

## 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 20 September 2016

**Agenda** at <http://www.chorleywood-pc.gov.uk/pdf/agendas/CWPC-Open-Spaces-Agenda-2016-09-20.pdf>

**Supporting papers** at <http://www.chorleywood-pc.gov.uk/pdf/agendas/CWPC-Open-Spaces-Agenda-Committee-Reports-2016-09-20.pdf>

**Committee membership:** following the bye-election in North Ward, Cllr Sarah Wright (one of the new members) has joined the Committee, and Cllr Trevett has left.

**Matters arising** from Minutes of previous meeting, 19 July 2016 [*pages 1-5 of Agenda papers*]. The warrant cards to enable the Clerk and Rangers to enforce the Public Spaces Protection Order are awaited. There have been no further developments in connection with the suggested Fun Run.

**Open Spaces Officers' Report** [*pages 9-13 of Agenda papers*]. The Committee accepted the recommendation to buy a *tree surgeon's pole*, to enable the Rangers to do some tree work in-house which would otherwise require the employment of contractors: cost, £200-£250 plus tax (to be paid from the tree surgery budget) - likely to be covered fairly soon by saved contractors' costs. **Commons Day:** [*the Chairman allowed me to explain FoCC's position: briefly, that we support a children-friendly event and demonstrations of 'country crafts' and the birds of prey; but we suggest also re-thinking the objectives of Village Day and how the two events should relate to one another.*] The Committee discussed the recent (rather wet) event, whether and when it should be repeated, and how it should relate to Village Day: Cllr Edwards suggested holding it in the schools' Easter holiday (not the Easter weekend itself); Cllr White was strongly in favour of repeating the event. The Clerk reported that the film showing had been popular despite the weather; it might be possible to arrange a children's film followed by a feature for the evening of Village Day - perhaps in the second fire ride - but outside help would be needed to organise it (the Rangers already have a full workload on Village Day). The Committee decided to refer consideration of both events to the next meeting of Full Council (18 October). **Cattle:** the Clerk reported that three cows are grazing; they had to be confined temporarily to the Railway Field when the recent heavy rain flooded the power supply to the virtual fencing, but they have now been let out again; the plan is to keep them as long as possible, possibly till Christmas. **Cut and lift** is largely complete, and the hay bales will be available for participants in the scarecrow competition. **Also mentioned in the Report:** the Ranger has pulled large quantities of ragwort; FoCC volunteers helped on Larks Meadow (and spared cinnabar moth caterpillars); the waste at Top Common Pond South has been removed and the area will be re-seeded (with appropriate wild origin seed); wasp spiders have again been noted on the

Common; the Clerk and the Ranger have met a teacher from Christchurch School to arrange a 'Forest School' programme, which will initially be two hours a week for six weeks and if successful will be expanded (funding is available from Natural England).

**Litter bins and dog bins.** After discussion, the Committee decided to acquire two large dog bins for the Memorial Hall and Shepherd's Bridge parking areas, and two recycling bins for the Memorial Hall and the Office.

**Request for fibre broadband cabinet:** BT Openreach had asked permission to place a cabinet on the Common opposite the top of Colleyland, near an existing junction box; the Committee refused the request - it was suggested that a convenient location would be on the other side of the road.

**Winter works programme:** the Ranger was unwell and unable to attend the meeting, so it was agreed that the chair and vice-chair should meet the Rangers to agree priorities. First on the list would be further clearance in the May Bushes area [*between the Cattle Creep and Larks Meadow*] in accordance with the Stewardship arrangements: the Rangers would be able to fell the trees that need to come down, and bring them out when ground conditions permitted; and the carver making the chainsaw carvings for the Nature Trail project [*see below*] would be prepared to barter carvings for timber. (Work would also be scheduled for Grovewood and for the Copmans Wick allotments.)

**Nature trail.** Before the meeting the Clerk led a walk around the Common for members of the Committee [*FoCC committee members were also invited - our thanks*] to explain provisional suggestions for the type and location of elements of a Nature Trail, including information boards at the parking areas; chainsaw sculptures; 'Wildwood dens' and woodland trails; provision of den building materials; and QR codes providing links to further information and educational materials. In the meeting, there was a display of pictures of what various elements might look like, and the Clerk provided information on cost, sources of finance, and regulatory issues. The most elaborate (and expensive) items would be the bespoke 'Wildwood dens'; [*an example, in different surroundings, is at <http://www.wildwooduk.com/projects/national-trust-ashridge.html> ;] they are made of natural oak [*like the fallen tree between Shepherd's Bridge and Cherry Tree Dell*], to British Standards; they are designed to give opportunities for imaginative play and for interacting with the natural environment (for instance they can incorporate bumble-bee homes); and they would be expected to last for 50 years or more. There could be items in the woodland between the Cricket Club and Darvells Pond; at the Gun Dell and the fallen tree; and in the woodland between Artichoke Dell and Christchurch Pond. It would be possible for families to drive to one of the parking areas (or walk to the Common) and go round part or all of the circuit as they chose. The total cost of all the items identified in the Clerk's presentation would be well in excess of £100,000, but it would not be necessary to install all of them at one time: the project could be undertaken in stages and funded from the Parish's share of 'Community Infrastructure Levy' money as it came in, and parts of it could be prepared in-house by the Rangers. It is understood (and will be confirmed) that Natural England, the Chiltern Conservation Board, the Open Spaces Society and RoSPA approve of the concept. Some elements*

may require Defra / Planning Inspectorate consent under Commons Act 2006 s 38, but it is considered that ordinary planning permission will not be required; it was suggested that all necessary permissions should be obtained at the outset even if implementation will proceed in stages. The Committee decided to accept the principle of the Nature Trail; to approach Natural England for formal approval; and to put detailed design work in hand.

**Four-year vision:** *1. Nature Trail:* see above. *2. Common security:* CWPC and the other parishes in the district have agreed to use the same solicitors to deal with any future trespassing by ‘travellers’; it is proving difficult to design an effective barrier for the Christchurch access because of the width to be spanned (and the resulting weight of any barrier) and the possibility that large vehicles would have to reverse out onto the A404. *3. Parking areas:* the Office have not yet succeeded in getting the contractor whose process was being investigated [*see previous Notes*] to visit and estimate or to identify examples of his work which could be inspected. *4. Surveys:* the process is ongoing; Brenda Harold has undertaken a survey of the chalk grassland areas.

***GH.***