

MINUTES OF MEETING NO. 1 OF THE NOMANSLAND JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

held in the Cricket Pavilion, Nomansland Common, Wheathampstead on Thursday 7 July 2011 at 7.30pm.

Present:

Councillors: A. Brewster, G. Clark, J.Churchard, D. Johnston, J. Newton-Davies.

Officers in Attendance:

Nick Sherriff – Parks and Green Spaces Officer
Richard Sweetland – Countryside Ranger

Members of the Public - 7

Administrator

Mrs. I. Casper - Deputy Clerk Wheathampstead Parish Council

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED

That Councillor A. Brewster be elected Chairman for the 2011-2012 Municipal Year.

2. **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED

That Councillor Newton-Davies be elected Vice-Chairman for the 2011-2012 Municipal Year.

3. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Councillors Hackett and Shardlow

4. **REPLACEMENT MEMBERS** – None

5. **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST** - Councillor Newton-Davies is a member of the Woodland Trust. Councillor Johnston is a member of Herts and Middx Wildlife Trust.

6. **NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2011**

The notes of meeting No. 3 held on 7 April 2011 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

7 **CRICKET CLUB**

The Chairman thanked Mr. Martin for allowing the committee to meet in the pavilion. (The meeting took place immediately after the annual inspection of the common).

Keith Martin spoke on behalf of the Cricket Club.

Development Work

Mr. Martin thanked Wheathampstead Parish Council and St. Albans District Council for providing the Club with grants towards the costs of recent development work that had taken place. Works included, relaying the cricket square -£16,000, redevelopment of the outdoor nets - £7,000 and a new bowling machine. These works had been funded by grants and Club funds.

The next phase of development the Club would like to implement is the improvement of the out field which is quite bumpy.

Works would include:

1. Skimming the surface of the field to flatten.
2. An earthmoving session to flatten the bottom end.

This is the Club's priority for the next 5 years. Fundraising for the project would take 2/3 years. Cost would be approximately £5,000. This does not include the cost of temporary fencing.

The Chairman would be happy to seek grant funding.

Mr Martin explained that the works could be done in two stages, with parts of the field being fenced off for a time. When the re-laying of the cricket square was implemented the area was fenced off from October to March. Nick Sherriff was concerned that spreading the works over two stages would have a longer impact on the area. Completing the work in one stage would only impact for 3 / 4months during the winter.

Mr. Martin then asked Nick for clarity about what works can and cannot be done.

Nick will check with the Planning Inspectorate to see what works can be carried out, and check the lease and the scheme of management, he will also check the legality of fencing off the area.

The Chairman asked Mr. Martin to obtain two quotations – one to complete the work in one go – one to complete the work in two stages.

Advertising Boards at the Pavilion

Mr. Martin then asked about the possibility if allowing advertising on boards at the cricket field. There were already some companies interested in this, and it is an opportunity for the Club to raise more funds.

Nick explained that this is a planning issue and at the moment there is no flexibility in the bye laws for advertising boards on the Common, although it may be possible on match days. He will look into the legality of advertising boards and inform the Club of his findings.

Bin

There is an old wire bin that is in need of removal.

Proposed from the Chair, 'The committee ask to have the bin removed'.
Agreed.

ACTION

The Cricket Club will remove and dispose of the bin.

Ongoing problems

Mr Martin informed members of ongoing problems caused by, rabbits, dogs, fly tipping and crows. Dog mess on the field is one of the worst problems. There is a dog waste bin, behind the pavilion at the end of the wood, but dog walkers pass this and the dogs are then on the field where they leave their deposits and owners are negligent in picking it up.

The dog bin is owned by Wheathampstead Parish Council and this item will go on the next meeting of the Playing Fields Committee.

Proposed from the Chair, 'If Wheathampstead Parish Council are happy to move the bin, it should be moved to the left of the gate going onto the common'. Agreed.

ACTION

Administrator to ensure this item is on the agenda for the next meeting of the Playing Fields Committee.

The committee were delighted to hear that the Cricket Club have 60 children in their Colts team.

DECISION

An article about the Cricket Clubs recent developments and an the invitation for more players of all ages will go in the next edition of the local parish magazine, the Pump,

ACTION

The Cricket Club to submit an article to go in the next edition of the Pump.

Nick Sherriff then asked Mr Martin about old surfacing from the nets and a mound of loam from the development works that had been left piled up behind the pavilion at the entrance to the woods.

Councillor Newton-Davies asked if an old roller that had been left in the wood could be removed.

ACTION

Mr Martin agreed that the Club would dispose of the old surfacing from the nets and will check with their contractor about the re-use of the good soil and remove the old roller.

The Chairman thanked Mr Martin for his verbal report on the Cricket Clubs future plans.

8. **PROGRESS REPORT**

Nick Sheriff Parks and Green Spaces Officer reported on works emerging from the Management Plan.

- (i) Works Emerging from the Management Plan

It was reported that the vegetation regrowth has recovered well since the works in winter.

Councillor Johnston asked for details of the Management Plan.

Nick explained that the Management Plan is a 5 year plan and we are just coming to the end of this 5 year phase. It is ongoing and a fluid document. A copy of the plan is on the District Council web site. The budget sits with the District Council, who look at the actions within the plan and put a figure to the works split over 5 years. This amounts to a budget of approximately £8,000 per year. This is topped up with grants from organisations such as Natural England and the Forestry Commission. The plan is reviewed annually by the Nomansland Joint Management Committee. Moving forward the updating of the plan for the next 5 years will be out for consultation shortly. The Joint Management Committee will be consulted and then the plan will go out for public consultation, starting with major stakeholders.

The Joint Management committee will consider the plan at the spring 2012 meeting.

Tree Works

This year's tree works will be discussed at the autumn meeting and will be the main focus of the site visit beforehand,

(ii) Guided Walks

The Countryside Management Service undertook a guided walk on the Common on the 11 June. Unfortunately only 4 members of the public attended even though this was publicised in the local paper, on the internet and on the common. This was in contrast to over 60 people attending the Bricket Wood Common guided walk.

DECISION

At the spring meeting of the committee this item to be on the agenda and publicity to be discussed. The walks will also be publicised in the local parish magazines.

(iii) Access Improvements on the Common and improved access to boardwalk

Quotes are being returned for a crush concrete path and a section of boardwalk to improve access to the present boardwalk. Some vegetation removal will have to take place to accommodate this path. The entrance to the path will be opposite the existing right of way. A handrail may also be installed if budgets allow.

The Rights of Way Unit at Herts County Council has put a works order out to build an earth ramp which will run parallel with the existing boundary line. The ramp will be of a gradient of approximately 1:12. There will be some vegetation clearance (mostly elder and blackthorn along this route) a date has not yet been set for the works to be carried out.

Members were pleased that Hertfordshire County Council were funding this work

Highway signage on the B651

An email was sent out to all committee members regarding the signage. The only signage that can be used are pedestrians ahead and or ridden or accompanied horse signs. Unfortunately the quiet lane signs cannot be used as the trial was unsuccessful. Nick will be speaking to Hertfordshire Highway about installing the signs in due course. (HCC are happy to put the signs up on existing poles).

(iv) Volunteer Work Days

SMC will be undertaking a work day in the next couple of weeks to pull ragwort on the Common and install a rustic bench (similar to existing benches). The bench will be installed to replace a bench that has rotted away. Nick informed members that he can get some bench seats from St. Stephens Parish Council

RESOLVED

1. To note the report
2. The Joint Management Committee to review the Management Plan at its meeting in spring 2012.

9. RANGER'S REPORT

The Ranger referred to the following matters:

- Pest control and litter picking continued on a regular basis.
- 3 reasonably sized motor bikes had been on the common. The police had been called when they arrived 2 bikes had cleared off the one remaining rider apologised and promised not to return.
- 12 youngsters had been camping in dry valley bottom. A tent, sleeping bags and a pillow had been collected and put either side of a broken chair this had been removed.
- The Ranger had asked the local police to patrol the common on a Friday night.
- Household rubbish dumped in Ferrers Lane had been removed.
- Chipboard has been dumped on Wheathampstead Parish Council land.
- Rabbit clearance has been successful.

ACTION

Wheathampstead Parish Council contractor to remove chipboard.

RESOLVED

To note the report.

10. NOMANSLAND COMMON BUDGET

The budget for works on the common is approximately £8,000 per year plus grants. Grant funding is usually project related.

Councillor Johnston expressed concern that the committee were not shown a detailed budget for the common.

Nick Sherriff assured members that the budget would be looked at as part of the management Plan. St. Albans District Council do inject a lot of money into works on the Common such as grounds maintenance. Grants are usually project related.

DECISION

The Nomansland Common budget to be discussed as part of the Management Plan.

11. ITEMS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Councillor Newton-Davies had submitted a question about the state of the Ferrers Lane Car Park and the recently created ramp on pathway 32.

Nick Sherriff reported that Ferrers Lane Car Park has an ongoing problem with subsidence. In the new Management Plan state of the whole of the car park will be looked at. Potential funding from various sources will be looked into. It will be better to spend money on renovating the whole car park rather than temporary patching.

Councillor G Churchard informed members that Sandridge Parish Council does have funds, and the committee should write to the Council requesting a grant to resurface the car park. The Chairman asked if Nick could get a quotation so that the committee have an idea of what funds will be needed. The Woodland Trust could be asked to contribute to the costs.

ACTION

Nick Sherriff agreed to look into having designs drawn up – one aspirational and one a basic design.

The Chairman questioned about the benefits of funding a Special Constable on horseback to patrol the common. The costs involved would be £1000 for training and £250 per year for 10 hours a month presence on the common.

Councillor G Churchard thought Sandridge Parish Council would be happy to contribute to this resource.

DECISION

The committee agreed a special Constable on horseback to patrol the common would be useful.

ACTION

The administrator to write to Sandridge Parish Council regarding grants towards funding resurfacing of Ferrers lane Car Park and a Special Constable on horseback and the item will be referred to WPC for consideration.

Councillor Johnston had submitted question including the use of the common by the model aircraft flyers.

At its last meeting the committee had agreed to extend the three month trial period to fly 3 i/c aircraft at any one time.

There has been one complaint received about the extra i/c plane flying. Mr Stocker had written complaining about noise nuisance. (Letter circulated to all members).

Judith Adamson had submitted a briefing note giving clarification of the Model Flyers item. (Previously circulated to all members).

It is noted:

1. The minute of this meeting reflect that the Byelaws from 1987, set out at Byelaw 11, the designated area for which model aircraft flying is permitted and the hours of flying time. These should be adhered to by the flyers.
2. The Code of Conduct (as amended) reflects the number of aircraft and these may have been amended by the Joint Management Committee. To ensure clarity the Committee will consider at a future meeting the following:
 - i The number of each type of aircraft that can fly
 - ii Consider representations on this issue from Mr Stocker and the Flying Club to enable them to decide on the number of different types of aircraft and amend the Code of Conduct accordingly.

Nick Sherriff then read out the Byelaw giving the restrictions of the flying area.

Members were informed that the byelaws are going to be reviewed imminently.

Members discussed this item and agreed that more information was needed regarding noise nuisance, anxiety caused to walkers etc. It was also agreed that the Environmental Health Department of SADC be asked to take noise pollution findings and report back to the committee. All members are to visit the common when the model aircraft are flying.

Richard Sweetland thought a questionnaire the Model Aircraft be delivered to all local houses would be helpful. All members agreed with this idea. The Flying Club will have sight of the questionnaire before it is delivered.

DECISION

A questionnaire will be delivered to all houses on the common and circulated to all normal users of the common.

ACTION

1. A Working Party of Councillors Brewster, Newton-Davies and Johnston will produce a questionnaire.
2. Richard Sweetland will deliver the questionnaires to houses on the Common.
3. All committee members to visit the common when the model aircraft are flying.

Councillor Churchard then proposed.' Let's continue with this trial period for 6 months, until the committee receives further facts and figures, the byelaws are updated and the committee consultation is over, seconded Councillor Clark. Agreed.

DECISION

That for a trial period is extended for 6 months to 1 December 2011 - 3 i/c model aircraft may fly at any one time.

ACTION

Nick Sherriff to liaise with the Environmental Health Department at SADC regarding noise pollution by the model aircraft.

11. **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Committee Meeting No 2– Thursday 6 October 2011 7.30pm

This meeting is preceded by an inspection of the Common, meet at 6pm in Ferrers Lane Car Park.

Committee Meeting No. 3 – Thursday 1 December 2011.

The meeting ended at 9.40pm.

(signed)

CHAIRMAN