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## 1 COMMUNITY PLAN

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From Monday 17 November residents of Chorleywood have been receiving a questionnaire which gives them the opportunity to voice their opinions on the future of Chorleywood.

The Friends of the Common have been active members of the committee tasked with producing this document, with input on Planning and Open Spaces.

The questionnaire has been divided into various sections, Planning, Leisure, Education, Open Spaces, Safety & Security, Health & Care, Business and Transport & Traffic.

The document, which has been hand delivered, can also be completed online. Various questions under each subject are being asked and an opportunity to "have your say" has also been included.

The results from the survey will be used to shape the future of Chorleywood. Our community will be able to implement suggested changes via the Parish Council. This will be done by working with our Parish Councillors. If any changes are needed that are the responsibility of other organisations, the Parish Council will lobby on our behalf.

The results from the plan should improve Chorleywood as a place to live. Planners and other agencies should take note of our concerns and wishes. Apathy towards the future will be reduced, as we will have a path set out before us. Pride in the parish will be enhanced.

Please don't ignore this survey, make your thoughts known. Closing date: Monday 15 December.

Bob Sutherland

Friends of the Common

On Thursday 27 November FOCC members will be able to come to a Forum in Chorleywood Library starting at 8 p.m. and ask questions of a panel of members of the Community Plan working party.

The link to complete the questionnaire online is

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Chorleywoodsurvey>

More information on the Community Plan can be found at:

<http://www.chorleywood-pc.gov.uk>

or

<http://mycommunityrights.org.uk/neighbourhood-planning>

## 2 WASP SPIDER

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The Wasp Spider (*argiope bruennichi*) has been recorded for the first time on the Common this summer. This striking spider was discovered in south east England in the 1920's as an arrival from the continent and its range has been steadily expanding northwards. It is the female who is so unmistakable, whilst the male is small and brown – living dangerously at mating time by choosing a moment during the female's moult when her jaws are soft – but not all manage to get this right and are consumed. It is likely that the change in the pattern of mowing on the Common has enabled this species to establish a foothold, as more grass is being mown less frequently than before – in this case above the fallen oak at Shepherd's Bridge.

## 3 GRAZING UPDATE

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The autumn grazing period is now over. Initially there were six cows, but two of them had to go home early because of problems with their collars. (The supplier of the equipment is being asked to make sure it does not happen again.) The cattle did not eat very much of the shrubby scrub on the "lower chalk slope" (between Larks Meadow and the Railway Field) and in the "May Bushes" (on the Shepherds Bridge side), so there has been a "cut and lift" of those areas. Nevertheless, the Ranger reports that the grazing will have had beneficial effects, particularly on invertebrate numbers, for next year. The cattle have to be trained to wear the collars and to learn about the invisible fences: training will take place during the winter, and the numbers will be increased for future grazing pe-

riods, eventually up to a dozen or so, which is expected to produce even better results.

The new piece of equipment in the Railway Field is a "cattle race", to hold a cow steady when adjustments to her collar are necessary; it is expected that over time, it will be cheaper to have a permanent cattle race available than to set up temporary hurdles every time it is necessary to hold a cow still.

One of our members commented that the edge of the grazing compartment could have been better marked on the Shepherds Bridge side; we passed the thought on to the Parish Council, and we understand that there will be more detailed signage in that area when grazing resumes next Spring.

## **4 PLAY AREA**

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The Parish Council decided in October to agree to re-open discussions with the Three Rivers District Council about the possibility of installing a Play Area, and has set up a Working Party to "*look at all possible sites within the Parish of Chorleywood for formal and informal play*" (i.e. anywhere, not just on the Common,) and report findings back to the Full Council. The Working Party consists of four Parish Councillors, one District Councillor and one representative each from the Residents Association, the Friends of Chorleywood Common, the Friends of Chorleywood House Estate, and Chorleywood Mums. The tenders obtained last year have expired, and if the project is to go forward, a suitable site will have to be identified and new designs obtained. Cllr Trevett explained to the Parish Council that for funding for the project to be available from Three Rivers, progress will have to be made before the Three Rivers budget meeting in February, though it will not be essential to reach a firm conclusion by then.

Anyone who has a suggestion for a possible suitable site for a Play Area, (not within 200 metres of any of the ponds on the Common,) please let us know and we will pass it on.

## **5 NATURE TRAIL**

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The Parish Council's initial application for Heritage Lottery funding for the Nature Trail proposal was unsuccessful: apparently plans for Cassiobury Park absorbed everything available for this area at that time! However, the Parish Council was encouraged to apply again, and is doing so.

## **6 SHEPHERDS BRIDGE AND THE CATTLE CREEP: TFL'S SUGGESTIONS**

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Shepherds Bridge is the responsibility of Transport for London, who have been discussing possible modifications to the structure with Hertfordshire Highways and Three Rivers: apparently it is feared, in view of the age of the bridge, that a vehicle colliding with the parapet might cause it to collapse onto the railway. The latest proposal, mentioned at the Parish Council meeting in October, is to place two kerbs in the carriageway, one on each side, to keep vehicles in the middle and away from the parapets.

Transport for London put a motion sensor in the Cattle Creep earlier this year, as a result of which they apparently believe it is well used by pedestrians, and they are considering installing lighting. The November meeting of the Open Spaces Committee felt some concern at this suggestion: depending on exactly what lighting equipment was used, there might be light pollution for Clements

Road and Cherry Tree Dell; and anyone walking, after dark, into a lighted area and out again will temporarily lose night vision. Also, the Cattle Creep is a badger run, so some of the movements detected may have been badgers rather than humans. The Committee decided to write to Transport for London asking for an explanation of exactly what is proposed, and why, because the suggestion of installing lights in that position has caused some concern. So "watch this space"; and of course anyone who wishes to do so is perfectly entitled to lobby the Parish Council or Transport for London.

## 7 ORCHIDS ON THE COMMON

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**Bee orchid:** this does not appear very often, or in large numbers; there were a few on the Common in 2014 – for the first time in about 10 years. It is named (obviously) for the appearance of its flowers. About 15" to 18" tall.



**Pyramidal orchid:** this is prolific on the Common; its main stronghold is the lower part of Larks Meadow, but it has spread to the slope above the Railway Field and to some other locations. About 6" tall.

## 8 PHOTO COMPETITION: "THE SEASONS ON THE COMMON"

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Chorleywood Common was designated as a Local Nature Reserve 10 years ago, in November 2004, and the Parish Council has decided to mark the event with a photographic competition open to residents of the Parish, with the theme of the passage of seasons on the Common. One picture will be chosen from the entries submitted each month, and the 12 winners will be used to create a calendar. There will be further details in Chorleywood Matters and on the Parish Council's website, and at the Council's stall on the late-night shopping evening.

## 9 FRIENDS OF CHORLEYWOOD HOUSE ESTATE NOVEMBER 2014

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It's been a good year on the Chorleywood House Estate. Entering by the gate opposite the cricket ground, the parkland sweeps down on the left, but was being encroached upon by scrub. A working

party has started to cut this back, removing masses of bramble and elder so that trees, notably a fine maple, are visible once more, and creating south-facing scallops to encourage bio-diversity.

Woodland work has also been done in the Community Woodland, beyond the football fields. Here young trees were planted 15 years ago, but once again scrub was choking the trees and obscuring the footpaths through the wood. There is still work to be done, and the volunteer working parties will continue through the winter.

Then there is the regeneration of the old artificial pond in The Dell, created for farm use and fed by the leat bringing surface water from the parkland. Volunteers, with help from both Parish and District, cleared out the sludge, repaired the pond edge, and planted irises at one end. Inspired by this, one of our members sponsored wood sculptures around the pond, so now there are owls, foxes, squirrels, a magnificent dragon-fly, an Old Man of the Woods and even friendly bears around the pool.

Why not come and join the volunteer working party? We meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday mornings each month, and there is a variety of tasks, some strenuous, many less so. We can promise good company, cake and the feeling of a job well done. Details from Tim Venner – [timvenner@aol.com](mailto:timvenner@aol.com), phone 01923 284320.

## 10 HELP NEEDED PLEASE!

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At the 2014 AGM, Michael Hyde took on the position of “Acting” Treasurer of the Friends of Chorleywood Common; he did not want to commit himself to doing that job indefinitely. Please will anyone who would be willing to take over as Treasurer, make yourself known to any member of the Committee; and if, before making a firm offer, you would like to find out more about what the job involves, please get in touch with Michael for enlightenment.

## 11 DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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27 November 2014 (Thursday)	Panel discussion on the Community Plan Questionnaire, 8.00 p.m. in Chorleywood Library
15 December 2014 (Monday)	Closing date for completing Community Plan Questionnaire
27 February 2015 (Friday)	Friends of Chorleywood Common Annual General Meeting, 8.00 p.m. in Chorleywood Library

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