

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

AMENITY LAND COMMITTEE

Report of the meeting held on Thursday 16 February 2012
in the Council Chamber, Cock Lane, Tylers Green, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8DS

Present;	Cllr K Wood - Chairman	Cllr C Jordan
	Cllr S Digby	Cllr M Patel
	Cllr I Forbes	Cllr B Sadler
	Cllr J Herschel	Cllr L Willis

There was one member of the public present

Minutes

1. Apologies for absence.

Cllr. Jean Johnson, Cllr. J Bailey, Cllr. J White

2. Declarations of members' interests in Items on the agenda.

Cllr. L Willis, item 11: Payment of closed graveyard maintenance grant to St Peters, Loudwater

3. Railway Land - Conservation Area Presentation

The committee RECEIVED a 30 minute presentation from Mr Stan Armstrong about the deer, foxes and badgers to be found in Lower Fennels Wood and along the council-owned railway land in Loudwater. The chairman expressed her thanks and that of the committee to Mr Armstrong for the informative presentation and also for his kind agreement to show the council's Warden the location of known dens and sets so that when undertaking work in the area we would disturb them as little as possible.

4. Tylers Green Common rejuvenation

The committee NOTED the on-going work on the Front Common to improve the grass sward and that setting bollards to deter parking on the grass verge along Bank Road track had been completed. While even those affected by the work are pleased to see the council taking steps to make-good and then protect the verges from future damage, some would have preferred to see metal posts used, matching those along Church Road East. Members however expressed their satisfaction with the timber posts, as previously used by the council along the track on the Back Common on Church Road opposite the Horse & Jockey public house, but asked that the bollards on Bank Road be reduced in height to match those on Church Road once residents had got used to and would be aware of the posts when reversing out of their properties.

5. Widmer Pond rejuvenation

The committee NOTED that work to rejuvenate the water-side margin and eroded areas was to be undertaken by Manor Estates and would start in March.

6. Protection of Amenity Land from damage by vehicles and building works

Members unanimously ENDORSED the council's existing policies in respect of protecting council property or land in our care from damage or degradation and INSTRUCTED the Clerk to robustly assert and enforce the council's policies and rights either as the landowner or our obligations as lessee.

The committee APPROVED the proposal to require those who wished to undertake works adjacent to our land and required access to obtain a permit from the council and put up a

bond before starting work to cover any anticipated damage that was not put right by the permit holder at the conclusion of the project. In drawing up a scheme the clerk was directed to consider how best to include a fee-based, time-dependent condition so as to encourage early completion of the works.

The clerk was further INSTRUCTED that when aware of a planning application adjacent to our land and that might impact on it, to immediately write to the applicant and advise them not only of the council's policies in respect of protection of our property or that in our care and the possible need for a permit, but also of any betterment to which the council on behalf of the community might benefit under the 'Cambridge formula'.

7. Old Forge Bank rejuvenation and maintenance

Members unanimously ENDORSED the work being undertaken by the council's grounds team to rejuvenate and improve the bank beside this river-side walk between Old Forge Road and Station Road, and in particular replacement of the safety fence beside the steep bank.

8. Kingswood Car Park - damage to railing, tree and tarmac surface

Members NOTED that the council was in touch with Environmental Services at Wycombe District Council to have the railings and tree damaged by their contractors put right.

Members discussed the concerns that had been raised about both the fly-tipping that was taking place in the car park (no doubt attracted by the recycling containers that had steadily proliferated over the years since the council first agreed for glass recycling containers to be placed on site) and the serious damage that was being caused to the surface of the car park by the heavy vehicles being used by contractors to empty the containers.

The clerk was INSTRUCTED to review what arrangements had been formally agreed for recycling facilities in the car park; to determine the respective responsibilities for the maintenance of the area and to bring forward for the consideration of the committee options for the future that would mitigate the costs to the parish of assisting WDC and BCC in achieving their obligations to meet recycling targets set by central government.

Members NOTED and supported that the council had written to Environmental Services at Wycombe District Council thanking them for the efforts they had made over the Christmas and New Year period to help ensure that the car park did not become a total eyesore for residents living nearby or those driving past.

9. Kingswood boundary encroachment

Members NOTED a verbal report from the clerk that suggestions that residents had encroached on the council's land should in the absence of proof be treated with an open mind. Nor should it be assumed that those who had private gateways opening onto council-owned had done so without a permit from the council. Examination of the council's records as part of the formal registration of council-owned property with the Land Registry had shown that many adjoining properties had valid permits, though the council had not in recent times invoiced them for the annual fee that may be due to the council for the permit.

The clerk was INSTRUCTED that as and when staff resources permit, but within 12 months, arrange for a survey of the boundaries of council-owned properties and to document and regularise what was found so as to protect from illegal encroachment by adjacent residents on community-owned property in the trust of the council.

Members ENDORSED the council's renewed efforts to robustly protect the council's property from encroachment (including land in our ownership or care) and RE-CONFIRMED the council's policy of requiring those who wish to open up an access onto our land first obtain a licence to do so and RECOMMENDED for consideration by the council's F&GP Committee that

the council now charge £50 for new licences to cover both the premium for the concession and the council's administrative costs; and an annual fee of £30 to cover the council's costs of inspection of the status of the access and maintaining the register of licences.

The clerk was DIRECTED to bring forward proposals of suitable designs of gateways for consideration of the committee so as to ensure that the visual harmony of the council's boundaries were maintained rather than spoilt by poor ad-hoc construction and appearance.

10. Questions from council members and the public

No questions were asked by either members of the public present or by councillors.

11. Accounts for Payment.

Members considered the list of accounts for payment, direct debits and Payflow transfers and agreed their payment. The list to be attached to the minutes so that they are open to the scrutiny of residents, in line with the council's policy of full transparency and accountability.

The chairman thanked members for their attendance at the meeting which ended at 8.55pm.

Date of the next meeting of the committee: Tuesday 15 May at 7.30pm

Signed

Date