

Chorleywood Parish Council: Open Spaces Committee -

**Notes by GH (in attendance as a member of the public)
of matters relevant to Chorleywood Common
raised at the meeting on 3 July 2012**

Play equipment: presentation by Mr Hope, Head of Leisure, TRDC – please see separate notes.

Cllr Mrs Jarrett in the chair; apologies received from Cllr Edwards.

Matters arising – grazing: on the basis of Full Council’s decision that grazing is to go ahead, Cllr Mrs Worrall raised the questions whether the Working Party should continue in existence and when the “slotties” should be installed, and pointed out that the costings and contractor’s engagement needed to be finalised. The Committee agreed unanimously that the Working Party should continue in existence (subject to the agreement of those of its members who were not present at the meeting) until grazing begins. It was understood that work was about to start on making the slotties; it was intended to mark their position on the ground a week before installation began, and to give details on the website, to enable any queries to be resolved in advance. The Ranger was confident that the problems previously encountered would not be repeated with the slotties and posts now intended to be used. Countryside Management Service had suggested the names of two additional fencing contractors who could be considered; Cllr Mrs Sutherland emphasised the need for the contractor to be reliable and locally-based. In case of emergency, the compartment could be divided into two; it was not intended to use electric fencing, but that could be brought on if essential, and if so would be battery-powered. The wet weather meant that the grass was growing fast and timing would be critical; it was expected that the orchids would probably finish flowering by the end of August, before the start of the intended grazing period.

[Note: please see also the record of the Extraordinary Meeting of Open Spaces on 7 August, for the decision and the reasons for the decision not to graze this year.]

Ranger’s Report. *[The report is extensive and detailed – I have a copy if anyone wishes to see it – and the following appear to be the points of particular interest.]* The roadworks at the traffic lights next to Top Common Pond North, discussed at the previous meeting, appeared not in the event to have had a detrimental effect on the pond or, particularly, on the newts breeding there. The newts have done well generally; there have even been Great Crested Newt eggs in the Dew Pond. A possible site for a new pond has been identified. The FoCC Pond Dipping event appeared to have been very informative for the children attending; fish, tadpoles, invertebrates and one Alpine Newt had been caught; the fish were re-homed off the Common and the others returned to the pond. The silt analysis at Christchurch Pond has shown significant contamination including lead and benzene, the result of the pond receiving run-off from the road; the silt will have to be disposed of as contaminated waste, and the Chilterns Conservation

Board will meet half the cost, and if the Council's application for "Higher Level Stewardship" funding is successful (the result of that application is awaited), that will cover the other half. Work on moving the drain and intercepting the run-from the road will be done in-house.

One of the Rangers gave a Guided Walk for children from Christchurch School; this may become a regular event. The children were disappointed that there were no cows on the Common.

The orchids were in flower in Larks Meadow, in the areas where they normally flower and in two further areas where they were not seen last year. The Common Broomrape has also spread. In the absence of mechanical mowing, anthills have developed well, and this could provide suitable habitat for *Lysandra* ("Blue") butterflies.

The French drain at the cricket pavilion is still causing concern for the Cricket Club; the Rangers are not willing to dig deeper for fear of damaging services and have advised that if the Cricket Club wish to do so, that is up to them. (Cllr Liley suggested that it might be beneficial to use a larger size of gravel in the French drain.)

Litter on the Common: the Cricket Club had asked the Committee to consider what could be done to discourage leaving of litter on the cricket field when it is not being used for cricket. It was explained that the Rangers do pick up litter daily, and members of the public also do so; the Golf Club also have the same problem. Signs in the parking areas might assist; and the PCSOs can also use their influence.

Christchurch School: licence to use the Common for after-school activities. The Committee agreed unanimously to renew the licence for 2 years. It was suggested that the school could be asked to remind parents, and users of the crèche, to pick up after their dogs; bags for the purpose are available in the Junction.

Veolia borehole: negotiations on the licence fee are ongoing. After discussion, the Committee decided to propose an annual fee of £1000 for each of the three years the borehole is likely to be needed.

Parking control at War Memorial Hall and Shepherds Bridge permissive areas: the Committee agreed to accept the terms negotiated with the contractor, to include annual payments of £10 plus VAT per warning sign (4 signs are proposed) after the first year of the contract. The new arrangements will start after the summer holidays, probably in the first week of September, and will be previously publicised on the website and through a press release.

Chorleywood Scouts sponsored bike ride: the Scouts have asked permission to hold a sponsored bike ride on the Common on Sunday 15 September; they will arrange insurance, first aid, marshals and a risk assessment. The Committee agreed unanimously to give permission.

Chalk Grassland day: the Rangers reported on their attendance at a chalk grasslands day run by the Chilterns Conservation Board in the Whitchurch / Streatly area.

“Four Year Vision”: the Committee discussed its priorities following the consideration of Four Year Vision projects by Full Council. It was reported that Mr Cattle and the Friends of the Common had arranged to undertake a butterfly survey on 16 July, weather permitting. *[Note: surveys in fact took place on 13 July and 2 August.]*

Dog fouling: proposal from TRDC. A report had been received very recently from TRDC recommending that the District and Parish Councils collaborate on introducing Dog Control Orders covering Chorleywood House Estate (TRDC) and Chorleywood Common (CWPC) under the Clean Neighbourhoods etc Act 2005: the immediate request from TRDC was for the Parish Council’s consent to TRDC going ahead with a public consultation and questionnaire; the Committee unanimously agreed. It was explained that problems had arisen with dog fouling *[as frequently mentioned in these notes]* and the numbers of dogs exercised, under less than perfect control, by some professional dog-walkers in particular. Dog Control Orders, if made, would limit the number of dogs any one person could exercise at the same time – the suggestion in the Report from TRDC is a maximum of 4 – and enable the PCSOs, or other staff authorised to enforce the Order, to require dogs to be on leads. Since professional and other dog-walkers may use both the Common and the Estate on the same outing, it is obviously desirable for the same rules to apply to both. On the Common, enforcement would be by the PCSOs; as a last resort they could issue fixed penalty notices (probably £65 per offence) for having too many dogs, failing to control them, or failing to clear up after them.

GH

With apologies for delay!

Please see also:

- *Notes of Mr Hope’s presentation on play equipment*
- *Notes of Open Spaces meeting on 7 August re grazing.*