

Nomansland Joint Management Committee

Minutes of the Meeting on Thursday 1 February 2018, 19:30, No 3

Held at Wheathampstead Memorial Hall

Present:	Councillors	John Newton-Davies	Chairman
		Janet Churchard	
		Gill Clark	
		David Johnston	
		Sandra Wood	
	Officers	Nick Sherriff	Green Spaces and Cemeteries Team Leader, St Albans District Council
		Faye Tuffnell	Countryside Ranger
		Ellie Beach	Projects Officer, Countryside Management Service
		J Warren	Clerk to Wheathampstead Parish Council
		Press	0
		Public	3

141-18 Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made to Faye as she attended her first meeting as Countryside Ranger.

142-18 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Claudio Duran and Tessa Reason.

143-18 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

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

144-18 Minutes of the meeting of 5 October 2017

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2017 be approved.

Resolved:

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2017 to be a true and fair account and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

145-18 Endorsement of Committee Terms of Reference/Scheme of Management

The Green Spaces and Cemeteries Team was to clarify rights of ownership.

Nomansland Joint Management Committee

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed that the Scheme of Management be endorsed.

Resolved:

To endorse the Scheme of Management

146-18 Green Spaces and Cemeteries Team Leader report

The officer's report had been circulated. It was reported that signage improvement and byelaw revision would be carried out as part of the new Greenspace Action Plan. It was agreed that signage should be an early budget item and it was anticipated that the bye-laws would be drafted by June or July.

The code of practice for model aircraft flying had been replaced with an approved but temporary sign; the Countryside Ranger had a number of replacements should these be required.

BBC Countryfile had been given permission to film part of a feature on foraging on Nomansland Common, reference to the site was not given and few would have identified its location.

Scrub near the Wicked Lady would be cut back shortly and a decision whether a boardwalk or culverted walkway be included be taken. Work would take place late in the current financial year or early within the next year

The encroaching scrub and bramble along the edges of the Common and ditches had been cut back, mature scrub along the southern boundary, Dyke Lane corner and the south east corner of the Common near to the permissive bridleway were scheduled to be cut within the following weeks. Consideration would also be given to scrub management needed to improve sightlines at the west end part of Ferrers Lane

St Albans District Council's Ice Cream Concession, which included a site at Nomansland, was currently being authorised. It was seldom used.

147-18 Countryside Rangers' Report

The Countryside Ranger's report had been circulated. She reported on her litter-picks, flailing of the margins of the Meadow adjacent to the main road, management of the Common with regard to brambles, scrub, gorse and heather, and maintenance of the interpretation panels. It was noted that the interpretation board in the woodland area was missing. She had been monitoring the refugia mats and the variety of species of flora and fauna, particularly birds. In places gorse was becoming invasive and would be controlled. On a site check on 30 January with the Clerk and Chairman 34 of the 40 refugia mats were found, though few showed signs of habitation. It was hoped that the county lead moth recorder would monitor the Common for night flying moths April until September.

A butterfly walk was planned for the spring/summer. Refugia mats would be regularly checked as temperatures rose, and the rabbit enclosures encouraging heather growth would be moved to new areas of the Common.

Nomansland Joint Management Committee

148-18 Countryside Management Service Project Officer Report

Further to Minute 137-17 the Countryside Management Service Project Officer reported on all positive responses to the briefing document for the Greenspace Action Plan consultation. She encouraged all to advertise the consultation which closed on 28 February 2018

149-18 Items raised by Members

Councillor Wood asked about access across the Common, in particular the feasibility of a surfaced path from Heartwood Forest. It was reported that any such work would require significant consultation and approval from the Secretary of State. Consideration would also need to be given to any requested route to the Village and safe crossing points particularly over Ferrers Lane. Attention was drawn to the Greenspace Action Plan (Minute 148-18) currently out to consultation.

It was reported that the pest control contractor now had a road legal quadbike which greatly assisted his ability to carry items over the Common. Equipment fitted with infrared night vision was used.

A retrospective request for filming of a costume drama had been received from a university student. It was unclear how complex this had been as a member of the public reported a number of vehicles present. Members acknowledged the need for specification of areas suitable or less so for such activities given the sometimes delicate ecological balance of the Common. Any future request should be made in advance and this should be specified in the Clerk's response. *(addendum – it transpires that the student approached Sandridge Parish Council officers the day following the meeting and it had been assumed that retrospective permission was automatically granted by the Nomansland Joint Committee).*

150-18 User Group comments

Concerns were raised about parking on the verges within the Common along Down Green Lane. The Parks and Green Spaces Officer would look into the provision of logs to deter parking. It was noted that without reflective markings these might be regarded as a safety issue.

A rustic bench in the silver birch area in the south east corner of the Common needed repair.

151-18 Date of next meeting

5 April 2018, 19:30 at the Memorial Hall following an informal walk round the Common starting at 18:00.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20:45

Dated this day of 2018
Chairman