



(minute 7 continued)

The Administrator agreed to contact Edgbarrow School about speaking to their pupils about the dangers and to also put a post on Facebook and into the Crowthorne Eye.

**Action:** Cllr Robertson and Administrator

2 Min 3.2 – Woodland Update

Mr Metcalf reported that there was a lot of bracken at the site which was narrowing the footpaths. The identified Japanese Knotweed had been treated and appears to be contained. It was noted that there had been some anti-social behaviour plus much litter recently (see minute 8.5 below).

Mr Metcalf reported that one of the raptor boxes had been knocked down and broken and that the other one appeared to be uninhabited. Mr Dodd agreed to replace the broken one and donate 2 further boxes to the Trust.

**Action:** Mr Dodd

3 Min 3.3 – Hedgehog Homes

Mr Dodd reported that regrettably the installation of motion cameras for the hedgehog homes had not been possible, primarily due to the cost. Mr Metcalf stated that he had 3 hedgehog homes that he would be happy to install at Circle Hill. The Administrator agreed to obtain advice from a hedgehog rescue organisation as to the best way to do this.

**Action:** Administrator

4 Min 3.8 – Wildflower planting

The Administrator contacted various charitable organisations including the Woodland Trust and Plant Life to ascertain if wildflower plugs or seeds are available to plant/sow at Circle Hill/Walter Recreation Ground and has some leads and grant information on possible sources of help with such a scheme or project. Should a Trustee be interested in pursuing a grant application, they should contact the Administrator who will be happy to share the grant application information.

Cllr Dye asked about the possibility of planting nectar flowers for butterflies and caterpillar food plants. These requests could also be followed up via the grant schemes. Potential suitable plants include: yellow rattle, herb Robert, common vetch, marjoram, betony, agrimony, dandelion (agg.) self heal, water mint, thistles especially marsh thistle, ox-eye daisy, knapweed, bulbous buttercup (a perennial), hawthorn (May), bramble for flowers (June), maybe some non-native bushes e.g. Abelia (July-Nov) etc.

The Administrator agreed to check the budget to see whether there was scope to annually spend £100 - £200 on wildflower seeds/plugs. Mr Dodd donated a big bag of wildflower seeds to the Trust for growing in the autumn.

**Action:** Administrator

5 Min 3.9 – Publicity about insect homes at Circle Hill

Mr Dodd advised that the insect homes were ready to be installed at Circle Hill. Once installed, photographs will be taken to share online on social media platforms.

**Action:** Administrator

6 Min 3.9 – Photograph collage display

Cllrs Robertson and Sever confirmed that some photos had been taken but that more were needed to complete the seasonal collages. Further photographs are to be taken whilst the Berkshire Conservation Volunteers are on site on 14 July to include in the collages. The intention is to give each of the 4 identified schools a collage of a season.

**Action:** Cllrs Sever and Robertson

7 Min 3.9 – Green Flag application process

The Administrator met with Graham Pocket, Parks and Countryside Development Manager, BFC, at Circle Hill Woods and the Walter Recreation Ground to seek his advice on applying for Green Flag status for these areas. He advised that one application could be

made to cover both areas as they are in such close proximity and owned/managed by the same charitable trust. Certain improvement works are required before an application could be made, including information boards at the various entrances to the sites with details about the route of footpaths, bio-diversity of wildlife, flora and fauna. Additionally, formal management plans and documents for the areas would need to be devised as these are reviewed as part of the application and assessment process. There is only one round of applications and judging in each calendar year.

Mr Dodd added that the application process demanded quite a lot of work and as such the earliest possible date for submission would be January 2021.

Trustees were asked to let the Administrator know if they were interested in forming a working group to progress the Green Flag application.

**Action:** all Trustees

#### 8 Min 7 – Cherry Laurel

The Administrator reported the concern about cherry laurel to Nick Robins who requested details of the exact location of the laurel concerned. Various cutting back and maintenance works have already been undertaken. Cllr Dye reported that the cherry laurel was all over the site and Mr Dodd agreed to identify areas which would benefit from being tackled first.

**Action:** Mr Dodd

### 8 ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

#### 1 Berkshire Conservation Volunteers

The volunteers have been on site at Circle Hill on 31 March 2019 when they undertook the task of planting the alder buckthorn whips kindly donated by Wellington College. Mr Dodd was thanked for arranging the gift of the alder buckthorn which it is hoped will attract Brimstone Butterflies to the Walter Recreation Ground and Circle Hill Woods. A further visit is scheduled for 14 July where the volunteers will concentrate on footpath clearance works and cutting back bracken.

#### 2 Day in the Woods

Children from Crowthorne C of E Primary School attended a team building, problem solving and adventure activity day in Circle Hill woodland on 18 June 2019. The session was organised and run by Louise Gigg, Forest Schools Leader and 30 children and various adults took part. Cllr Robertson visited the group during the activity in her combined role as a governor at the school and trustee to Circle Hill woods and reported that she had very much enjoyed the session despite having spent time clearing shards of glass from the area.

Prior authorisation and consent had been obtained from the Trustees, via email, and it was confirmed that all appropriate risk assessments and insurance were in place before the activity proceeded.

#### 3 Japanese Knotweed

Mr Metcalf reported a further patch of suspected Japanese Knotweed at the edge of Circle Hill, early in May 2019. The area was quickly inspected by Nick Robins who reported that there was a clump of around 12 stalks alongside the ditch, one stalk a few feet away and the odd bit regenerating itself from the area concentrated on over the past couple of years. It has been sprayed but not in ideal conditions so will be redone when drier. Nick Robins continues to monitor the area on his regular maintenance visits.

Mr Dodd stated that he had equipment that enables the injecting of poison directly into the plant, which is quite an efficient eradication method. He would be willing to undertake this as it was doubtful that the maintenance contractor would possess this specialist equipment.

**Action:** Mr Dodd

Full diligence by the Trust can be demonstrated in tackling the Japanese Knotweed. In

addition, a full record of work undertaken is a legal requirement which the grounds contractor is obliged to keep up to date.

4 Emergency tree works

Emergency tree works had to be undertaken following the heavy snow on 2 February 19 as a silver birch had fallen at the entrance to Circle Hill woods posing a danger to the public.

5 Vandalism, fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour

The Administrator had received various reports of vandalism to bins, fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour at Circle Hill woods since the start of the year. Cllr Robertson has attended to remove broken glass before the 'Day at the Woods' activity where several bottles had been smashed on the old skateboard ramp base. Paul Chase (litter picker) also reported several Lidl wheeled baskets had been found broken and smashed in the woods along with a vast amount of litter. One incident of fly tipping was also reported and dealt with.

Thames Valley Police have been informed of this recent upsurge in anti-social type behaviour and carried out foot patrols in the village last weekend, at the request of CPC, and are planning to bring the Mounted Section Police to the village for a high profile visit on a weekend as soon as possible.

Neighbours living nearby to the woods have been encouraged to call in any concerns about anti-social behaviour and fly tipping to the non-emergency Police number 101.

The vandalism to the bin liners has led to a cost to the Trust as new liners have had to be purchased. WWPC have placed signs on their bins and those at the Walter Recreation Ground informing the public that they are owned and emptied by the Parish Council. WWPC's Clerk has been asked for an update, as if this scheme has been beneficial in reducing littering and vandalism, it would be worthwhile replicating it at Circle Hill. Trustees discussed the possibility of doing the same at Circle Hill.

6 Tree charter grant application – BFC

CPC has been invited to identify land within its ownership for new tree planting under a grant scheme. The grant would fund half of the cost of planting and maintaining new trees for three years with the other 50% met via a matched funding grant. Unfortunately, CPC and the Walter Rec and Circle Hill charity land do not meet the criteria for the grant as trees have been felled and/or planted, for reactive reasons, on the land within the last 3 years. Grant funding could be applied for for planting to extend forest margins but there is no land available to the Trust to extend the margins.

9 TO ENDORSE THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CLERK AND STAFF OF CROWTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL AS THE ADMINISTRATORS OF THE CHARITY

In line with the Charity Commissioners scheme dated 14 January 1975, for the Walter Recreation Ground: The charity to be administered by the staff of Crowthorne Parish Council.

It was RESOLVED to re-appoint the Clerk of Crowthorne Parish Council and Crowthorne Parish Council office staff as administrators of the Walter Recreation Ground and Circle Hill Charity.

10 TO REVIEW THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE WALTER RECREATION GROUND CHARITY

The Trustees reviewed and approved the circulated Terms of Reference.

11 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2019

The Trustees received and noted the Annual Accounts for year ending 31 March 2019.

12 TO RECEIVE, NOTE AND AGREE THE ANNUAL TREE SURVEY AND FOLLOW UP WORK

The tree work recommended is required on health and safety grounds to reduce the risk of a tree, or part of a tree, falling and causing injury or damage to people or property. The Trustees would expose the charitable Trust to the risk of litigation and liability for damage if the works recommended in the report were not undertaken within the time frames specified.

Nick Robins currently undertakes the Trust's grounds maintenance work and his quotation for the tree works is substantially cheaper than the other contractors who have submitted quotations. He has the requisite insurance, risk assessments and method statements to undertake the work. Accordingly, it is recommended that he carries out the work as he is reliable and provides the best value service to the Trust.

The Administrator authorised Nick Robins to carry out the urgent tree works specified to minimise the risk of an adverse event exposing the Trust to liability. The Trustees are requested to confirm the instruction of Nick Robins to carry out the remainder of the tree works specified in Lee Garner's report.

It was therefore proposed by Cllr Robertson, seconded by Mr Dodd and unanimously RESOLVED to undertake the tree work recommendations in the Arboricultural Report of Tree Assessments UK (the Report) dated 18 March 2019 as follows:

- a) The works recommended by Lee Garner of Tree Assessment UK's Arboricultural Report Tree Work Recommendations are undertaken at the Walter Recreation Ground and Circle Hill woods, within the time frames stipulated in the report, by Nick Robins at a cost of £3,761 + VAT.
- b) That further re-inspections are undertaken within the time frames specified, after the works have been completed.
- c) That the next tree survey is undertaken in March 2020 in line with the recommendations in the report.

13 TO RECEIVE, NOTE AND CONSIDER A COMPLAINT RECEIVED FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC CONCERNING RECENT TREE WORKS

The complaint received from Mr Brant was circulated to the Trustees, along with the response that had been sent by the Administrator.

As reported in the paper for the agenda item above (minute 12), the charitable Trust's trees were inspected by Lee Garner of Tree Assessments UK in early spring. Some extremely urgent works were identified which the Administrator immediately authorised in order to minimise the liability exposure to the Trustees and of imminent risk to members of the public and nearby property.

Nick Robins was the tree surgeon engaged to carry out the work and he confirmed the findings of Lee Garner, that the tree was considered an immediate danger and needed to be felled. The tree was duly felled.

It was proposed by Mr Metcalf, seconded by Mr Dodd and unanimously RESOLVED that a formal response to Mr Brant's complaint is sent by the Administrator on behalf of the

Trustees reiterating the previous emailed response. The formal response should also refer to the findings of Nick Robins who felled the tree as he has confirmed the findings of Lee Garner, that the tree felled was extremely dangerous and posed a risk of personal injury and of damage to property had it been allowed to remain in situ until after bird nesting season and the die back of nearby flora and fauna.

**Action:** Administrator

14 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Mr Dodd was asked whether he could once again attend the CPC Summer of Fun event on the Morgan Recreation Ground on Wednesday 21 August 2019. Mr Dodd replied that he would be happy to do so.

15 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

- Woodland footpath update
- Planting of British wildflowers
- Green Flag status
- Future promotion and public awareness

Meeting closed 11.20am

Signed .....

Dated .....