

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2008

Committee	<p>Cllrs M.A.Morley - Chairman Mrs C.Barton C. Pointon-Taylor D. Baker</p> <p>Clerk M.S.Green</p>
Apologies	Cllrs M.J.Bayley, M.J.Raszpla, Mrs M.Seymour, J.Smiley
1) COMMONS, GREENS AND ALLOTMENTS	<p><i>Knotty Green allotments</i> - All plots are taken. The Nov 5th bonfire was cancelled because of insurance complications. <i>Send copy of W/Hill bonfire arrangements when agreed. Review rents</i></p> <p><i>Knotty Green Cricket Club</i> - Only two incidents of vandalism on an outside shed this year.</p> <p><i>Knotty Green Recreation Ground</i> <i>Friends of Knotty Green</i> are being wound up and any funds will be transferred to the Parish Council. <i>Informal rota of residents</i> is still keeping a regular eye out for any damage and litter. <i>Playdale</i> are trying to improve the swing of the swings. <i>Notice board</i> has a new nameplate.</p> <p><i>KG Wicksteed Inspections</i> - Tom Barron has agreed to carry out the following work highlighted in recent inspection reports: <i>Double Arch Swing</i> - Sand and paint the swing frame - £65 <i>Double Timber A Frame Climber</i> - Replace nut covers - £15 plus covers <i>Triple Timber Pull up Bar</i> - Treat bottom of posts with wood stain - £30.00 including materials <i>Log Section</i> - Waiting for tree company to come back with logs <i>Supernova on wet pour</i> - Fill gap between wet pour and kerb with black mastic, sand, cut back burnt area - £75.00 including materials <i>Concrete Timber Bench</i> - Replace wood with outdoor treated timber - £265.00 including materials <i>Horse Spring Mobile</i> - Treat timber with wood stain - £10.00 incl. materials <i>Football goal grass</i> - Fill depression with top soil and re-turf - materials being no more than about £50.00.</p> <p><i>Beacon Hill Garden Plots</i> <i>New tenants and tenancy agreement.</i> Rents are now- £25 small plot(x3) and £50 large(x2) Five tenants in all. <i>Roadside Hedge to be cut in Autumn/Winter.</i> Tenants have cut inside. <i>Boundary hedge</i> between bungalow and plots ripped out by neighbour Mr D. Dorehill of The Bungalow. Agreed to reinstate hedge but need to <i>confirm hedge will be on old line. Also check water pipe installed by Mr Dorehill.</i></p>

Penn Street & Forty Green Play Areas

Wicksteed inspections - the 4-monthly inspections always repeat several recommendations with a non-mandatory priority such as the need for a notice, a litter bin and (Penn Street only) for a fence around it. These have been discussed in the past and it has been agreed that no action should be taken.

The Pound - Lease rent has been renewed for next five years wef Jul 07 (increase of 14%). *De-registering the Pound as common land is the next step*

Trees

Annual Parish tree inspection - Our public liability insurance requires an annual check by a qualified tree surgeon for any trees likely to be a danger to the public. The order has been placed with Pete Whipp. *Check progress.*

Penn Street Vicarage oaks - two oaks on the boundary of the common have been pruned of dead branches.

Pistles Pond - Two willows and an elm have died in the last few months, possibly of honey fungus. They have been cut down and burned on the neighbouring Penn School land at a cost of £420.

Hollow horse chestnut, Elm Road - *To be crown lightened for quote of £180.*

KG triangle - *Investigate whether to crown lift one tree.*

Grass-cutting

The 3-year fixed price contract with CTR Maintenance has been working extremely well and there is no hesitation in *recommending its continuation for next year.*

W/Hill Football Club - Mr Bill Calder of the W/Hill Football Club argued at the September Council meeting that the Parish Council should include the football pitch in the five summer cuts of the rest of the common since no football was being played in the summer. This argument was accepted and will cost an additional £200 pa. It was later suggested that there could be grants from the FA for small clubs.

Add £200 for 5 cuts for the W'Hill Football Club pitch

W/Hill Play Area - The site has been agreed, a meeting held to discuss possible sources of funds and application made on 20 Oct to Veolia for £25,248 as part of a total project budget of £31,700. Our contribution will be £4,452, the Residents Association, £2,000; PCSO John Webb and Laurie Johnson of Bucks Community Action are separately checking other possibilities.

W/Hill Bonfire - An issue arose with insurance which resulted in the bonfire going ahead without fireworks. On the day, the environmental officers were called by a neighbour and a bath, two sofas and some other potentially toxic material removed before the event. The Common has been chewed up by the tractor because of the softness of the ground. *Discuss future arrangements with the Residents Association.*

W/Hill Easement - The District Valuer has quoted £400 for a valuation of the capital sum due to the Parish Council for granting an easement to a new house. The owner of the plot has agreed to meet the £400 cost for a valuation of the easement by the District Valuer. *Cllr Bayley will take before and after photos in case there is a dispute and we must try to ensure the track is not damaged.*

Parking on the grass verge of Elm Road common - This had largely ceased since

	<p>our letter was sent to residents some 18 months ago, but has apparently resumed. <i>Identify and speak to culprits.</i></p>
2) OTHER LAND	<p>Penn Street school field - Bollard at entrance gate. It was agreed that this is not needed since the gate is kept locked.</p> <p>A404 hedge, Penn Street - The County Council have agreed a contract with South Bucks Tree Surgeons to remove a large amount of deadwood from the large oak by the A404 at the end of the Penn Street School field at a cost of £672. It has not yet been done.</p> <p>A site meeting with Phil Hallam established that the removal of four large branches of the old oak, right back to the trunk, would be essential to allow enough light for a newly planted hedge. All the large sycamores need to be dug out and the stands of ash thinned. There are no layable trees and the few straggly hawthorns need to be coppiced. The total length is about 40 yds. A ditch protects half of it from vehicles entering the field but 20 yds of fencing would be needed on the corner. <i>The Committee did not think it was a worthwhile project.</i></p> <p>Queensway - WDC have been investigating putting an athletics track on Queensway, but do not yet have any detailed proposals to be considered by the Queensway Committee. <i>Monitor progress.</i></p> <p>Woodbridge Alley – <i>Get overgrown hedges around the neighbouring garden cut back.</i></p> <p>Sale of Stony Lane - After four weeks of silence, the purchaser for his house is now anxious to proceed and Mr Stephen Jones wants to exchange by the end of November. At the November Council meeting we need to agree a resolution as follows: <i>The Council agrees to the sale of Stony Lane to Mr Stephen Jones for the sum of £17,000 plus the Clerk's costs of £750 and the Council's legal costs with Baily Gibson.</i> <i>The Council also agrees that it will make no claim to the small area of land, roughly triangular in shape, lying between the north western corner of Roundheads Wood and the Forty Green Road which was once part of the entrance sweep to Stony Lane but has been fenced into Roundheads Wood by Mr Charles Pitcher since the mid 1980s.</i></p> <p>Potters Cross <i>Ask Tom Barron to sweep gullies clear of leaves.</i></p>
3) WOODS	<p>Common Wood - The Clerk and local member Cllr Morley met Alison Perry (Rights of Way Officer) on FP 66 between Penn Road and the wood entrance to review its state and to see if it could be improved for disabled access. <i>Await Alison Perry's report.</i></p> <p>Penn Wood - The Woodland Trust's manager, Loren Eldred, has reported several dead trees on the boundary with the Penn Street school field which he will be clearing.</p>
4) PONDS	<p>Widmer Pond - <i>Clearance party with the Chiltern Society is at 10am Sat 29 November.</i></p> <p>The minutes of the Joint Meeting with CWPC of 8 Sep 08 were reviewed, noting that there were proposed new byelaw- making procedures in the pipeline and that the two councils would have to agree if any were to be</p>

	<p>applied to the pond as well as agree any costs if they were to be shared. Letter to CWPC.</p> <p>Potters Cross Pond - No date for clearance fixed. <i>Silt and Oil traps have not been cleared despite constant requests.</i></p> <p>Penn Street Pond - The cleared pond is now full.</p> <p>Gawde Water - <i>Chiltern Society clearance date is Sat 14 Feb at 10 am</i></p> <p>Wash Pond - A work party will be needed in due course</p> <p>Sheep Washing Pond, Knotty Green - Debbie Marsden organised a local clearance party on 26 Feb 08.</p> <p>Pistles Pond CWPC Joint Meeting suggested investigating the acquisition of Penn School's derelict land to the north of the pond, but it was not felt that this would be a useful addition.</p>
<p>5) OTHER MATTERS</p>	<p><i>Making & Enforcement of Byelaws</i></p> <p>We have received a consultation document from the Department for Communities and Local Government entitled <i>The making and enforcement of byelaws</i>. Our comments are required by 20 Nov 08.</p> <p>The intention is to make byelaws easier to understand and enforce by devolving power to local communities. Following this current consultation, Regulations will be made under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 which will establish new procedures enabling parish councils to make byelaws without the present need for scrutiny by central government and confirmation by the Secretary of State. Central Government's role will be confined to publishing good practice guidance and model byelaws.</p> <p>Byelaws generally relate to a particular locality where they require something to be done or not to be done. They are only needed where there are not already express powers in primary legislation and even then only after all avenues such as voluntary schemes have been exhausted. The fullest possible consultation with local people and interest groups via notice boards, local newspapers, web sites, and so on must be undertaken before any new byelaws can be introduced and the Parish Council has to be clear about the reasons why it considers that a byelaw is the best way to address the particular problem.</p> <p>They also propose replacing the present enforcement through Magistrates' Courts by fixed penalties (£50 to £80). The issuing and enforcement of fixed penalties would be through designated employees of the parish council who have first completed a recognised training course. Parish Councillors cannot do this. PCSOs may well be the best bet for many smaller parish councils without employees.</p> <p>We would have to revoke our existing byelaws and there is a procedure for this. There has been some preliminary discussion about the need for a byelaw to control fishing on Widmer Pond, but clearly we will have to await the completion of these regulations and then consider whether a byelaw is the best way forward.</p> <p><i>/t was agreed that we should comment In favour of these proposals.</i></p>

Don Millar Memorial Fund

The Chiltern society has a fund to support and encourage local conservation projects endorsed by the Parish Council, such as ponds, hedges, trees, footpaths, hire of equipment, notice boards etc.

Joint Meeting with CWPC

The last meeting was on 8 Sep 08. The next is suggested for January. *Agree a meeting date.*

NERC Act 2006

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 came into law on 1 Oct 06 and creates a duty for every public authority to conserve biodiversity (i.e. wild plants, animals and their habitats). For example, we are advised to consider:

Allotments - to discourage pesticides and herbicides, create ponds for amphibians, woodpiles for hedgehogs, and install bird and bat boxes. *Consult Greg Hopkins.*

Commons - manage accordingly. Create wild areas where possible.

Highways - leave grassed verges to grow long and set seed.

Hedges - consider birds nesting needs when cutting.

BBOWT have produced a guide for local authorities on their website at

www.bbwt.org.uk *Consult John Smiley*

B474 hedges - *Ask Penn Estate about laying hedge between Penn Court and Penn Ridge. Also leading up to the Crown from opposite Gatemoor.*

High voltage cable, Penn Street - The 132,00 volt cable running along the edge of Penn Street common is leaking from the protective oil surround, but the leak was located at first dig. *Check ground is re-turfed after it has settled down.*