

CHILBOLTON PARISH COUNCIL'S OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE (COSC)

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11 July 2024; Poplar Dene, Cart Lane, Chilbolton; 18:30

PRESENT: Cllrs David Griffiths (Chairman) (DG) and Julian Hudson (JH), Moya Grove (MG), Trish Heaton (TH), Nick Horne (NH), Emma Noble (EN).
Members of Public: None

1. Apologies: Cllr Rick Franke (RF), Terry Gilmour (TG)
2. Declaration of Interests: NONE
3. Approval of Minutes – Thursday 13 June 2024: These were agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.
4. Matters Arising:
5. Chairman's Report: ([11724 4](#)).

Some items in the Chairman's report are discussed in more detail below.

DG reported that an article has been put in the Parish Magazine indicating that the Common gate will be shut at weekends. This is incorrect. It will be shut for the duration of the summer holidays including at weekends.

6. To take questions and/or discuss and decide on any proposals within the monthly update reports as follows: -
 - A) Finance – Clerk
 - i. Finance transactions since last COSC meeting: Prior to the meeting the Clerk circulated the attached report ([11724 3](#)).

Noted by COSC. Nothing to add.

- B) Allotments – TG had nothing to report. Prior to the meeting the Clerk circulated that one plot remains available (A12).

COSC are aware that one of the vacant allotments has been taken. A second is awaiting a new owner.

All bar one of the allotment holders are happy for Roundup (or similar) to be used on the vacant plots, so this has been agreed by COSC. Ian Daubney will clear the plots shortly.

- C) Common – Prior to the meeting MG circulated the attached report ([11724 5](#)).

- I. Update on Fishing Rights: Strutt and Parker are no longer agents for Church Commissioners. The new agents, Farrer, have had the deed signed by the Commissioners and will register the Grant of Deed. A signed copy will be sent to CPC.
- II. Discussion on extension of Purlygig Bridge:

Agreed and Signed (Chairman)
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JH has redrafted the letter to go to Wessex River Trust (WRT). MG would like some additional points considered: 1. Mandy Denyer (MD) is going on holiday so a member of COSC will need to send the letter 2. Alison Graham-Smith (A G-S) of Natural England rang MG and was not minded to give permission for boarding to be put back in place. A G-S does not think that HCC Highways needed to be consulted by WRT. MG considers it best that the letter to WRT is sent as it stands (the one amended on 11.7.24).

MG reported that it is too late now for Sparsholt College to schedule into their curriculum assistance with extending the bridge.

MG confirmed that CPC are responsible for maintaining the line of the Test Way whereas HCC are responsible for its surface.

COSC agreed to the following actions:

- Send JH letter to WRT as soon as possible.
- A plan of action is urgently required, but without agreement between the various departments involved, this is currently difficult to formulate. MG will try to arrange an appointment with WRT, CM and NE. Replacing the revetments will be the key action because there is no realistic alternative. Prior to Covid wear and tear the level of the path was much higher. This will be emphasised.
- MG will also look to arrange an appointment WRT alone, as soon as possible, as getting a meeting with all three departments is probably be some time off.
- EN will recirculate the meeting notes with NH's amendments.

- III. Sleeper Bridge: CPC have agreed to accept Hutton's (Andover) quote for the repair of the Sleeper Bridge. CPC also agreed that JH should write to resident of The Old Inn Cottage asking for a significant contribution to the works – 80% would be considered acceptable. The resident may look to their contractors for redress as they should have reinforced the bridge prior to the works (as WRT did when they brought gravel in). Following the work being done CPC will negotiate with other Common residents.
- IV. To discuss and decide on the use of a 'Smart Padlock': Prior to the meeting JH circulated the attached notes ([11724 1](#)). COSC would like to thank Tony Ewer for his initiative, but given the difficulties raised in JH's notes, COSC do not consider use of the lock to be feasible.
- V. To discuss and decide on Common Gravel Area plan - updated to include changes to the proposed horse gate. Prior to the meeting JH circulated the attached plan ([11724 2](#)). DG reported that Andy Bond has been asked to put in the dragon teeth as indicated on the plan.

D) Machinery Maintenance:

Nothing to report.

E) Parish Paths:

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EN reported that she, with the help of some other volunteers, had cut back about half the Mark Way. A local volunteer has also cut along the main footpath through the trees outside the enclosed area. COSC thanked those involved.

DG reported that the Lengths Man will be tasked with cutting back the side growth along the southern section the Mark Way.

DG has obtained permission from the CPC to hire a mulcher/mower for two days to see how it copes clearing the brambles etc on West Down.

F) Village Greens:

DG reported receiving a range of differing opinions about whether or not to mow Stocks Green. The orchids have seed heads but they have not dropped yet, so mowing will not be done until they have.

G) War Memorial Playing Fields.

I. Update on WMPF Development Group and Adventure Tower update:

The development group will consider again the rubber matting as a certain amount of grass has now come through in places.

II. Update on the proposal to enclose the WMPF to be able to apply for an 'Enclosed Sports Area' under the TVBC Public Spaces Protection. Re-routing the the Test Way is not a practical option. It would necessitate getting approval to divert the Test Way which might not be forthcoming. It would involve a lot of expensive clearance. The surface of the area is very wet and boggy

III. Improving the surface of the Test Way as it enters the WMPF: DG handed to TH the specification provided by HCC for the construction of an improved path across the very boggy area. NH suggested asking Beth Rutterford of CM if she could provide chalk for the project as she indicated that they have a ready supply.

DG will contact the animal welfare officer at TVBC to confirm that ,if the fencing work done, we will get Enclosed Sports Area status.

DG said that CPC have a spare self-closing gate in the container which could be used for this project.

IV. Annual Play area inspection: to discuss and decide on actions to be taken: The [attached report](#) was discussed and the following actions were agreed: - NH will communicate with MD as to what is required of the volunteers with regards to regular Adventure Tower inspections.

Concerning the loose bolt on the clamber stack: NH has not yet sent an email to Vitaplay. He would like CPC to send a letter that he has drafted. The letter will say that, although the issue

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was not identified until after the guarantee period had elapsed, the damage must clearly have begun during the guarantee period.

There was a divergence of opinions between COSC members as to the use of weed killer having regard to some online reports circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed that the email drafted by NH would be sent to the "concerned user," with the line 'once dry it is not harmful to people, domestic animals or wildlife' removed by EN; then forwarded to MD to send. NH will ask the MD to order some Glyphosate free weed killer and, in future, a sign will be put up to indicate weed killer has been used.

V. Regarding the ash tree hanging over the container, DG reported that a report will be sent off to the insurance company to see if they will cover the cost of removal.

VI. NH will contact MD to order the toddler swing seats.

H) West Down

- I. On Tuesday DG met with Mike Hardy, an HCC Ranger, and someone from the land department at HCC. The points identified and discussed were:
 - a. The damaged height barrier. It was agreed that this will be fixed with a lock and chain by HCC.
 - b. Test Valley Farm access onto West Down – both of the above were adamant that there is no legal access from Test Valley Farm onto West Down. They would like to see the fence barrier reinstated. DG has arranged for a letter to be sent off to Southern Water as it is possible they removed it. Southern Water have replied with a holding letter saying they are looking into it.
 - c. Regarding the allegation of encroachment by one of the gardens onto West Down, COSC are not concerned with it. It is a matter for HCC as land owners.
- II. Update on request for memorial plaque on a WD bench (or installation of a new bench with memorial plaque): COSC reviewed the bench suggestions provided by the Budd family. NH reiterated that he would like to see a more low maintenance option. However it was agreed that, as the preferred option from the Budd family came with a 25 year guarantee and is allegedly vandal proof, COSC will accept their choice. The Budd family have not identified the correct bench to be replaced though. EN will provide a photograph to MD showing the correct one which is the nearby wooden one. This was dedicated to the 2012 Jubilee. EN will remove the small plaque. The Budd family will also need to provide the footings. COSC are happy for them to arrange a concrete plinth or similar.

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- III. To discuss Teasel Field as per resident email ([1724 9](#)): DG will contact MD to reply saying that (as per MG) it is an area that is left on the whole for the vegetation to develop as it will, and variations will occur with climate and time.
- IV. MG has replied to some negative comments on Facebook regarding the ragwort pull and its impact on the cinnabar moth. Ragwort on West Down outside the enclosure (of which there is plenty) will be left.

I) Tree Warden report:

DG will inspect the trees indicated on the report. DG will discuss with Rick Nightingale whether monthly reports are necessary. Regarding the tree over the container, NH suggested looking into taking the whole tree down rather than just a few limbs. DG will look into the cost. DG will draft a tree warden policy. JH suggested using the chunky bits of wood from the WMPF trees for the pump track.

7. To Discuss and decide on Lengths Man tasks for the following month (to include number of hours allocated per task):

DG has requested he cuts the side growth on the southern section of the Mark Way.

8. Correspondence:

4/6/24 - Resident email re overgrown vegetation on WD ([1724 3](#)) - forwarded to COSC/resident has cut back vegetation at the WD car park

11/6/24 - Letter to Old Inn Cottage re sleeper bridge repair ([1724 7](#)) responses from resident inc. quote from Hutton ([1724 7a](#)) 18/6/24 JH email to Hutton ([1724 7b](#))

13/6/24 - Resident email re WD barrier to TVF and other COSC matters and MD response (forwarded to COSC as requested) ([1724 9](#))

22/6/24 - Weed Spraying at WMPF ([1724 18](#)) – forwarded to COSC for response

25/6/24 – Emailed letter to Southern Water re WD barrier ([1724 20](#)). Initial automated response from SW ([1724 20a](#))

9. Questions from Public:

10. Any Other Business – For information only:

TH raised that someone has been dumping grass clippings on Martins Lane. TH will report it to TVBC as fly tipping.

11. Items for the next agenda:

12. Date of the next meeting – Scheduled date is Thursday 8 August 2024 at Poplar Dene, Village Street.