johnston Gill Clark Claudio Duran Janet Churchard	Chairman Vice Chairman
	Officers	Nick Sherriff	Green Spaces and Cemeteries Team Leader
	Administrator	Louise Harrison	Deputy Clerk to Wheathampstead Parish Council
		Press	0
		Public	3

93-16 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Judy Shardlow and Sandra Wood.

94-16 Specific Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Councillor Newton-Davies declared an interest as a member of the Woodland Trust. Councillors Newton-Davies and Johnston declared an interest as a member of the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.

95-16 Minutes of Committee meeting of 14 July 2016

The Chairman proposed and it was agreed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2016 be approved.

Resolved To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2016 to be a true and fair account and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

96-16 Points emerging from the pre meeting walk

None.

97-16 Green Spaces and Cemeteries Team Leader Progress Report

The officer confirmed that due to staff turnover and restructuring of his department there had been a delay progressing some projects.

1. Revision of Byelaws

This is currently on hold until the new year.

2. Ragwort pulling

John O'Conner's undertook a ragwort removal day on Sunday 17th; there was not a great turnout by volunteers however a large amount was removed on the northern side of Ferrers Lane. The meadow area has also been cleared a month earlier than usual to remove

ragwort before the flowers could go to seed (the collected material was not used for fodder).

3. Find on Nomansland

A Middle/Late Bronze Age spearhead was found by a child on the Common. This is a rare and significant find of museum quality. Officers are in negotiations with the Althorp Estate regarding acquiring it for the museum.

4. Interpretation Board

Officers continue to try and locate the existing board with John O'Conner's and CMS.

5. West End Car Park

The specification and application to the Secretary of State has yet to be undertaken due to staff resources. The office plan to process the application in Autumn for a construction phase in 2017. This project is currently delayed due to the restructure and current staff resource issues and will be actioned next year.

6. Fires in Dell Area

Officers have been contacted by local residents regarding a group of young people starting fires in the dell area and northern area of the common. The police had been informed and members were encouraged to promote the use of the 101 non-emergency number if further incidents were reported.

7. Rabbit control

Officers have contacted a contractor regarding carrying out rabbit control on the common. He currently undertakes this function for Harpenden Town Council on their common. He has all the correct insurances and risk assessments and has previously undertaken this role on Nomansland when employed as our Countryside Ranger. The control work will be undertaken in parallel to the continued ferreting regime (ferreters will be one site from 21 October for two days).

8. Forestry Work winter 2016

A contractor has been appointed to carry out the woodland management works with a provisional start date of Monday 21st November (officer to let the committee know when this date is confirmed). The work is likely to be ongoing for two weeks and a new set of posters are to be displayed on site throughout the Common next week advising the public of this planned work, as well as issuing a press release and a briefing to members.

On Saturday 12th November at 10.30am the Officer will be holding a guided walk around the common/woodlands (as part of the Walks & More programme) to further publicise the work. The Officer agreed to contact the contractor and request their presence on the walk. The Officer also agreed to send the Deputy Clerk at Wheathampstead and the Clerk at Sandridge information about the walk, which they would then publicise on their respective websites.

When the work is underway, the Officer will conduct regular site checks to ensure everything is being delivered to the best possible standard and path diversions or closures will be put in place to ensure public safety where necessary.

Resolved**To note the report****98-16 Report from Countryside Ranger**

The SADC Officer circulated this report and confirmed that the new Ranger, Laura McLellan, had settled in well and had picked up from where the previous ranger had left off.

The Ranger has undertaken walks on the Common and had identified further projects: formation of a "Friends Group" to encourage community engagement in active conservation of the site; updating information boards; further heathland scrub management; increasing the amount of educational walks; encouraging wildlife groups to take a more active role in the long term monitoring of the Common, and a botanical survey. The Ranger had also been in liaison with Hertfordshire University and local wildlife groups to undertake bat monitoring on the Common.

Resolved**To note the Report****99-16 Items raised by Committee Members**

The Chairman requested the placing of refugia mats on the Common to assist the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust MARA survey.

Cllrs Churchard and Duran confirmed that mats had been put down on areas on Jersey Farm last spring for a planned period of three years with the aim of identifying mammals, reptiles and insects. No one objected to the Chairmans request.

Resolved**To support refugia mats on the Common to assist the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust MARA survey****100-16 User groups and residents comments (members of the public)**

A discussion took place with regards to dogs out of control of their owners on the Common, especially in relation to horse riders. The Officer confirmed that the byelaws were being updated to address these concerns.

101-16 Date of next meeting

Committee Meeting number 3 – Thursday 19 January 2017 7.30pm.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20.50hrs.**Dated this****day of****2017****Chairman**