

Nomansland Common Joint Management Committee

Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday 19 March, 19.30h, No 3

Held at the Hewitt Room, Wheathampstead Memorial Hall

Present	Councillors	J Newton-Davies	Chairman
		D Johnston	Vice Chairman
		G Clark	
		C Duran	
	Officers	Nick Sherriff	Parks & Green Spaces Officer
		Charlotte Hawkins	Countryside Ranger
	Administrator	Julia Warren	Clerk to Wheathampstead Parish Council
		Press	0
		Public	2

35-15 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors G Churchard, T Reason and S Wood.

36-15 Replacement members

Councillor C Duran replaces Councillor Hackett who had stepped down as parish councillor.

37-15 Specific Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Councillor Newton-Davies is a member of the Woodland Trust and both he and Councillor Johnston are members of the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.

38-15 Minutes of Committee meeting of 9 October 2014

The Chairman proposed and it was agreed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2014 be approved.

Resolved To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2014 to be a true and fair account and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

39-15 Countryside Ranger Progress Report

It was reported that John O'Conner had recently cut East Common, the rides and ecotones. Over the winter months volunteers working with the Countryside Management Service had undertaken significant work, including coppicing of gorse and bramble clearance in the rabbit exclusion area. Blackthorn had also been cut back. Volunteers had repaired and replaced the damaged noticeboard and would be reinstating the retrieved

interpretation panel. Spring had brought out the wildlife, a hen harrier had been spotted, as had a pair of nesting red kites.

Resolved To note the report.

39-15 Wheathampstead Cricket Club

Last minute apologies had been received from the Cricket Club representative. Their major concern was the state of the car park.

40-15 Parks & Open Spaces Officer's Progress Report

1. Finance

Nick Sherriff presented the finance report which had been previously circulated. Much of the work was within the maintenance contract. An overspend had occurred in 2014 because of the access improvements including scrub removal around Ferrers Lane, and hedge restoration along the southern boundary to Heartwood Forest. The blackthorn had been severely cut back but was expected to regenerate.

2. Access Improvements

New bollards had been installed, their initial padlocks stolen and subsequently replaced by specialised locking bolts. A post extractor was to be purchased as the oak bollards were a tight fit to the sockets. It was noted that Wheathampstead Parish Council's padlocks had also been stolen from the Meads / Marford area, the theft to be reported to the police.

3. Forestry

Forestry work, as agreed at minute 32-14 and in the Management Plan, was now complete. The contractors had been monitored and work undertaken to specification. This included a large glade and space where self-set sycamores had grown, a number of which were clearly rotten when felled.

The contractor had been working around the Ayot's so economies of scale had been realised. Nick Sherriff would clarify ownership of the timber against the scheme of management. Any profit from sale of the wood was ring fenced for work on the common.

Wood had temporarily accumulated because of a vehicle breakdown delaying removal from site. One final load of timber remained for collection and the raking over of the car park for loose debris. The site would be clear within the next day or so.

4. Ferrers Lane

Scrub in this area had been cleared per the specification, the vistas opened and gorse with some saplings left to flourish.

5. Byelaws

Existing byelaws had been installed onto the posts. Their revision has been delayed because of officer workload in the legal department. A consultation was necessary prior to byelaw revision.

6. Car park pot holes

Nick Sherriff to look into the possibility of grading the car parks to 'smooth out' potholes.

- Resolved**
- 1 To note the reports.**
 - 2 To report padlock theft to the police.
To clarify timber ownership per**
 - 3 management plan.
To look at possibility of grading the car**
 - 4 parks**

41-15 Puddingstone

Further to Minute 32-14 it was reported that the Puddingstone had been moved from the outfield and reinstated on the parish boundaries overlooking the pitch. Concerns were raised about its current vulnerability and potential trip hazard value. The Chairman proposed that a semi-circular curved seat be purchased, joint funded by the parishes, to partially surround it. It should carry a plaque detailing the stone's history. Agreed that this proposal be taken to both Sandridge and Wheathampstead Parish Councils for consideration.

- Resolved**
- 1 To note the report.**
 - 2 Sandridge and Wheathampstead Parish Councils to consider joint funding a semi-circular seat to mark the Puddingstone.**

42-15 Plans for Surfacing/drainage improvement to FP32 at the south east entry to the Common

It was noted that the issue of the need for a safe cycle route between Sandridge and Wheathampstead had been raised at Wheathampstead's Annual Parish Meeting. The path was surfaced through Heartwood but became a mire at the junction with Nomansland. This had been raised as a potential issue when the Heartwood surfacing was agreed. Changes to the path across Nomansland would require both Secretary of State approval and funding. It was further noted that the gradient of the path probably exceeded 1:15, so any alteration to the surface may require it to zig zag to accommodate access issues.

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that Nick Sherriff approach the HCC Rights of Way Officer to ascertain any plans the Access Group had for the joining of Heartwood and Nomansland, and also to raise the matter with County Councillors Churchard and Crawley in relation to funding using their locality money.

- Resolved**
- 1 To note the report.**
 - 2 To approach HCC Rights of Way Officer**

regarding the Access Group's plans to join Heartwood Forest and Nomansland.

3 To approach County Councillors Churchard and Crawley for locality budget funding towards any access project.

43-15 Items raised by Committee Members

1 Heartwood driveway resurfacing

It was noted that Heartwood Forest car park would be shut during June and July whilst the drive was resurfaced. Concerns were raised regarding parking for displaced vehicles.

2 Speeding along Sandridge Road

Recommendation that County Councillors Churchard and Crawley work together to reduce speeding vehicles between Sandridge and Wheathampstead.

3 Flying Club notice.

It was reported that the Flying Club sign/ notice had become dangerous. Ranger to investigate.

4 Other matters

Further to Minute 39-15 it was noted that the cricket club was responsible for maintaining the outfield, including making good damage caused by rabbits. A desire for additional benches was expressed, particularly near the flying area, Nick Sherriff to investigate possibilities.

- Resolved**
- 1 To note the report.**
 - 2 Wheathampstead and Sandridge Parish councils to contact their respective county councillors with a view to working together to reduce the speed limit between the villages.**
 - 3 Ranger to investigate report of dangerous signage.**
 - 4 Nick Sherriff to look at potential for more benches.**

44-15 Date of next meeting

Committee Meeting 1 – Thursday 11 June 2015, 19.30h at the Cricket Club on Nomansland, preceded by annual inspection at 18.30h (meet at Cricket Club car park).

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20.50hrs.

Dated this day of 2015

Chairman