

COLESHILL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Of the Common Management sub-committee meeting held on Tuesday 4th April 2023 at 7.00 pm, held at the Village Hall, Barrack Hill, Coleshill

Committee members: Nigel Suttie (NS) Chair
Chris Wege (CW)
Steve Thompson (ST)
Graham Thorne (GT)
Derek Higgins (DH)

Parish Clerk: Lynda Jackson (LJ)

Parish Councillors: Jon Herbert (JH)

Members of Public: 4

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** Steve Bowers
- 2. Articles of Association:** NH gave an overview of the history of this document first implemented as set-up & purpose document in 1992. The Articles of Association 2023 had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting. NS confirmed that the Parish Council had now adopted this document. The Articles of Association state that at least two open formal meetings must be held each year, usually in February and November. In November, the Activity plan for the following year will be produced and work costed so that a budget document can be agreed and sent to CPC for approval at the CPC December meeting. Once approved it will be forwarded to Buckinghamshire Council for final agreement. The February meeting will be used to go through the work programme for the new year which starts in April. Members of the public will have the opportunity at both open meetings to raise concerns and suggestions regarding the Pond & Common during the democratic period.
- 3. Committee members:** The committee has now been realigned with how it was originally set-up in 1992. NS is the Chair; Steve Bowers takes over Finance and DH is the secretary. The committee has five resident members and 1 CPC member.
- 4. Councillor representative vacancy –** There is a vacancy for a 2nd CPC member. The CPC has recently lost three councillors and recruited 2 new councillors so committee will have to wait a short while for a 2nd councillor to be appointed.
- 5. Matters arising:** None

Meeting Closed: 19:07

DEMOCRATIC PERIOD-

- Terry Reilly wanted to congratulate the CMC on updating the Articles of Association but added there is nothing in there to proactively seek advice from villagers. The survey undertaken earlier this year did that. Would the CMC keep this going forward proactively asking the village about the Common and Pond which is for all villagers to use. NS responded that the 2 open meetings will be available for villagers to come forward with suggestions and advice. In addition, the work parties are advertised and anyone can come along they don't have to take part but can talk to the volunteers. NS agreed that it was an action that was needed, and the newsletter and website would be a good place to start.*
- Terry Reilly regarding the conclusions of the survey undertaken. There was no point in running a questionnaire if you didn't draw conclusions from it. If you ignore the Pond answers the rest were suggesting the Common should be managed and run differently. DH informed the meeting that the responses were divergent. The majority were happy with what the CMC were doing. The work plan this year has incorporated the suggestions from the consultation. JH advised the meeting that a high number of responders to the consultation were over sixty-five. ST advised the meeting that*

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whilst on the Common he spoke to a young family at the picnic bench who commented the view was much better now. ST felt the balance was about right at present.

- *Kate Barber informed the meeting that talking to a lot of people in the village, they would like to see the centre of the Common cut. When it is left uncut there are large thistles and brambles. Mrs Barber went on to say that families with small children would like to use the centre of the Common and that by letting everything go wild you are also losing a lot of wildflowers. Mrs Barber thought the recent work on the Common was excellent, a really good job.*
- *Terry Reilly felt that if there was twelve acres of Common then 2 acres should be available for village use and the rest for wildlife. CW felt that the grassland area could be divided so that there is an area for children to run about. JH added that openness was especially important and there was the opportunity to open up from Barrack Hill end of the Common opposite Littlelands. This would show light as you looked through.*

Meeting re-opened: 19:26

- 6. Volunteer work parties: Risk Assessment** – The previously circulated document was being used, especially for new volunteers. NS advised there had been a recent incident where an ambulance needed to be called so it was important that everyone was made aware of the risks when working on the Common or at the Pond. NS informed the meeting that they were using `3 words` to identify locations for emergency services. ST had investigated wayfinder posts stating the `3 words` locations which could be located at each access point of the Common. The committee **agreed** unanimously that CPC should be presented with the cost for the posts and request approval so that they can be ordered. --

Recruitment – the committee are actively trying to get more volunteers. Work parties have seen new recruits, DH has set up a WhatsApp group to communicate with everyone and some members of the village's Fathers group have also helped out. NS thought that numbers would gradually increase. DH suggested someone take on active recruitment of volunteers. NS **agreed** to take on the role.

Record of attendees – It was confirmed that the Clerk is sent a list of attendees after each work party.

- 7. Action plan 2023 for Common & Pond:** GT updated the meeting on progress of the Action plan to date. GT advised a willow tree had come down but as there were nesting birds using it then it would have to be left for now. Once UKPN have completed their planned works it is planned to landscape the corner of Chalk Hill nicely. Regarding the grassland, Chiltern Rangers no longer have suitable equipment for cutting the centre due to the need to avoid the large anthills. There is a requirement to find an alternative contractor. Katie Horgan from BBWOT suggested a survey of the anthills as the contractor needs to work round them. It was **agreed** that LJ approach Amersham Town Council or Chesham to find out if they have the right equipment and whether it is doable. GT mentioned the leftover aggregate which could be used to make better paths. GT also suggested later in the year getting various surveys done. GT was asked to find out if there would be costs involved for such work.

- 8. Finance:** LJ had circulated a copy of the 2023-24 budget & 2022-23 costs to budget prior to the meeting.

i) **Quotes for work** – The committee were informed that CPC had approved the quote from Gabris to pollard the two willows at the pond. In addition, a cost had been approved for digging a trench adjacent to Park End cottage boundary to restrict the willow roots. The work going ahead is subject

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to a planning application approval on the two protected trees.

ii) Budget 2023-24 – LJ advised that she was waiting for purchase orders from David Stowe for the budget. DH asked if the committee could be copied in on all CMC payments as they occur.

iii) Grant applications – None

iv) Reimbursement of expenditure – Members of the committee were reminded of the correct procedure for first agreeing small expenditure and then claiming reimbursement. All receipts must be made out to Coleshill Parish Council and a VAT receipt obtained.

9. Plans for public participation events: GT suggested a Wildlife Explorer Day, Common picnic, and possible surveys although they are unlikely to be for public participation. Mrs Suttie advised that if any events involved young children, then CMC must give plenty of notice. It was **agreed** that events must be advertised effectively.

10. Next Meeting date: Tuesday 14th November 2023 7.00 pm at Coleshill Village Hall

20: 23pm.Meeting Closed.

After the meeting there was a short informal session where Mr Reilly commented that the Pond was attracting visitors from outside the village and that it's because it's pretty. Mr Reilly suggesting flailing the grass part of the Common that could be used by families even though it may not be good for the ants. Mrs Barber commented the Pond used to attract painters.

Signed Date