

## **MINUTES OF MEETING NO. 3 OF THE NOMANSLAND JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

held in the Hewitt Room, The Memorial Hall, Marford Road, Wheathampstead on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2009

### Present:

Councillors N. Page (Chairman), J. Turner (Vice Chairman), G. Clark

### Officers in Attendance:

Mr. M. Lovelady – Head of Legal and Democratic Services  
Mr. J. Green – Senior Parks and Green Spaces Officer (Culture and Community Development)  
Mr. A. Laurie – Hertfordshire Countryside Management Service (CMS)  
Mr. R. Shwe – Head of Culture and Community Development  
Mr. R. Sweetland – Commons Ranger

### Administrator

Mrs. I. Casper

1. **Apologies for Absence**  
Cllr. J. Shardlow
2. **Disclosure of Interest**  
none.
3. **NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON 4 DECEMBER 2008**  
The notes of meeting No. 2 held on 4 December 2008 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.
4. **Nomansland Flyers, Bird Scarers and Noise**  
Jon Green had looked into the request received from the Nomansland Model Flying Club at the last meeting, to extend the number of flying hours and to allow up to three i/c models to fly at the same time. To change easements already in place Environmental Health would have to repeat the whole process of noise tests etc. again. At the moment 2 planes meet the requirements, to extend flying time would need public consultation and monitoring of noise over a period of time. At present there are no resources available for this exercise.

Cllr. Turner asked if the extra hour directly related to three planes, an extra hour would not break the noise barrier. Mr. Sweetland reported that there had been no noise problem with two i/c powered models flying at the same time.

Cllr. Clark thought it was unfortunate for the Flying Club that non members used the site.

The Environmental Health Department had circulated two sets of sheets to members of the public to record noise levels. The sheets went out in October/November 2008 and had not been returned to the Council.

Cllr. Turner proposed that we allow the flyers to fly for the extra hour requested, but not to allow more planes at this time.

It was explained that if the proposal went through the current signage would need to be updated.

### **DECISION**

1. That flying time be extended by one hour to 7.00pm.
2. That signage be updated as required.

### **Electric Flying – Code of Practice**

No consultation to change the temporary consent has taken place.

### **DECISION**

To extend the temporary consent for another year.

### **BIRD SCARERS / NOISE**

Environmental Officers are looking into this. They only act on complaints from residential properties.

In answer to a question from Cllr. Turner, as a resident of Nomansland, neither Mr. Sweetland nor his family had any complaints about bird scarers / noise.

### 5. **ACCESS PATH / KISSING GATE / TO HEARTWOOD FOREST**

A kissing gate has been erected by the Woodland Trust on Heartwood Forest land adjacent to the Common. Neither the Management Committee nor owners of the common had been consulted before the gate was erected.

The gate opens on to a permissive footpath. People are being encouraged to use the footpaths on this land. The Chairman has discussed footpaths in this area with Julian Thornton

(HCC); if the usage of this footpath increases it may be changed to a bridleway. There is no signage at this gate. The access path from Ferrers Lane is overgrown with a large area of thorn, visibility is almost non-existent. The path needs to be cleared.

### **DECISION**

1. Letter to go to the Woodland Trust expressing concern that the kissing gate was erected without consultation and asking for advance notice of future works if they are likely to have management implications for the Common.
2. Access path from the kissing gate to Ferrers Lane to be cleared.

### **Action**

1. The administrator.
2. Jon Green (SADC) / Alex Laurie (CMS)

## 6. **ENVIRONMENT IMPROVEMENT OPPOSITE WEST END FARM**

As a result of the new permissive access to the Heartwood Forest this part of the Common has become more popular. Increased car parking on the Common makes it muddy and threatens to conflict with the established livery traffic use. An all-embracing approach is needed to improve the area. The verges and drainage ditches need improving. There are dead and badly damaged trees. Work should be done on a Health and Safety basis to clear these. An access path on the Common linking FP14 from Harpenden to West End and the Heartwood Forest link is in a poor and dangerous state. Some dead elms have been marked for removal.

The work needed in this area should be part of a maintenance scheme.

**Snow damage work** – Cllr. Turner thanked Mr. Green for the work done on the trees damaged by the October snow.

### **DECISION**

1. St. Albans District Council will investigate and take immediate action on dangerous trees.
2. The condition of the link footpath on the Common between FP14 and the Heartwood Forest kissing gate be made safe by removal of dead elms and improvement of the surface.
3. The committee to have a good look at this area at the annual inspection.

### **Action**

1 and 2 Jon Green (SADC).

### 7. **EMERGENCY ACCESS TO THE COMMON**

The Chairman reported that there were a variety of padlocks in use on the common. He proposed that, from a safety point of view, standard 601 padlocks be used so that emergency vehicles can get access to the common.

The committee discussed this matter.

### **DECISION**

That when a padlock needs replacing in future a standard 601 will be purchased.

### 8. **MANAGEMENT PLAN**

A draft copy of the plan had been circulated to all members.

The timetable for completion of the Management Plan is:

- CMS to forward first draft to SADC Parks Officers by 31<sup>st</sup> March – completed.
- SADC officers to add additional information, review content and format, and make comments by 24<sup>th</sup> April.
- CMS to produce a final draft for circulation and comment to the committee and general public by 22<sup>nd</sup> May.
- CMS to make amendments and forward final version onto SADC by 19<sup>th</sup> June.

### **DECISION**

The Completed Management Plan to be circulated to all members of the committee before the next meeting – 2 July 2009

### **Action**

Jon Green (SADC).

### 9. **PROGRESS REPORT AND RANGERS REPORT**

The Senior Parks Officer gave the following report.

#### Works emerging from the Management Plan

The winter management works have been carried out by Sentry Groundcare. The work has been carried out to a high standard and has included grinding all the Oak stumps as suggested at the last Nomansland Joint Management Committee meeting.

The area alongside Ferrers Lane now has far more penetrative light and should allow ground flora to establish. Good Oaks have been singled out and some have received "Staghead" pruning to encourage growth and shape. The light now afforded to the remaining trees should allow them to develop and produce growth nearer to their base. Trees found with snow damage were pruned to remove their damaged branches.

#### Harpenden Common

In October Harpenden Town Council took some heather cuttings from Nomansland Common to help re-establish heathland on Harpenden Common. The work was supervised by the Nomansland Common Countryside Ranger and they trimmed the seedling tops of a small amount of heather.

#### **Rangers Report**

The Countryside Ranger has been carrying out general litter picking duties and keeping paths open. He has been in contact with the Police over some small trees being cut down by vandals on the area south east of the cricket ground. Some management works have been carried out, with the Ranger coppicing Gorse, and he will be cutting brambles on the woodland edge of the area behind the climbing tree.

#### **Bench**

The Ranger reported that a bench on the cricket outfield is in a very poor state.

#### **DECISION**

The broken bench will be replaced by Wheathampstead Parish Council.

#### **Action.**

Cllr. Page.

#### 10. **WINTER AND SUMMER WORKS**

Cllr. Page thanked the Officers of SADC and CMS for the work that has taken place. The committee were pleased that their ideas from the last meeting have been taken on board. The CMS has had sessions with volunteers to litter pick; clear brambles; tidy the area up. Boggy footpaths are still a problem, woodchip has been put down, this is not the best solution as the chips soak up the water and the situation gets worse. The footpaths are to be assessed at the annual inspection.

Jon Green reported that SADC will be weed-wiping areas where birch colonisation has followed woodland clearance. Brambles behind the runway will be cleared this summer.

11. **LEGAL ADVICE 30 JULY 2008; 4 DECEMBER 2008**

Item 30<sup>th</sup> July to be moved to end of meeting.

4<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Receipt of legal advice acknowledged.

12. **COMMITTEE RECORDS AND NEW SADC WEBSITE**

The new St. Albans District Council website only has minutes available from 2004. The committee discussed whether all the minutes (from 1974) should be on the website; or the minutes be kept in the Wheathampstead Parish Council office where the administrator of the Joint Management Committee works.

**DECISION**

That the records of the Nomansland Common Joint Management Committee, between 1974 and 2004, should be in the possession of the administrator.

**Action**

The administrator to write to St. Albans District Council requesting copies of all committee meeting minutes.

13. **COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

The committee discussed the present structure of the committee, two members from St. Albans District Council; two members from Sandridge Parish Council; two members from Wheathampstead Parish Council. Members discussed the possibility of co-opting members of various interest groups onto the committee. Mr. Lovelady reported that if members of interested parties were co-opted onto the committee they would not be able to vote.

Mr. Lovelady informed members that after the Annual District Council meeting in May the current structure will still be in place. The District Council will be requesting two members each from Sandridge and Wheathampstead Parish Councils.

**DECISION**

The committee structure to remain the same and members of Sandridge Parish Council to be encouraged to join the committee.

14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Meeting No. 4 – Thursday 2 July 2009.

The date of the Annual Inspection to be confirmed.

The press and public were requested to leave.

11. **LEGAL ADVICE 30 JULY 2009**

The committee discussed this item fully.

**DECISION**

The Administrator to write to St. Albans District Council and request a copy of a letter sent from the Althorp Estate to the District Council.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

**(signed)**

**CHAIRMAN**