

Bringsty Common Manorial Court

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting on Wednesday 3rd May 2017 at Whitbourne Village Hall

Present:

Allan Corder (chairman), Tom Fisher (vice-chairman), Mike Harrison (treasurer), Sue Long, Paul Friend (Brockhampton PC), Carol Friend, Tim Phillips, Peter Hall, Claire Hall, Cllr. Nigel Shaw (ward councillor), Jenny Creek (clerk)

1. Apologies for absence

Anne Evans (Whitbourne PC)

2. Chairman's report

The chairman had nothing to report additional to the agenda

3. Treasurer's report

- No further expenditure has been incurred on Drovers' Pond so the sum available for maintenance is still £2469.82.
- One of the expense cheques for the A.G.M. has not been cashed.
- We have had a letter from Secure Trust stating that the interest on our account has dropped to 1.25%.
- Dave Manton has decided to charge us for 2015 and 2016. His charges per year are £1256.40, including VAT, making a total of £2512.80.
- Spreadsheet accurate (including cheques not cashed) as of 03/05/2017

4. Official Business

None

5. Parish Reports

a. Ward Councillor - Nigel Shaw

Nothing to report

b. Brockhampton - Paul Friend

- The new clerk is settling in well.
- There have been discussions about various issues relating to Clater Park which will be resolved.
- Paul apologised that the request from BCMC for £200 towards the maintenance of the football pitch was omitted from the agenda. This was due to an oversight. He promised it would be raised at the next meeting.

c. Whitbourne – Anne Evans

In the absence of the Whitbourne representative there were no matters to discuss.

6. Public Questions

Dugy Bullock had expressed concern about the lack of a fire break around Marley Cottage. There has been some difficulty in getting a contractor who can do this job because of the lie of the land and the presence of a pile of brash on one side of the site. In his capacity as ward councillor Nigel has offered to speak to the occupants to see if they themselves are concerned.

Action: talk to the residents of Marley Cottage Nigel

7. Matters Arising from Minutes of last meeting

a) constitution – any response from HCC?

There has been no response from Herefordshire County Council. Allan asked Tom, as chairman of the constitution sub-committee, if he would write to George Thompson again. Tom felt we should not do anything until we have had their response. Paul suggested we should consult their corporate lawyer. Nigel said that George is expected to visit the Common shortly so he offered to broach the subject with him again. This was accepted.

Action: talk to George (again) Nigel

b) hay disposal – meeting with contractor

Nigel has not yet had the opportunity to visit the waste disposal site so has not spoken to the contractors yet.

Allan said that there are one or two people on the common who might be interested in taking the hay, even though it is of poor quality. It is possible that they might want it baled rather than loose. The cost of doing this might be quite high, but might be less than the commercial purchase price. Ashley could produce small bales. If they are interested, they should be encouraged to inspect the crop. Any ragwort would have to be removed. Allan agreed to speak to the interested parties to see how much they might want and then we can decide if it is sensible to ask Ashley to bale at least some of it. Nigel agreed still to talk to the contractors about incinerating it.

**Actions: talk to the residents interested in the hay after
Paul has obtained a price from Hugh and Ashley Allan**

talk to the incinerating contractors. Nigel

c) scrub work – is it done?

Paul said that he had not yet heard from Ashley about this work. Sue was concerned that it may be a bit late now to do it because of nesting birds.

d) grant from Natural England for dormouse boxes

Allan approached them about this but was told that there was no more money available.

e) owl boxes – meeting with Owl & Hawk Trust representative

Paul walked round the common with two people from the Trust. They liked the site and suggested that we should put up about 5 barn owl boxes. Paul offered to make these. They suggested that we should try and get people interested in sponsoring the boxes. In view of the current uncertainty about future funding, Allan thought this was a good idea and suggested that something should be put in the Commoner asking for sponsors and detailing

the locations where they will be sited. Paul will estimate the costs and notify Tom. Work will not proceed until we have sponsorship in place to cover the costs and suitable sites have been identified.

Actions: cost the project Paul
Article in Commoner Tom

- f) hedgehogs
- release date: at 5 p.m. on Sunday 7th May. The representative from Hereford Wildlife Rescue will be at the Live & Let Live to give a short talk prior to this.
- fabrication of hog house: completed
- g) dog fouling – survey and notices
Tom confirmed that he had put notices in the Commoner and Off the Record. Nigel did an extensive survey of the Common on 25/04 and found a total of 11 deposits, two of which had been bagged and dumped. The concensus was that this is not a huge problem. No further action.
- h) woodland management scheme
The process to apply for a grant under this scheme has been started. Dan Wencek will put in an application for a grant to draw up a woodland management plan. This grant is for £1000 which covers the cost of the planning. Only if this is successful will he then create the plan. Once this is finalised we can then apply for a grant for the work. The plan will not commit us to anything. We will have to consider if the potential grant is sufficient to cover the work suggested on the plan. If this all goes through the grant would be available in 2019. The areas of woodland covered by the plan have to be excluded from our application to NE for grants under the new stewardship scheme.
This item is ongoing.
- i) speed limit on A44
Tom confirmed that the press release had been picked up by The Ledbury Reporter, The Hereford Times and BBC Hereford and Worcester. He and Allan did a live interview for the BBC. The Hereford Times came and took pictures and interviewed them, as did the Birmingham free post. Regrettably the parish councils did not see fit to support us. Natural England are still talking about grazing on the common. Allan hopes that the fact that we have tried (and failed) to get support for a speed limit will make it clear that this is not an option.
There will be no further action. Tom suggested a note in the Commoner to thank all the people who supported this idea.
- j) new stewardship scheme – progress?
Allan started by thanking all the people who helped with the work: Peter, Paul, Tom and Nigel. It was a good team effort and the application has been submitted by the deadline. Confirmation of receipt has been received. If the application is approved then a process of discussion with Natural England will be needed to decide on what grants we can have.

This item will be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

k) This year's mowing

In order to keep our costs down, Allan proposed that we should cut the fire breaks as usual, then cut only half of the large grass areas. If people are interested in having the hay (see item 7b above) we may be able to get rid of it all. Nigel mentioned the difficulties of timing the cut so that it can be dried and baled. Paul suggested asking Ashley how much he would charge for doing the complete process. He thought that Ashley might express an interest in the hay. Allan asked Paul if he would talk to Ashley. It was agreed that half of each area would be cut leaving half uncut for the wildlife and to seed. Nigel asked about the possibility of topping the uncut areas in late summer to prevent the thistles and docks from seeding, but in the end it was agreed that it would be left untouched to see what happens. The grassland areas will need to have the perimeters mown (even the halves that are left un-mown) to minimise bracken encroachment.

Paul mentioned the ragwort should be pulled out. Paul offered to talk to Hugh as well to explain what we are planning for this year. This was accepted.

Tom asked if Brackenburn will be coming back. Allan confirmed that that will return in late August.

Action: talk to Ashley and Hugh

Paul

l) update on enforcement issues

- abandoned car. A reminder has been sent to George Thompson
- Fencing at Primrose cottage. This has been removed
- Waste water from pub. An easement has been granted for works to ensure that waste water from the pub is properly treated and then goes into a soakaway. The council have promised a speedy resolution to this problem.

8. New Business

There was no new business to discuss

9. AOB

- a) Allan has received a letter from the Open Spaces society asking for a donation to their legal fund. He asked if the committee wished to agree to this. Nigel pointed out that constitutionally we are not allowed to do so. We already pay them an annual sum of £45, so it was agreed that we would not make a further payment.
- b) Mike mentioned a notice he had seen about another motocross event but it was pointed out that it was not in the same field as before. The event which took place allied to the Festival of Speed was very noisy; however, it is not really Manorial Court business as it did not take place on the common. There was a general discussion about the nuisance caused by these events.
- c) Nigel mentioned that he had repainted the trig point on the Jubilee.
- d) Allan said that the newly planted lime trees on the Jubilee appear to be doing well.
- e) Paul mentioned that he and Claire are booked on the dormouse training day.

- f) Tom said that Mike Davies has pruned all the fruit trees. This was acknowledged by the committee.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was then closed.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held in the small room of Whitbourne village hall on Wednesday 13th September 2017 at 7.30 p.m.