

SILCHESTER COMMON MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Committee met at the Calleva Arms on Monday 7th April 2014.

Present: Anne Tynegate, Paul Baker, Graham Dennis, John Harrison, Jon Saltmarsh, Bob Radley, Steve Spillane (Chair Silchester Parish Council)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Item		Action
1.	<u>Apologies</u> Chris Lee	
2.	<u>Minutes of last meeting</u> As per the process instigated in March 2013, the minutes from 9 th December 2013 were deemed to have been approved 2 weeks after circulation as no comments received. John Harrison to contact Maxta to remind her to put on the website.	JH
3.	<u>Matters arising not covered elsewhere</u> Action from Section 4 of previous minutes – Complete All actions from 6 – complete with exception that an eye wash is still required All actions from 8 – complete. John reported that he had been told that an unnamed dog had been responsible for at least some of the damage to the gate; as it was no longer in the area this should cease.	JS
4.	<u>Accounts / Budget</u> Anne circulated a summary of the current financial position. The current balance is around £25k which will reduce to around £8k with all the planned expenditure over the next year (see details later in these minutes). We need to keep £6k for contingencies such as late payments from RPA. The HLS work we need to do is likely to be completed 12 months early. Therefore final HLS payments due within the first 5 year scheme could be utilised on other capital projects. The parish council have agreed that the SPS claims will now be dealt with by Fergus Hodge of Simmons & Co. Graham reported that in the future SPS may be limited only to those who farm. As we do not plan to farm the cattle, we may withdraw from the SPS scheme under these conditions. It was agreed we have up to £14k immediately available to fund additional contractor work.	
5.	<u>Silchester Volunteer Group Report</u> Work party organisers rota will be allocated when we set dates for next year in the September meeting. Jon confirmed we are making use of those who volunteered to turn up early to start fires etc.	

Insurance for chainsaws was discussed; our new insurers assume we currently work to the HSE guidance unless otherwise agreed. This places limitations on what Andy Alcock can do with his current training certification. John agreed to write to Chris Lee and Andy to agree a summary of how we use chainsaws on the Common that will then be used to inform our new insurers.

JH

Steve Spillane recommended any future retraining uses the Berkshire training services and could provide a contact.

The committee extended their thanks to Paul Baker for organising a very successful and well supported curry evening.

Steve and John noted that we were perceived by the Parish Council to be spending too much on our volunteers and needed to be seen to be trimming our budget. It was noted that our policy of providing a single drink after a working party had remained unchanged for over 10 years; what had changed was the level of take-up as the working parties and post working party social activity had become more popular – this was a measure of the value and success of our current arrangements. It was further noted that we had already cut back on sandwiches and rolls in the interests of economy. Nevertheless, we would consider the next social event in the light of this feedback and also seek to ensure it remained inclusive.

The committee discussed a forthcoming meeting with Mr Matthews to improve dialogue about our use of the tarmac drive and use of Common Land.

6. **HLS**

The committee agreed the Area near Impstone Road should be done next using a contractor already selected through competition provided this work continued to offer value for money. This would be reported to the Parish Council.

JH

We were still awaiting the capital works payment for the last work.

Graham advised not to treat all the cut birch because two moths like to nest there and we are currently the best site in Hampshire for their preferred habitat. It was agreed that around 10% of the cut birch should be left untreated.

John noted we had received another vote of confidence from Natural England following Harold Makant's latest visit.

7. **Work Areas**

New work areas were discussed in some detail. It was agreed that we should look to undertake the following activities:

- Using machinery to cut back growth around school playing field and to widen the path between Sallow Copse and Tinkers.
- Improve surface on WRNS ride, Sallow Copse footpath and the hollows under gates where puddles appear.

Anne to contact David to arrange

AT

The mud at the end of footbridges was discussed, extending them had simply moved the problem and we should instead try putting hoggin down. Steve to ask Richard Westwood (the new Parish footpaths officer) to survey and the committee pre-authorized action to address this problem following the results of the survey.

SS

There was also a need for a bridge building working party. Jon agreed to arrange for May/June

JS

8. **Cattle Report**

The remaining cattle are in good health.

Jay Hunt is putting together a group of 6 new cattle for delivery around May. We need to ensure they have all passed their TB tests in advance of delivery.

The annual inflation linked pay rise for the grazier was discussed. It was agreed to increase payment to £410 per month based on the excellent service we have received.

9. **Risk Assessment**

The risk assessment had been updated and circulated to the whole committee for comment or assent. No comments had been received and so it was now formally approved by the committee. The risk register was now included in the front cover of the signing on sheet for work parties. The committee thanked Anne for her work developing this.

10. **Karslake Pond Update**

The area around the pond had been sprayed and the dead growth removed. The decaying bench remains an issue for the parish council. Graham will check the pond for any signs of Cressida.

GD

David Glover will be arranging a repeat of his newt hunt for 11-12 May 2014.

11. **Any other business**

The committee discussed the future of Lordswood and agreed it would be good if it could be brought into public ownership either as part of Silchester Common or through Hampshire Wildlife Trust. Steve would pursue with Parish Council.

SS

The issue of flying birds of prey on the common was also discussed. This did not appear to present any issues within the remit of the SCMC although we would keep a watchful eye on any impact on the existing environment.

12. **Date of Next Meeting**

The date for the next SCMC meeting will be 8th September 2014.

All

