



**MINUTES OF THE COMMONS & HAMS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 21st JULY 2016 AT 10.00AM
AT KEMPSEY COMMUNITY CENTRE**

PRESENT: - Cllr Waller, Cllr Pugh, Cllr Ferguson and Cllr Geens.

IN ATTENDANCE: - Two members of the public present – Nancy Morris, Prospect Cottage and Andrea Halford, Kempsey Common.

1. Apologies: Cllr Michael and Cllr Bannister, accepted

2. Declaration of Interests:

1. Register of Interests: Councillors' were reminded of the need to update their register of interests.
2. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) – None
3. Other Disclosable Interests (ODI) –None

3. Minutes: The minutes of Commons & Hams Committee of 10th June 2016

Having been previously circulated, these were agreed by a vote of the Committee and signed as a true and correct record.

Standing Orders were suspended for public question time. Notes on the public discussion are attached below. Standing Orders were thereafter re-imposed.

4. Ashmoor Common Management Plan and other issues

As this was Cllr Ferguson's first meeting on this Committee, the background to the issues were explained. Cllr Pugh offered a site visit for Cllr Ferguson.

4.1 Grazing plan: There has been a lot of vegetative growth and Cllr Pugh felt more cows were needed to graze the rushes. Rob Harvard, Natural England (NE), is yet to respond regarding location and funding for a watering hole for the cattle in the mid-section area of the Common. Without a source of water they cannot graze the mid-section. There was a discussion about ways to create a water source. Cllr Waller asked if pumping water out of the stream would work. Cllr Pugh to ask Chris Gove.

4.2 Ragwort control: Ragwort is still infesting the same locations on Ashmoor Common though plant growth is much less vigorous this year. It was felt that waiting until the August PC meeting for full approval of expenditure would result in treatment being too late. It was decided to contact Dave Mansell to carry out ragwort control up to maximum expenditure of £250. Proposed by Chairman, Seconder: Cllr Pugh. Unanimously agreed.

4.3 Rushes: Chris Gove to be asked to top rushes (will provide winter foraging).

4.4 Marker posts: Some of the steel posts that mark the underground water gauges are missing. Collision with the water gauges could damage maintenance equipment or cause accidents. The posts need to be replaced by Natural England, Rob Harvard to be contacted.

4.5 Brambles: Brambles need cutting before the onset of winter autumn – Roger Martin to be asked for a quote.

4.6 Leaning power pole. Cllr Pugh will locate the pole and Chairman to ask the Parish Office to contact Western Power Distribution.

Action

Cllr Pugh
& Cllr
Ferguson

Cllr Pugh

Cllr Pugh

Cllr Pugh

Cllr Pugh

Cllr Pugh

Cllr Pugh
& Cllr
Waller.
Cllr Pugh

4.7 Broken stile: The broken stile has been reported to Worcester County Council (WCC) . WCC may need a reminder to take action.

Cllr Pugh

4.8 Orchid count: No update on orchid count.

4.9 Repairs to the coral. One on the posts supporting one of the gates is lose due to age and needs replacing. One quote is available, but others may be required.

5. Ashmoor Common fence The Teal Turf fence needs improving at various points. The Chairman has written to Rob Harvard asking if Natural England will finance a new fence and left a telephone message but has received no reply. The Chairman to try to arrange a meeting with Natural England on this and other Ashmoor matters.

Cllr Waller.

6. Update on the issues of horses on Kempsey Common

This item was substantially dealt with during public question time.

7. Use of Kempsey Common by GetOutStayOut

The Chairman had written to Anne Humphries but had no response. Cllr Geens to follow up.

Cllr Geens

8. Update on maintenance work on the other Commons

Cllr Pugh updated the meeting on the work carried out on Normoor Common - the rough area had been cut, however the access to Willow Cottage needs to be cleared and the overgrowing chestnut trees need to be looked at – Cllr Pugh will investigate.

Cllr Pugh

Both Normoor and Stonehall Commons are awaiting their annual cutting. Maintenance work on the anti-trespass ditches and verges on Stonehall Common has been on hold awaiting the Clerk’s return to office but now needs progressing.

Cllr Waller.

9. Budget and Expenditure 2016/17

Deferred to next meeting.

Deferred.

10. Any Other Business

Cllr Geens asked if Committee members should have specific responsibility and be assigned a Common. The Chair responded that this had previously been the case but the Committee had been one Cllr short up until Cllr Ferguson had joined and also some of the Commons required much more work. This matter and the matter of ‘points of contact’ will be raised at the next meeting.

Raise at next meeting

Cllr Pugh felt it was important to know current situation on each of the Commons and to circulate information. Cllr Geens thanked him for his report on Ashmoor and asked for it to be circulated electronically.

Cllr Pugh

Cllr Pugh asked about a ‘thank you’ letter to Mr Hodgetts for his help with the cow escape. The Chairman said he would do this.

Cllr Waller

Open Spaces Society Membership renewal – the idea had been to try this for a year and review. The Chairman felt that their response when contacted for advice had been poor and recommended that before renewal that he contact society and speak to them about improving their response in the future.

Cllr Waller

Meeting Closed 10:56am
Hazel Robinson: Minute taker

Signed Chairman..... Date

Notes on public question time.

Mrs A. Halford asked about the District Council's position on byelaws on common land. The Chair replied that MHDC's position is that they are happy to enforce existing byelaws but due to conflicts with statutory laws are unable to create new ones to prevent supplementary feeding or removal of stock during the winter. MHDC had requested evidence of all the details of what was happening on the common and details of horse owners. The Clerk had been tasked with writing to owners for details but was currently on sick leave.

Mrs N Morris asked if no new byelaws could be enforced then what was plan of action. The Chair responded that evidence would be needed to show that the animals were acting aggressively towards public resulting in incidents, for them to be removed (Animals Act). There was currently not enough specific evidence to show which horses were causing the issue. Freeze branding or putting straps on horses was discussed to allow identification. Freeze branding was preferred but would need owner's permission. The next step is create a list of horses and their details to enable identification of problem animals. Cllr Geens said he would write to owners in the Clerk's absence.