



BOX PARISH COUNCIL

A MEETING OF THE BOX HILL & RUDLOE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE WAS HELD ON 21ST AUGUST 2023

- 1. Present:** Councillors: D. Wright (Chairman); R. Davies; D. Dorey; N. Ingledew; M. Tye; B. Walton
- 2. Apologies** Cllr I. Johnston
- 3. Public Question Time:** There were three members of the public present. Two representatives from Corsham Baptists stated that they would like to be able to use the Rudloe Community Centre to provide services to the Community.
- 4. Declarations of Interest:** Nil
- 5. Walk round:** Members of the Committee had walked round prior to the meeting.
- 6. Minutes:** The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th June 2023 were taken as read and signed as being a true record
- 7. Risk Assessment and Forward Plan:** The Risk Assessment was reviewed. This links in to the Forward Plan. To be circulated to the Committee
 - a. Insufficient resource available to deliver the Box Hill Common & Lacy Wood Management Plan:** It had been estimated that 96 working days will be required to deliver the work to the Common and Lacy Wood. Cllrs Walton and Wright to go through the time sheets to reassess the work. Cllr Tye suggested that some of the grassed areas could be left to grow longer and she offered to look into this. Cllr Wright stated that there are currently four areas allocated as wild flower areas:
 - The Middle Common
 - Area the other side of the seat near to the Black Hut
 - Opposite the Caravan site
 - The area from the picnic area up to the gap in the trees

Action: BW/DW/MT
 - b. Ash tree dieback:** The number of trees with Ash dieback is spreading and will be managed in accordance with the Box Hill Common and Lacy Wood Management Plan. The estimated cost of £2k is within the 2023/24 precept.
 - c. Stairway to heaven:** Seek funding to replace damaged steps and extend handrail to cover the entire length of the path.
 - d. Rudloe Play Area:** RoSPA to carry out the safety check in September. It was suggested that there needs to be a community group to look at this to take it forward. Cllr Dorey agreed to lead on this. **Action: DD**
 - e. Interpretation Board:** On going. Money in budget for replacement. Id Verde had offered to buy bird boxes etc.
 - f. Seats:** Mrs Williams has offered to replace the damaged seat on the Common with a recycled one. This would require a concrete base which the Council would put down.
 - g. Lacy Wood Dry Stone Wall:** The Cotswold Wardens will be carrying out the work when appropriate stone is made available and the walling team have sufficient time to complete the task

- h. **Retaining wall at Albion Terrace:** The survey had been received from Giraffe Engineering giving recommendations. These would be to clear the brash from above the wall and then employ a master mason to cost the works.

It was **recommended** that the report is endorsed, quotes obtained from Daniel Part to clear the brash along with Joel and Chris and for a master mason to be engaged to cost the necessary works.

- i. **Tree stumps:** More treatment is needed to the tree stumps as there is a lot of regrowth. Clerk to ascertain how much treatment is still available and to ask the Groundsman to cut off the growth.
- j. **Surface of Albion Terrace:** This is an unadopted road and the responsibility of the users to maintain it.
- k. **Japanese Knotweed:** Monitor this to ensure it does not spread.
- l. **Lacy Wood Tree Safety Action Plan:** Further £5k to be put in the budget to deliver the management of Lacy Wood
- m. **Thoday Wood:** John Kerr has drawn up a four year management plan. The Cotswold Wardens will fell some of the trees. Reassess the Ash and Sycamore in 2024/25
- n. **Footpath 38:** the footpath at the top had been cleared. The barbed wire fence had been taken down and an electric fence had been put up. Cllr Wright agreed to speak to the landowner **Action: DW**

8. Matters Arising from the Minutes:

- a. **Community Orchard:** The Community Payback Team are clearing the hemp agrimony once a fortnight to enable yellow rattle and wild flower seeds to be planted to suppress the grass.
- b. **Box Hill Common residents group:** These meet on the 1st Sunday of the month and are investing a great deal of time and effort.
- c. **Lacy Wood Kissing Gate and Bristol Gate:** These had been installed. 20 further fence posts had been acquired to create more dead hedges

9. Monitoring of budget: This was all on line

10. Management of the Rudloe Area:

- a. **Rudloe Community Centre:** Letter received from Cllr Walters stating that Steve Abbott (ex chair of Corsham Town Council and ex Westlea Housing) had offered to sit as a Trustee on the Rudloe Community Association should there be a change of Wiltshire Council considering a lease.

He asked if it is worth exploring what the Parish Council's objection would be to a lease were it to be underwritten by Corsham Baptists and would the Council's previous objections be mitigated with a back-to-back lease, in which case rather than an asset transfer Box parish Council could express an interest in a lease.

The Parish Council had previously voted not to submit an Expression of Interest but would support any application by the Community Interest Company. As previously minuted Wiltshire council has stated that it would not support the use of the Centre by any political or religious groups.

After discussion it was **recommended** that a Working Group comprising Parish Councillors, local residents and the Corsham Baptists be set up to look into this and draft a due diligence paper which will be discussed at a meeting to be held at the Dandelion Café on 12th September. It was also **recommended** that the Council finds out what is meant by a "back-to-back" lease.

Post Minute note: Cllr Walters has explained that “a back-to-back arrangement is one in which costs and liabilities are transferred from one part to another ie if Box Parish Council were to enter into a fully repairing lease over a 3 year period then another lease would transfer that responsibility to say Corsham Baptists over precisely the same term. In this way Box Parish Council is absolved of responsibility”

- b. **Rudloe Play Area**: see item 7d above
- c. **Cutting of communal grass areas at Ashwood Road and Pine Close**:
The grassed areas in question had been owned by the developers who had past a service charge on to the residents but this had long since expired. Wiltshire Council had taken over the grass cutting but as it was not legally their responsibility this had ceased. Wiltshire Council has now agreed to take over the maintenance of the amenity areas and this has now been cut.
- d. **Rudloe Community Group**: No further update
- e. **Rudloe surgeries**: Cllrs Davies and Dorey attend the surgeries and take note of issues raised. The next one will be held on 12th September.

11. Budget forecast 2023/24:

- a. **Albion Terrace survey** recommendations and approval to proceed - discussed above - money to be put into the budget
- b. **Appoint a master mason** to conduct a work – discussed above - money to be put into the budget
- c. **Thoday wood survey** - recommendations and approval to proceed - commencing 4 September 2023. Discussed above.
- d. **Tree stump treatment** - continue with existing plan – Precept 2023/24- £500
- e. **Box Hill Common Work Breakdown Structure** and resource shortfall – outsource or in house – Precept £5k
- f. **Lacy Wood management plan** – Daniel Part - £4.5k
- g. **Orchard pruning course** – to be carried out by Cotswold Conservation Board
- h. **Refreshments for Community Payback team** – Precept 2023/24 £300

12. Items for discussion:

- a. **Permission to plant a Rowan and a Fruit tree on the Lower Common**: Request received from Helen Murphy to plant a Rowan and Fruit tree. It was agreed to ask her for an idea of where these would be planted. Previously the Parish Council had suggested £100 per tree to cover the purchase from Landcare together with tree guard, stake etc.
- b. **Letter to Box Hill Common residents inviting them to a meeting on Monday 4th September to inform them of:**
 - Albion Terrace retaining wall restoration plan including the cutting back of the overgrowth in accordance with the survey from Giraffe Engineering
 - Thoday Wood Conservation Plan
 - Orchard maintenance course

13. Correspondence:

- a. **Relocation of bin**: A request had been received to relocate the bin between the GWR and the other seat on the Common. However, the bin belongs to Wiltshire Council and has been concreted in place. It was felt that Wiltshire Council might not continue to empty the bin if it were to be relocated.

14. Items of report and future agenda items:

- a. It was reported that the two disabled parking spaces near 5 Leylands Road and the Community Centre on the Rudloe Estate need repainting. Clerk to notify David Arnup.

15. Date of next meeting: 16th October 2023

Chairman

Meeting closed at 8.10 pm