



QUALITY  
PARISH  
COUNCIL

**PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL**

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**MINUTES OF THE  
RECREATION AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 20<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2014  
AT THE SPORTS PAVILION**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs Wallace (Chairman), Clarke, Queded, Lawson, Mills, Henly, Wilson & Gill.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Lisa Underwood (Assistant Clerk) and 1 member of the public.

**The meeting opened at 7.55pm**

**74. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

**75. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

All members declared a non pecuniary interest in agenda item 5, Nutbourne Common as the Council is the Trustee of the ground.

**76. MINUTES**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to agree and approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th October 2014 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and the Chairman signed them.

**CLERK'S REPORT**

Item 62 – Cousins Way Trim Trail

The Assistant Clerk is yet to arrange a meeting between all interested parties, as the Neighbourhood Plan Survey work has put other work behind schedule.

Item 64 – Pocket Park

A date for the Committee to meet at Pocket Park and carry out an assessment of work is proving difficult for a weekend date. The Assistant Clerk would therefore like to arrange a meeting date in the week, if acceptable to the R&OS Committee. *A meeting date of Friday 5th December at 10.00am was agreed.*

**77. PUBLIC SPEAKING**

There were no public speakers.

**78. NUTBOURNE COMMON RECREATION GROUND**

Members received a report of a 'Brief Survey and Management Recommendations for Nutbourne Common' from West Sussex Wildlife Trust (WSWT) (Appendix 1) and noted comments from the Nutbourne Residents Association (NRA), including:

- The report was not commissioned by the NRA, but by Frank Riddle.
- The NRA neither agree or disagree with the WSWT report.
- At the NRA meeting on 27th October 2014, attendees voted 23-0 in favour of woodland at the Common.

- The WSWT report was not issued prior to the meeting on 27th October, but sent out with the NRA minutes of 27th October 2014.
- Residents are concerned, and not happy with what the Parish Council has done at Nutbourne Common, over the last 18 months.
- The NRA may issue a questionnaire regarding Nutbourne Common in their NRA newsletter.
- A working group was proposed to enable NRA and Pulborough Council to agree further works at Nutbourne Common.

Members received a copy of the NRA Chairperson's report, dated 19 January 2009, which confirms an agreement between the NRA and Pulborough Parish Council over the future of the Common, stating that Pulborough Parish Council have 'cleared a central area and planted this with heather, and have given their assurance that the clearing will not increase in size in the future', this has been adhered to by Pulborough Parish Council. It was noted that a number of members from 2009, are the same members today. With this in mind, members cannot understand why the NRA are not in agreement with the works that the Parish Council are doing now.

Members felt that the WSWT report, sent on 16th October 2014, should have been issued and reviewed before any vote was taken, at the NRA meeting on 27th October 2014.

It was noted that the WSWT report was commissioned because the original report was about 7 years old, and needed to be updated. Members noted that the report states that the continuation of the current management approaches is recommended, with consideration to some modifications.

The proposal, made by the NRA, of a working group was discussed. Members commented that the management of the Common should follow the recommendations made in the report, and so didn't think it was beneficial to set up a working group between the NRA and the R&OS Committee.

Members felt that the NRA had not had time to consider the WSWT report, so should be given time to do so. It was also suggested that the Parish Council commission their own report from the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), who represent the Wealden Authority. It was therefore AGREED that this matter will be added to the agenda for the R&OS meeting on 15th January 2015 when the NRA have had time to consider the WSWT report, and a report from the SDNPA has been received. After this time it was suggested that a public meeting is held, to obtain the opinion of all Pulborough residents on the future works of Nutbourne Common, having been able to view both reports.

## **79. PLAYGROUNDS**

Members received a quotation from ARD Playgrounds, following the 6 monthly inspection. The Committee AGREED to the priority 1 works and all the priority 2 works, apart from the replacement of the safer surface for the Wicksteed 4.4m slide. The Assistant Clerk was instructed to enquire if the replacement surface could wait until Spring 2015. Cllr. Clarke commented that the budget for playgrounds may need to be increased, and instructed the Assistant Clerk to bring it to the attention of the Clerk.

**80. MSF SIGNAGE**

The Committee received quotations of £229.00 for a swing door case notice board and £61.07 for a printed notice board, to replace the current old and worn MSF sign. Members AGREED to proceed with the swing door case notice board, as this was felt to be more flexible in terms of displayed notices and charges. The Assistant Clerk was instructed to order one, but to check with the Groundsman that it could be fitted onto the wire fencing.

**81. ALLOTMENTS**

The Assistant Clerk advised that it would be beneficial if all R&OS Committee members could attend the quarterly allotment inspections if possible. Members AGREED, and instructed the Assistant Clerk to arrange an inspection date on a Tuesday in January 2015.

**82. MEMORIAL GARDEN**

Cllr. Mills suggested the use of stepping stones to enable access to the current notice board, in the memorial garden. Members AGREED this was a good solution and instructed the Assistant Clerk to proceed with obtaining costs for the stepping stones.

Members noted that the memorial garden is in need of weeding, and suggested getting a volunteer group to help with this. It was suggested that a request is put into the next Parish bulletin, but also to contact Mrs Heath, at St Mary's School, to see if a gardening club or Forest School group could help with the weeding. The Assistant Clerk was instructed to facilitate accordingly.

Comments from Peter Jones were received regarding the security of the memorial garden. Members felt that there wasn't anything that could be done, which would be effective enough. The Assistant Clerk was instructed to thank Peter Jones for his comments.

**83. LIME TREE ON FOOTPATH, ALONG BOWLING GREEN**

Cllr. Wilson advised that the lime tree along the Bowling Green footpath, has not been pruned for some time, has lost branches, and is considered dangerous. Cllr. Clarke advised that this should be included on the tri-annual tree survey programme, and instructed the Assistant Clerk to see when this tree is to be assessed and report back to the Committee.

**84. RISK REGISTER**

Members received the Risk Register and AGREED to the updating of R3.2, R3.4, R3.5, R4.1, R4.2, R5.1, R5.2 and R6. The Committee AGREED to recommend, to Full Council, the inclusion of footballs to R3.5, and the review frequency to be changed from annually to bi-annual.

**85. CORRESPONDENCE**

**Sports & Social Club (S&SC)**

Minutes from the S&SC meeting held on 30th September 2014. Copied to Committee.

**Residents Letter**

Copy correspondence from residents at Chestnut Walk to the Football Club Committee. Copied to Committee.

**Pythons**

Notification regarding missing goal post hole covers and confirmation from Pythons that they will arrange replacements.

**Pocket Park**

Email correspondence from Phil Williams regarding Pocket Park. Copied to Committee.

**The Purple Bus**

Agreement between West Sussex Rural Mobile Youth Trust and Pulborough Parish Council, which the Clerk will sign as previously.

**86. MATTERS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS FOR INCLUSION ON NEXT AGENDA**

- Pocket Park (Cllr. Quested).
- New bin by bandstand (Cllr. Mills)
- New salt bin in Carpenters Meadow (for P&S-Cllr. E Wallace)

**87. PAYMENTS RESOLVED:**

That the payment of the following payments be approved and cheques signed:

<b>PAYEE</b>	<b>AMOUNT/£</b>
NatWest	20.20
Kent County Council	176.54
New Call Telecom Ltd T/A Fuel Broadband	9.08
British Telecommunications Plc	72.83
British Telecommunications Plc	71.96
R Quested	26.70
Banham	466.80

**The meeting closed at 9.22pm**

.....**CHAIRMAN**

.....**DATE**



## Brief survey and management recommendations for Nutbourne Common

**Tony Whitbread  
Chief Executive  
Sussex Wildlife Trust**

### Background

The common was visited on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2014 to make an assessment of the nature of the ecology of the area and make brief recommendations on future management. The timing was not ideal in that spring flowering woodland plants might have been missed, nevertheless it is still likely that a reasonable assessment of the site could be made.

### Site description

The site appears to represent a fragment of what might once have been a more extensive common in the Nutbourne area. Surrounding areas consist largely of acid grassland with a few relicts from a likely previous heathland habitat, although no heather was seen in the immediate surrounding area. In the past it is likely that this area was a small part of a chain of heathlands currently including Hurston Warren and Wiggonholt Common.

Nutbourne Common itself is now a mixture of ancient boundary trees, secondary woodland (i.e. regenerated on past heathland) and restored heathland. It is a small site (around 4 ha in extent) so maintaining a diverse matrix of habitats is always going to have management implications.

Ancient trees on or near the boundary clearly grew up in more open conditions, accounting for their spreading form. As trees have more recently grown up around them some lower branches on the older trees have started to die off. However, because of their location on the edge of the common, it is unlikely that trees will suffer long term damage from over-shadowing.

Woodland in Nutbourne Common is now a relatively species poor oak – birch woodland (both downy birch and silver birch) over a ground flora consisting mainly of bracken. Bluebell may also be common in spring, mainly on the edges of the site, and a few other common species of this habitat type were noticed. Mountain ash, holly, grey willow and alder buckthorn were also present, and one large crab apple was seen on the boundary. Alder buckthorn (*Frangula alder*) was perhaps one of the more interesting species seen on the site as it tends to be associated with heathland, or open heathy woodland.

The heathland clearing in the centre is quite small and not particularly species rich. It does however contain vigorous heather regeneration, with some heath bedstraw and gorse, alongside prolific birch regeneration.

### Management

In absence of management it is likely that woodland regeneration will take over the site, heathland interest will be lost and some of the shrub species (willow and alder buckthorn, but possibly also mountain ash) may reduce or disappear. These species are generally rich in associated invertebrates and so support insect-eating species. The vertical structure of the site would probably be simplified (i.e. fewer layers of vegetation), tending towards a high canopy with few shrubs underneath in the long term. In the absence of natural disturbance, or management by people, small sites do tend towards uniformity.

From a wildlife perspective it is better to maintain a matrix of open and wooded habitats although, especially on a small site, this is difficult to achieve in practice. Nevertheless, past management does seem to have produced a matrix which has probably contributed to maintaining or restoring the wildlife interest of the site. This has not doubt involved considerable effort to prevent aggressive species, especially bracken and birch, which would otherwise have simplified the diversity of the site.

The simplest management option would be to stop management and allow woodland to take over. This would not be the most beneficial approach in terms of nature conservation or landscape history. A continuation of the current management approaches is recommended although consideration could be given to the following modifications:

- I am aware that there is a desire to expand woodland regeneration on the site. This would largely be damaging to the wildlife interest of the site, however, there may be an option that provides the best of both worlds. This might be achieved by expanding the heathland clearing further in the south of the site with an expansion of woodland in the north. Heathland (and heathland associates) develop best on south-facing aspects so clearing to the south would open the site to more light and enhance the heathland, whilst expanding the wood to the north would give a larger contiguous block of woodland with little damage to the heath. Co-incidentally the northern area is also where the gorse and alder buckthorn are so this might encourage their regeneration without too much encroachment (by gorse) into the heathland.
- In concept this may be a change from viewing the whole site as heathland restoration towards viewing it as a heathy clearing within a woodland complex.
- Ancient trees on the boundary are a valuable feature and should be retained. There is a small risk that they might be damaged by overshadowing from recent regrowth of other trees. This risk is small but nevertheless it may still be worth giving consideration to removing, or thinning occasional young trees that are starting to shade the lower branches of these veteran trees at some time in the future. It may be worth undertaking an invertebrate survey; old oaks are generally rich in invertebrates but generally prefer oaks grown in open conditions.
- There are a few Scots pine trees on the site and, whilst these may add to diversity, they could cause management problems in future (they may already be doing so). Pine seedlings in the heathland might become a major issue. It may be a shame to remove the trees but management will need to stay on top of any pine regeneration.
- There are several wind-blown fallen trees on the site and it is recommended that these are not cleared away, indeed it would be beneficial if even more dead wood was retained on the site and allowed to rot down naturally.

Overall, however, the current management approach is delivering a beneficial matrix of habitats types in a small area.