

**JERSEY FARM WOODLAND PARK JOINT
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Met remotely via video conferencing on Monday
11th January 2021 at 7.30pm

Present:

Councillor Jenny Roberts –Chair
Parish Councillors – Geoff Churchard, Claudio
Duran
District Councillors - Clare Julien, Frances
Leonard
Warden – Mark Carter
Public Members – Tony Farnfield, John Forward,
Clyde Martindill, Sue Riley, Carrie Sherriff

Apologies:

Cllr John Newton-Davies

Absent:

Public Members David Burrows, Jamie Burrows,

Officers:

Emma Hostler, Deputy Clerk
Rebecca Pannese, Project & Amenities Officer

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Mark Carter declared an interest as he is working as a self-employed contractor for Sandridge Parish Council.

517. NEW PUBLIC MEMBER

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming the new public member John Forward to the committee, which was followed by a brief introduction from each of the existing committee members.

518. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Jersey Farm Woodland Park Joint Management Committee held on 7th September 2020 having been previously circulated, were taken as read and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Jersey Farm Woodland Park Joint Management Committee held on the 7th September 2020 be approved and signed as a correct record.

519. MATTERS OF REPORT

- The Project and Amenities Officer has received positive feedback from horse riders and walkers on the quality of the newly laid bridleway surface between St Helier Road and Highfield Road.
- Following reports of the expansion of an illicit 'camp' in the North Plantation instruction has been given to contractors John O'Connor to remove it.
- Following the last meeting of the Full Council, the Parish Clerk has written to the landowner St Albans District Council expressing an interest in the Parish Council taking freehold transfer of the Jersey Farm Woodland Park and additionally the green space between Wheat Close and the JFWP and the fenced playground within it. The Woodland Park is currently under a 30 year leasehold to the Parish Council from SADC granted in September 1999. Cllr Clare Julien asked that consideration be given to the need to keep the trees trimmed back along the boundary with Wheat Close.
- A feature on responsible dog walking written by the Parish Clerk has been published in the winter edition of Neighbourhood News in response to complaints regarding anti-social dog behaviours across the Parish.
- Mark Carter has started thinning the trees in the South West Plantation as per the management plan.

520. MANAGEMENT PLANS AND BUDGET

The Committee reviewed the summary document of spend to date which is £5,277 and noted the outstanding budget amount of £4,779, largely attributable to a saving of £3,000 because the meadow grass has not yet been cut. See item 521 below.

521. GRASS CUTTING ON THE MEADOW

Due to COVID-19 related restrictions on activities and wet weather conditions, the annual meadow grass cut has not yet taken place and seems increasingly unlikely. After some discussion and recommendation from Mark Carter, members agreed that given the exceptional circumstances of this year it would be sensible not to attempt to cut the grass during this budgetary cycle, especially given the potential for further ground damage, but ensure an autumn 2021 cut and collection of risings does take place. Mark Carter pointed out there may be some benefits to this especially in terms of encouraging the small mammal population.

522. ADDITIONAL MEASURES FOR PROTECTING THE NESTING SKYLARKS

The committee continued discussions from earlier meetings on measures to protect nesting birds, specifically skylarks, in the meadow grass. Mark Carter is drafting an article to raise awareness of their nesting habits for the spring issue of the Neighbourhood News. Following discussions, including the need for more robust signage, members agreed to trial fencing off a designated nesting area in the meadow, as identified by Mark Carter. The preferred fencing is chestnut paling supported by wooden posts. Mark Carter will trim the grass as needed within the area. A decision will be taken at the end of the nesting season whether this should be a permanent fixture or removed and stored for later usage. It was;

RESOLVED

To erect a single fenced off area in the meadow, size and location to be determined by Mark Carter, to protect the skylarks for the duration of the nesting season. Signage to be erected alongside the fencing to explain its purpose.

523. CONDITIONS OF THE FOOTPATHS AND OTHER HIGH TRAFFIC AREAS

Committee members discussed some of the current poor, muddy conditions of the footpaths, bridleways and other areas in the Woodland Park believed to be caused by higher than usual visitor numbers compounded by the wet winter weather. In particular, concern was raised about the conditions around the Chiltern Road entrance and the nearby memorial stone. At the suggestion of Mark Carter and as an immediate short-term fix, it was agreed that he would approach an appropriate local company to provide waste wood chippings, ideally dumped at the entrance area, for distribution by volunteers. A more long-term solution, including the possibility of laying new footpath surfacing, would be discussed at the next meeting, or when the committee is once again able to undertake inspections of the Woodland Park as a group. In addition, the prospect of relocating the memorial stone to another position will be considered.

524. WILDFLOWER PLANTING

Having agreed to increase the budget available for wildflower planting at the last meeting, Cllr Frances Leonard updated the committee on her research into quantities and costs for different specimens. Due to cost savings from the uncut meadow grass it was agreed that Cllr Leonard would meet with Mark Carter to agree which plants would be appropriate, suitable locations, and quantity, which will determine the final spend. Mark Carter advised planting in recently cleared areas in the plantations and in the green around the memorial stones.

525. FIRE PITS AND BINS

Following a recent meeting of the Sports and Recreation Committee, Cllr Jenny Roberts has been prompted to enquire whether the committee would consider installing fire pits in the Woodland Park. It was unanimously agreed that fire pits would not be appropriate in the Woodland Park, principally because of the risk of fire, but additionally as this was not in keeping with the original underlying aim of the committee to keep the park as a natural habitat. The

committee also discussed the desirability of additional bins on the Woodland Park but felt that current policy of encouraging visitors to take their litter home with them was the still the preferred option.

526. A MEMORIAL TREE FOR PAT FORWARD

Following discussions at the last meeting, the members agreed that a memorial tree would be a fitting legacy to mark the work of former public member Pat Forward on behalf of the committee and the parish in general. Having consulted with John Forward and family, it was agreed that a Red Maple would be the preferred species to be planted in the vicinity of the pond. The committee agreed a spend of £200 on a tree and accessories but John and family offered additional funding to purchase a more mature tree should this be a better option. Whilst a plaque was discussed, it was agreed to adhere to the long-standing policy of not erecting plaques except on benches within the Woodland Park. John will arrange to meet with Mark Carter to agree final choice of tree and location and advise the Project and Amenities Officer accordingly. It was, unanimously;

RESOLVED

To provide £200 in funding towards a memorial tree and accessories on behalf of former public member Pat Forward.

527. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The committee undertook an annual review of the committee Terms of Reference with no amendments proposed. It was, unanimously;

RESOLVED

To approve the existing committee Terms of Reference document.

528. VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY

The current volunteer programme of activity has been suspended due to COVID-19 related Government restrictions on activities.

529. MATTERS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

- Relocation of the memorial stone at the Chiltern Road entrance
- Improving the conditions around the Chiltern Road entrance and extension of the footpath
- Review of planting policy especially in light of climate change and whether it should be extended to include other non-native species

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 12th April 2021 at 7.30pm. There will be a site inspection meeting at Woodland House, Jersey Farm Woodland Park, at 6.30pm, Government guidelines permitting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Chairman

Date