

## **TUNBRIDGE WELLS COMMONS CONSERVATORS**

### **Minutes of a meeting held in Committee Room A on Thursday 4 July 2013 at 2.00pm**

- PRESENT: Chris Jones (Chairman)  
Sarah Bird  
Neill Buchanan  
Mungo Chapman  
Cllr Barbara Cobbold  
Peter Freeman  
Ian Marshall  
Cllr Catherine Mayhew  
Cllr James Scholes  
Cllr Victor Webb
- APOLOGIES: Nathan Dickinson  
Andrew Gower  
Rodney Stone
- ATTENDING: Geoff Levitt (Treasurer)  
Steve Budden (Warden)  
Julia Woodgate (Support Officer)  
John Barber (Friends of Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Common)  
Jennifer Blackburn (Rusthall Parish Council)  
Saul Fajerman (KHWP)
- OBSERVING: Maria Simmons

## **MINUTES**

### **1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2013 were considered, approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

### **2. MATTERS ARISING**

#### **a) Harmony Street**

The Warden reported that the residents appear happy with the measures taken in Harmony Street to protect the grass. The grass has been slow to establish due to the constant shading from vehicles, but overseeding with more grass seed should rectify the problem. He had decided against keeping small areas free of cars in turn because of the pressure for spaces.

b) Scots Pines

It was pointed out that one of the newly planted Scots pines appeared to be failing; it was confirmed that it would be replaced if necessary.

3. **WARDEN'S REPORT**

The Warden reported that the drainage problems beside Brighton Lake had been resolved with the old drainage pipe reinstated. The ground has now dried out but still needs overseeding to restore the grass.

The path between Castle Road and Wellington Rocks has been improved with Freehold Tenants' funding, and has proved very popular.

The grass has grown very fast this year, so the machines have been brought in early to clear sightlines and path edges.

The Warden will shortly be taking the Britain in Bloom judges for a walk on Tunbridge Wells Common; the route was to have included Mt Edgecumbe Rocks, but, on cutting the long grass, sewage was found to be seeping out of the ground. The source of the problem will need to be identified and rectified, which could be a lengthy process.

Ten benches have been restored this year and the cricket club are continuing to maintain the benches by the cricket pitch. There is a possibility that several new benches will be donated this year.

**RESOLVED. To compile a list of criteria for future bench donations, which should specify the length of time the bench is guaranteed to be maintained, and what will happen to plaques when the benches are replaced.**

Concern was expressed over the increasing use of disposable barbecues, which burn the grass and create litter. As they cannot be moved while they are hot, the Warden requests that people raise them off the ground in future.

The issue of the sign at the entrance to the Common, which has not been maintained in years and is now in a very poor state, was raised. Its future will be discussed with KHWP, who installed the sign.

4. **FINANCIAL STATEMENT No 5 2012/13**

The Treasurer submitted Financial Statement No 5 2012/13 showing total payments of £12,618.11 and receipts of £7,582.39.

**RESOLVED. To approve the statement.**

5. **FINAL ACCOUNTS AND BALANCE SHEET 2012/13**

These have been audited, with the controls found to be satisfactory and effective.

**RESOLVED. To approve the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013 and balance sheet as at 31 March 2013.**

6. **FINANCIAL STATEMENT No 1 2013/14**

The Treasurer submitted Financial Statement No 1 2013/14 showing total payments of £31,121.75 and receipts of £68,947.92.

**RESOLVED. To approve the statement.**

7. **EDUCATIONAL PROJECT**

Saul Fajerman, for KHWP, and John Barber, Chairman of the Friends, submitted an internal briefing paper on the progress of the Common Vision project, which comprises interpretation and education, together with a statement showing costings and grants received. Both parts of the project have sufficient funding to allow implementation to be taken forward and it is hoped that if the Ernest Cook Trust support the educational project when they consider it in September that will enable, for example, both St Pauls and Broadwater Down primary schools to be included. NB this latter will not include a pond dipping element.

In answer to a question about the value of the project, the Conservators were told that the head teacher at St Paul's School, the first school to be involved, had made the very strong point that children do not learn about the natural world at home, and it is essential to lay down the foundations as early as possible, to teach them to respect, appreciate and enjoy their environment. These are the stakeholders of the future.

**RESOLVED. To thank the Friends for the hard work they have put in to make this project successful.**

KHWP has planned a day of Interpretation Training on Monday 5 August for a group of Commons users, including Conservators. This group will assist in drawing up an interpretation plan for providing information to the public.

8. **CASTLE ROAD**

The Warden reported that he had met Steven Noad of Kent Highways on site, and it was clear that, even if yellow lines are a possibility, it is very much in the future. Accordingly he will move the tree trunks to the permitted 450mm from the road edge, allowing cars to continue to use the eroded portion of the Common. Kent Highways will fill the eroded area with scalping to stop it from getting worse. He confirmed that the Clerk has written to KCC to formally request yellow lines both here and on the bend in Harmony Street.

**RESOLVED.** To ask Nick Baldwin, Highways engineer for TWBC, to attend the next Conservators' meeting.

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

a) Subsidence at Rusthall Park

The Warden reported that there is apparently subsidence on the road from Harmony Street to Rusthall Park where it passes between the rock formations. He will meet the residents' association to try to mitigate damage to the Common during repairs.

b) Kent Youth Services

They wish to hold an afternoon of sports for young people, including football and cricket, on the Lower Cricket Pitch, but there are no further details available.

**RESOLVED.** To allow the sports afternoon subject to the Warden liaising with the organisers and being satisfied with the details.

c) Dog mess

The Warden agreed that this is a problem, although less so than it used to be. He was reminded that bag and flag events may be helpful.

d) Stranges Avenue

Cars are continually parking at the bottom of the footpath beside the disused car wash, and the Warden reported that he will put in an extra bollard to prevent encroachment.

e) Verges at Plant and Tools site

It was noted that the verge is Common, and this needs to be protected when the development takes place. The plans do not show any encroachment.

f) Building at the top of Major Yorks Road

It was noted that the building, formerly a pub, was to be converted to flats, although no plan has been submitted yet. The Warden intends to place extra posts to prevent encroachment from the inevitable extra parking.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Henrietta House, 47 London Road – change of use to dwelling. No comment.  
72 London Road – replacement fence. No comment.

The next meeting will be held at 2.00 p.m. on 19 September 2013 in Committee Room A.