



BOX PARISH COUNCIL

A MEETING OF THE BOX HILL & RUDLOE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE WAS HELD ON 21ST FEBRUARY 2022

- 1. Present:** Councillors: D. Wright (Chairman); R. Case; S. Parker; M. Tye; B. Walton;
Mrs Carey (Clerk)
- 2. Apologies** Cllrs R. Davies; N. Ingledew; I. Johnston
- 3. Public Question Time:** There were seven members of the public present who were part of the Common Volunteer Working Group. Mr Wheeler stated that there had been a great deal of work carried out on the Lower Common. He asked whether advice was taken to do this work and what would be happening with the wood chippings.

Cllr Wright replied that advice had been taken. The chippings would be put down at the bottom of the slope to make this area more fertile. There are currently limited wildflowers on the slopes that had been cleared. More seeds would go down including Yellow Rattle at the beginning of July/August. The brambles will be treated and the brash dealt with in the summer.
- 4. Declarations of Interest:** Nil
- 5. Walkround:** Members of the Committee had met and walked round the Common prior to the meeting.
- 6. Minutes:** The Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th December 2021 were taken as read and signed as being a true record
- 7. Matters Arising:** Issues – see attached
 - a. Lacy Wood:** The work to the plaque will be carried out in April. Cllr Wright has spoken to the Groundsman and he will be carrying out work in line with the Management Plan dealing with the nettles and ash trees. Some of the other trees will also need thinning.
 - b. Ash tree dieback:** Affected trees will be felled when funding is available
 - c. Car Parking Area, Box Hill Common:** The application for funding from the FIPL for the creation of a retaining wall had not been successful.

Work will now be carried out to the car parking area so that it conforms with the planning permission. The area will be made square and the bunds will be lowered. Cllr Johnston to obtain three quotations for the work which it is hoped to complete by the summer. Cllr Wright confirmed that the land had been surveyed and the height of the bund agreed. A copy of the specification for the work to be circulated to the committee members. It is **recommended** that three quotes be obtained for the work to bring the car park in line with the

planning permission.

In the circumstances it was agreed that the revised planning application submitted in November 2021 for the retaining wall be withdrawn.

- d. **Albion Terrace retaining wall**: A due diligence exercise on the wall needs to be carried out. Cllr Johnston will draw up a specification and go out for quotes for a survey on the wall to see what work is required.

It is **recommended** that three quotations be obtained for a due diligence survey of the wall.

- e. **Clearance and processing of the Ash sapling on the Lower Common and creation of wild flower meadow**: The application for funding submitted to Farming in the Protected Landscape with the preferred option from Tree Parts in the sum of £14850 + vat had been successful and the work has been carried out.

The next phase of the work will be for the Cotswold Wardens to clear the brambles and hemp agrimony

The Council groundsmen will treat the tree stumps. Cllr Wright to ascertain what will be used for this and also what would be used for treating the brambles and hemp agrimony.

Phase 3 will be the planting of the wildflower meadow.

It was asked if there is going to be a coppiced area for birds and wild life. Cllr Wright will get advice on this. It was agreed to retain the hazel that had been coppiced. It was stated that it is appreciated that brambles need to be under control but some are needed for wildlife. Cllr Wright replied that there are several large areas of brambles.

Cllr Wright stated that the number of man hours spent by the Cotswold Wardens on the Common is about ten times more than for any other parish in the area. Although Box Parish Council are also contributing to the work it will need the support of the Box Hill Common residents to maintain this area as it is unlikely that the Cotswold Wardens will be able to do this next year.

The outcome of the public meeting held with local residents had been that about 20 volunteers had come forward. One volunteer had agreed to take this forward. The group will need materials and tools to enable them to do the work. An application to the Corsham Area Board for funding in the sum of £2000 to buy seeds, trees, bushes, tools etc had been successful. This will be matched by £2000 from the Parish Council's budget.

It is **recommended** that the Parish Council provides "match funding" of £2000 in order to provide materials and equipment for the project. It is **recommended** that hand tools (including scythes, bow saws) and wild flower seeds (including yellow Rattle), fruit trees and fruit bushes are acquired in order to create the community order and wildflower meadow.

The Clerk explained that for insurance and audit purposes the tools and materials etc will need to be purchased by the Parish Council to enable to volunteers to carry out the work. The volunteers will need to carry out risk assessments before any work. She explained that the group would be covered by the Parish Council's insurance provided they were acting on the

Parish Council's instructions.

Post Minute note: The Clerk had confirmed with the insurance company re the advice that she gave at the meeting. The Parish Council will need to draw up the parameters of the work authorised by the Council. This work must be monitored. The volunteers must accept these parameters. Any work that is done outside of these parameters will not be covered by insurance.

Creation of Community Orchard: Potential sites to be identified for up to 30 apple trees and 20 blackcurrant bushes

- f. **Tree Management Plan:** It was reported that in 2014 Josh Ledbury had carried out a survey of all the trees on the Common. He had rated these trees and had highlighted 55 trees that needed felling. Some of these trees had been felled but there were others that were still outstanding. After discussion it was agreed that no other tree surgeon would be prepared to analyse the 2014 report and validate it. It was **recommended** that three quotations are obtained for a full tree survey of the Common in line with the Parish Council's tree policy. This should focus on the safety of the trees.

Two ash trees by F39: As reported previously there are two ash trees on Footpath 39 which are in danger of falling on to the near-by property. One quotation for the work had been received. In view of the Health & Safety issue particularly in light of the recent storms it is **recommended** that the quotation from Daniel Part in the sum of £1200 + vat be accepted so that the work can be carried out urgently.

- g. **Farming in Protected Landscape:** A further application for funding for ten more kissing gates will be submitted to the FiPL in the sum of £3250. An application for match funding by Corsham Area Board in the sum of £3250 had been submitted. If both these applications are successful ten more kissing gates will be installed throughout the parish.
- h. **Update on Walking Map:** £400 has been received in donations towards the Walking Map. A quotation of £600 for printing 5000 copies had been received. Cllr Wright would be approaching more local businesses for donations towards the printing costs.
- i. **Footpath 33:** Wiltshire Council has confirmed that it will cost £3000 to either divert or close this footpath. In the circumstances it was agreed not to pursue this at the present time.
- j. **Climate Strategy Action Plan:** The SMART objectives had been drawn up. It was reported that over 3000 trees and hedgerows had been planted in Box.
- k. **Damaged GWR seat:** Cllr Case reported that it will cost £250 to make one new end for the seat. As both ends will need replacing Cllr Case will obtain further quotes for the next meeting. It was agreed that we could look at putting a further GWR seat in Lacy Wood overlooking the tunnel.

8. Items for Discussion:

- a. **Parking on the verges of the Common:** It was agreed that a notice be drawn up to put on the cars that are parking on the verge and request that they use the car park. The Committee will revisit this when the work to the car park had been finished to see if a new sign needs to be made.

9. Management of the Rudloe Area:

- a. **Rudloe Play Area:** Cllr Tye agreed to draw up a spreadsheet of the issues raised under the RoSPA report and to obtain further quotations for the repairs to the play surfacing.
- b. **Water safety risk at Dickens Gate:** This issue had been raised by Cllr Davies. There is a large attenuation pond on the Dickens Gate development which has no guard round it. It was agreed to raise this as a health and safety risk with the estate management company.
- c. **Provision of notice board at Dickens Gate:** it was agreed to ask the Planning & Conservation Committee to look into this.
- d. **Seat at Rudloe Firs:** Cllr Davies had raised this issue. There is no money in the budget but it was agreed to consider this with next year's budget

10. Rights of Way:

Matters Arising:

- a. **Clearing of footpaths:** On-going.
- b. **Monitoring of footpaths:** Committee members to monitor some of the paths
- c. **Work carried out by Cotswold Wardens:**
The Cotswold Wardens had been concentrating on installing the kissing gates, the clearance work on the common and planting trees

11. Correspondence:

- a. **Planting a tree on the Common:** A request had been received from a parishioner asking permission to plant a tree in memory of her late husband. She would like to put his ashes under the tree. It was **recommended** that the request be agreed in principle subject to there being no plaques or memorabilia by the tree and that the Parish Council will recommend the type of tree to be planted, agree the location and dig the hole.
- b. **Friends of Quarry Woods:** There will be a meeting on 8th march 2022 in the Quarrymans Arms at 7 pm to look at how the Friends of Quarry Woods group can take the matter forward.

12. Items of report and future agenda items:

- a. Cllr Walton reported that she had ordered the plants for the Lovar Garden pond
- b. A resident in Pine close had reported five sycamore trees which need attention. Wiltshire Council has stated that these are not their responsibility. Cllr Wright will speak to her.
- c. It was reported that there are three posts missing from along the edge of the Common.
- d. It was reported that the areas with the primroses and snowdrops had not been cleared this year

13. Date of next meeting: Thursday 21st April 2022

Chairman

Meeting closed at 8.50 pm