

CHILBOLTON PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT – Minutes of the Open Spaces Committee (COSC) held on Thursday 16 February 2023; 18:30 at Poplar Dene, Chilbolton

Present: Cllrs David Griffiths (Chairman) (DG) and Julian Hudson (JH),
Non-Cllr members: Moya Grove (MG), Emma Noble (EN), Abby Purver (AP)

1. Apologies: Terry Gilmour (TG), Nick Horne (NH), Rick Franke (RF), Trish Heaton (TH)
2. Declaration of interests: None
3. Approval of Minutes – Thursday 12 January 2023 – These were agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.
4. Matters Arising:
5. To take questions and/or discuss and decide on any proposals within the monthly reports as follows:
 - A. Finance Report – Prior to the meeting the Clerk circulated the attached report ([21623 2](#)). Nothing to add.
 - B. Allotments – TG had nothing to report.
 - C. Common – Prior to the meeting MG circulated the attached report ([21623 4](#)) plus the FAG Common report ([21623 3](#)).

COSC discussed looking into amending bylaws to deal with some of the problems experienced on the Common in summer as suggested by the office of Caroline Nokes MP. COSC decided that it is not necessary to investigate these currently, but should be borne in mind in future should the situation change. In coming to this decision COSC took into account the difficulty of enforcing any bye laws.

MG confirmed that one educational visit has been carried out. Sparsholt college had a successful visit. They have a Freshwater Course and lecturers have suggested that students could clear the Abbotts Stream as part of that course. There are two further educational visits scheduled.

DG reported that work on the gravel area redesign stopped during the cold weather but George Whitfield has now done a very nice wooden barrier along the ditch reusing wood removed from the river bank by WRT. Thanks to George for also clearing out the ditch. DG disposed of a lot of litter that had been removed from the ditch. Soon George will move the gate to The Old Cottage/WMPF in line with the gravel area redesign. George has installed the new retaining post for the new gate at the Joys Lane entrance.

MG reported a successful day of scrub clearance on the Common last weekend carried out by the Hampshire Conservation Volunteers and DG. DG and MG have thanked the leader for the work.

Regarding the proposed use of machinery to clear the Abbotts Stream in future, MG has not yet heard back from Alison Graham-Smith of Natural England.

MG discussed the possibility that more income could possibly be generated by moving from Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) to the new Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier (CSHT). DG to speak to Glynne Evans about this as it will require further study.

Agreed and Signed (Chairman)
Page 1 of 4

CHILBOLTON PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT – Minutes of the Open Spaces Committee (COSC) held on Thursday 16 February 2023; 18:30 at Poplar Dene, Chilbolton

DG spoke to George Whitfield about putting up the amended ladder boards. George said he can install the boards on the Chilbolton side of the Purleygigg Stream, but the river is too high to put up the ones on the other side as they are very heavy and need to be taken over the ford by vehicle. AP and EN suggested they may be able to carry these ladder board over the bridge with a small team of helpers. DG to ask George if he would be able to install the ladder boards if help was provided in taking them to the required spot.

DG reported that the new information boards are under production and should be ready for delivery soon.

AP reported that she has adjusted the horse gate at the Long Bridge with the help of Matt Purver by moving the weight to the other side so that it now self closes without swinging violently. However, if it is pushed too far it will swing right back and will not self close. This will need rectifying before the cows return. A post could be put in behind the gate to stop it swinging back too far.

Further to the above update on the horse gate at the Long Bridge, AP confirmed that HCC have offered a free replacement metal gate which is wider than the current one so a new gate post will be needed. COSC agreed to the installation of this replacement gate and DG will liaise with George Whitfield to have it installed. HCC can deliver the gate to DG's house. AP will liaise with the British Horse Society who have offered to provide an adapter to make the gate's closing mechanism suitable for horse riders.

DG and MG confirmed that there were no updates on the fishing rights.

MG reported that Corinne Davis-Cooke, the new Community Engagement Ranger for the HCC Countryside Service, is coming on Thursday 9th March at 10am; meeting at the gravel area on the Common, to discuss rights of way and other matters. MG encouraged as many members to attend as possible.

DG reported that the lengths man has cleared a large patch of bramble that was obscuring the view from the picnic area on the WMPF across the Common.

The large tree that had fallen across the Test Way as it runs alongside the WMPF was removed by Roy (instructed by John Rowles) at no expense to CPC or HCC. COSC expressed thanks to JR.

DG reported that George Whitfield will be tasked with filling the pot holes on the Common's gravel roads. There is gravel on site and probably no more will be needed.

DG will be taking down the 'no parking' signs that are dilapidated and will replace them with new ones. Also DG has removed the fallen and rotten dragons teeth. There are now gaps in the dragons teeth which George will be asked to close.

D. Machinery Maintenance – Nothing to report

E. Parish Paths – As above, DG reported that the fallen tree has been removed from the Test Way. Further, TVBC will be writing to the owners of Watch Cottage to ask them to remedy the potential danger caused by barbed wire as raised by Mandy Denyer.

F. Village Greens –

There is serious vehicle tyre damage to the grass verge between Poplar Dene and the Abbot's Mitre. There is now only one dragons tooth left. DG to recommend replacing the teeth. COSC also suggested that

CHILBOLTON PARISH COUNCIL

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dragons teeth are put on the verge in front of Abbots Orchard and Beech Lodge to prevent vehicles driving onto the verge. CPC will be asked to approve this action.

MG reported that the Flood Advisory Group has recommended the reinstatement of a pond in front of the two houses aforementioned. This is only an idea at the moment.

G. Chilbolton War Memorial Playing Fields (CWMPF)

i. Update on CWMPF Development Group and Adventure Tower proposal update –

COSC agreed that we would hold off placing an order for the adventure tower until after the grant has been secured due to concerns that we would lose match funding if the grant was refused, and also because there is a probability that placing an order and paying a deposit would be construed by TVBC as ‘work started’ and therefore would not be included in any grant calculation.

ii. Discussion on installation of CCTV (advice from HALC [12123 1](#)) – COSC agreed that we will wait until NH gets back to discuss this

iii. DG reported that the basketball back boards have been shattered, apparently by objects being thrown at them. EN will liaise with NH about a repair.

iv. DG reported that the mole man has been back at CWMPF and has now dealt with the problem.

v. EN reported that the hedge grant has been approved and the plants will now be ordered to go along the fence line behind the table tennis table.

H. West Down –

DG reported that work had been held up for a long time due to poor weather. However at recent working parties there has been an average of 9 people and excellent progress has been made.

6. To discuss making local legislation to protect the Common (re correspondence received from The Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP ([9123 3](#))) – See above, we will not look to seek bylaws currently.

7. To discuss and decide on Chainsaw Safety equipment – Should CPC provide or ask users to provide own and sign a disclaimer of some sort? – COSC decided that we will decide on this issue after RF has completed his chainsaw course.

8. To discuss ways to make Virgin Media and BT junction boxes around the village more aesthetically pleasing – COSC decided this was an interesting project, but to discuss further when NH returns.

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CHILBOLTON PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT – Minutes of the Open Spaces Committee (COSC) held on Thursday 16 February 2023; 18:30 at Poplar Dene, Chilbolton

9. Green Canopy Project – DG met with Kate Bradley who has secured funding of around £2500 for the Green Canopy Project. He met with Sheila and Glynne Evans to discuss what types of tree would be best suited. DG confirmed that Rick Nightingale is able to source the trees at a good price. We have funding for 9 mature trees and 11 saplings. Sheila and Glynne Evans recommended planting predominantly on West Down and possibly on the far end of the playing field, either side of where the bonfire is sometimes lit. The species suggested were oak, wild cherry, crab apple, rowan and field maple. DG is progressing this.

10. Correspondence –
10/01/23 - Email to HCC rights of way re barbed wire adj. to footpaths ([6223_1](#)) – HCC have investigated and provided the following report ([6323_6](#))

18/1/23 - RPA Countryside Stewardship payment rates have been updated ([6223_7](#)) – forwarded to COSC

12/1/23 - SSE re non eligible supplies - WMPF pavilion ([6223_12](#))

25/1/23 - SSE contract end and renewal quote - WMPF Pavilion ([6223_13](#)) (SSE renewal quote and British Gas comparison ([6223_13a](#))). CPC Cllrs discussed and agreed to renew the contract with SSE. The Clerk has informed SSE.

27/1/23 - Environmental Land Management funding update ([6223_15](#)) – Forwarded to COSC

6/2/23 - HCC New countryside access ranger details ([6223_29](#))

11. Questions from Public – None

12. Any Other Business – None

13. Items for next agenda - None

14. Date of the next meeting – Scheduled date is on Thursday 9 March at 6.30pm at Poplar Dene, Village Street.
All monthly reports to be circulated by 12:00 Wednesday 1 March 2023.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was closed at 8.15pm