

Nomansland Common Joint Management Committee

Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday 14 July 2016, 19.30h, No 1.

Held at Wheathampstead Cricket Club
following the annual inspection of the Common.

Present	Councillors	John Newton-Davies Gill Clark Claudio Duran	Chairman Vice Chairman
	Officers	Nick Sherriff	Parks & Green Spaces Officer
	Administrator	Louise Harrison	Deputy Clerk to Wheathampstead Parish Council
		Press	0
		Public	6

78-16 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Judy Shardlow, David Johnston and Sandra Wood.

79-16 Election of Chairman

Councillor Clark proposed, seconded by Councillor Duran, and it was agreed that Councillor Newton-Davies be elected Chairman of the Nomansland Joint Committee for 2016-17.

Resolved Councillor Newton-Davies elected Chairman of the Nomansland Joint Committee for 2016-17.

80-16 Election of Vice-Chairman

Councillor Newton-Davies proposed, seconded by Councillor Clark, and it was agreed that Councillor Johnston (in his absence) be elected Vice Chairman of the Nomansland Joint Committee for 2016-17.

Councillor Johnston (in his absence) elected Vice Chairman of the Nomansland Joint Committee for 2016-17.

81-16 Specific Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Councillor Newton-Davies declared an interest as a member of the Woodland Trust.

82-16 Minutes of Committee meeting of 14 April 2016

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

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

83-16 Points emerging from the annual inspection

This meeting was preceded by a walk and the annual inspection of

the Common.

The puddingstone location and new bench were inspected and it was agreed that a request would be made to the Cricket Club to regularly trim the areas under and around the benches.

The issue of rabbit control was discussed and it was agreed that the SADC officer would investigate the costs of hiring a contractor to shoot rabbits over the winter period as a secondary method of managing rabbit control (the first method being ferreting). The Officer reassured the Committee and members of the public that any contractor employed in this capacity would be suitable qualified, insured and licensed.

Sections of ragwort were discussed along the side of the B651 north of Ferrers Lane and the Officer confirmed that there was a ragwort pulling day planned for Sunday 17 July from 8am to 2pm, organised by John O'Connors staff (see 85-16 point 2).

The management plan in winter for the north east area of the Common (referred to as compartment 4) was discussed (see 85-16 point 7). The Officer confirmed that some trees had been marked for chipping and that once this work had been completed a further re-evaluation of the area would be made and further work agreed if required. The Officer confirmed that chippings from the northern section would be disposed of for bio-fuel while those south of Ferrers Lane would be left to rot down naturally, because of the difficulty of extraction.

The possibility of cutting a new path route through the length of compartment 4 to the Wicked Lady PH was discussed, as part of the wood management plan. The Officer reassured the Committee that this path would have the status of bridleway with a width of 4 metres if approved.

Resolved To note the points from the inspection

**84-16 Cricket Club Report
None.**

85-16 Parks & Open Spaces Officer's Progress Report

The Officer confirmed his new appointment as Team Leader for Green Spaces and Commons at SADC, heading up a staff of five.

1. Revision of Byelaws

The officer confirmed that SADC Legal Department had allocated time for officers to look into updating the Commons byelaws. Once a draft set of byelaws have been produced the management committee would be able to comment on them and include specific items relating to the Common.

2. Ragwort pulling

It was confirmed that John O'Conner's would be undertaking a ragwort removal day on Sunday 17th July from 8 am until 2pm

based on the Ferrers Lane Car Park. Any attendees were to be reminded to wear sensible footwear and bring gloves.

3. Visit to Bricket Wood

It was confirmed that a site inspection had taken place on Tuesday 28 June (one Committee member attended).

4. Replacement of missing Byelaw signs

Officers confirmed that new signs would be installed by the end of July.

5. West End Car Park

The Officer confirmed that the specification and application to the Secretary of State had yet to be undertaken due to staff resources and anticipated this process would be carried out in Autumn for a construction phase in 2017.

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. Forestry work winter 2016

The Officer read out an email from Matthew Watts from Countryside Management Services and the following planned woodland management work was in hand:

- Three contractors had been spoken to with regards to the proposed work
- A specification had been prepared and this would form part of the tender process
- Trees had been pre-marked with white paint in preparation
- Posters would be going up warning the public of the proposed work and in September a guided walk would be arranged to promote and explain the planned work by CMS
- The successful contractor would be required to start work as close as possible to the start of October
- Further work on enrichment planting of new oaks would be considered following this winter work.

The Chairman requested an update on the installation of the interpretation board at Ferrers Lane Car Park. The Officer confirmed he would make further enquiries and report back at the next meeting.

Resolved To note the report

86-16

Report from Countryside Ranger

The SADC Officer had previously circulated this report and confirmed that the Ranger had now left John O'Connor's employment to work with the Environment Agency.

The Officer confirmed that John O'Connor's have yet to appoint a

new Ranger but are planning to recruit a person with a degree in environmental studies.

The Officer confirmed that John O'Connor's were still undertaking routine tasks on the land (ie. litter picking).

Foraging and metal detecting had been identified and dealt with by staff on the land.

Resolved To note the Report

87-16 Woodland Management Scheme Report

As previously discussed (see 85-16 point 7). The Officer confirmed that the next stage would be to go out to tender. It was confirmed that this work would include the hedge boundary south of the flying area.

Resolved To note the Report.

88-16 Plaque for Puddingstone and bench

The Deputy Clerk provided members with a copy of a picture of a draft plaque with wording and colours, and costs. It was proposed by the Chairman and agreed that the Deputy Clerk was to order the plaque without any Council logos.

Resolved Deputy Clerk to order the plaque without any Council logos.

89-16 Ragwort pull

See 85-15 item 2.

90-16 Nomansland Nature Quest events

The Chairman confirmed that two groups from Beech Hyde School in Wheathampstead and three groups from schools in Sandridge had taken part in Nomansland Nature Quest days on the Common. A total of 132 children had taken part and activities including learning something of the history of the Common, species recognition, den building, bow and arrow making and tag with the Countryside ranger acting as the Wicked Lady. It was reported that they had all had a wonderful time.

Resolved To note the report

91-16 Items raised by Committee Members

None.

92-16 Date of next meeting

Committee Meeting number 2 – Thursday 20 October 2016 7.30pm.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20.20hrs.

Dated this day of 2016

Chairman