



3 Min 7.6 – Photograph collage display

The Administrator has obtained some photographs of the Berkshire Conservation Volunteers capturing their work in the woods. It was agreed that the photographs should be shared on the Walter Recreation Ground Trust section of the CPC website, on notice boards, and with Edgbarrow to encourage volunteers from the D of E scheme to participate in woodland management.

4 Min 7.7 – Green Flag application process

CPC's Project Officer carried out some preliminary working into the viability of a Green Flag application for Circle Hill and the Walter Recreation Ground. The Project Officer advised that there are some limiting factors relating to the sites which may preclude an application, namely that there is no designated safe crossing or entrance/gate into the sites which is one of the requirements for an application.

No further work has been done on the Green Flag application based on restrictive criteria and the lack of availability of funding for the application and limited officer time. CPC's Project Officer post is currently vacant and no appointment has been made despite two rounds of advertising and interviews.

The Administrator reported that an application had been submitted to the RHS In Bloom competition as the criteria are easier to meet but still demonstrate excellence in woodland and open space management. The outcome of the application is awaited and will be reported to the Trustees in due course.

5 Min 7.8 – Cherry Laurel

Wildscapes have confirmed that they conducted a monitoring visit in Spring 2021 to check and treat any regrowth of cherry laurel and rhododendron. They have also indicated that due to some small areas of regrowth they will spray this again next year. They are reporting that the chemical treatment they normally use has not been as effective this year. Another chemical will be utilised next year. The Administrator also reported that the application of anti fungal/algae treatments on play surfaces at the Morgan Recreation Ground had also been ineffective recently.

6 Min 7.9 – Japanese Knotweed

Mr Dodd has updated the Administrator to confirm that he has had to purchase new injecting equipment and will be treating the Japanese Knotweed week commencing 13 September 2021. Any dieback takes some time to be evident. Mr Metcalf reported that he has been to reinspect the Japanese Knotweed and over 90% appears to be responding to the treatment.

7 Min 7.10 – Berkshire Conservation Volunteers

The BCV team has continued to visit the woodland to carry out agreed works including the repainting of benches. The Trustees asked that the volunteers also focus on the two pathways at the top of the Walter Recreation Ground as these areas have become overgrown. Cllr Robertson reported that Costa Coffee are generous in supplying free hot drinks for the volunteers.

8 ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

1 Delayed AGM

The meeting schedule and AGM for the trustees has been delayed again this year due to the ongoing Covid restrictions limiting face to face meetings. The restrictions have now been lifted sufficiently to enable meetings to resume on a face to face basis, albeit with some ongoing Covid precautions.

The documentation required to ensure the charitable trust remains legally compliant have been filed with the Charity Commission.

8 (cont)

2 Appointment of trustees for the 2021/22 financial year

Crowthorne Parish Council and Wokingham Without Parish Council appoint 4 trustees each to the Walter Recreation Ground and Circle Hill Woods charitable trust each year. The Trustees confirmed the appointment of the following Trustees for the 2021/22 year:

CPC's appointed trustees for 2021/22 are:

Cllr Gail Robertson - CPC

Cllr Clifton Thompson - CPC

Cllr Simon Sever - CPC

Mark Dodd – Wellington College

WWPC's appointed trustees for 2021/22 are:

Cllr Janet Cannon - WWPC

Katy Hughes – WWPC Clerk

Cllr Doreen Dye - WWPC

Phil Metcalf – local resident

The Charity Commission has been informed of the current trustees' details.

3 Repair and maintenance works

The fence and gate post at the entrance to the Walter Recreation Ground were hit by an uninsured vehicle and the driver made off from the scene in May 2021. The cost of the fence repairs therefore had to be met by the trust and were £595.25.

A section of fence on the road opposite Travis Perkins rotted away and had to be replaced at a cost of £140 in June 2021.

Trustees were informed of these costs and authorised them ahead of the works proceeding.

The support legs on the notice board also rotted away at the base. The legs were therefore cut down in length slightly and the notice board recemented into met posts at a cost of £45.18 + VAT.

4 Rats

A local resident informed the Administrator that rats had been seen in the area around the bench which is close to the garages at the rear of properties on Circle Hill Road. The Administrator has visited the site on several occasions however no signs of vermin were seen. It is possible that local residents have placed bait/traps in their own gardens which have eradicated any rodent infestation.

5 Environmental crime and anti-social behaviour

The same resident reporting the rats has also reported that the bench on Circle Hill Road is a gathering point for local youths who congregate there to smoke, play music loudly and litter.

The Administrator was also called to this location recently as a pot of paint had been upended and its contents spilt in the woodland floor. The Administrator and a local gardening contractor cleared away the paint to avoid contamination of flora, fauna and wildlife.

There is no litter bin in close proximity to this bench.

There are also fairly frequent fly tips of bagged domestic waste which is deposited in the open topped litter bins around the woodland.

8 (cont)

Procurement of new close topped litter bins with small openings was discussed under minute number 14.

Crowthorne Neighbourhood Police have been requested to include Circle Hill Woods on their regular patrols to act as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour and environmental crime.

6 Bench relocation request

The resident who has raised concerns about the bench on Circle Hill Road being a gathering point for anti-social behaviour and littering has asked if the bench can be moved to an area away from the houses/gardens. The Administrator has discussed this with Mark Dodd who has advised that bench relocation is always difficult as it could move the anti-social behaviour and littering problems further into the woods where more nefarious problems and activities could ensue. It may also be harder for the Police patrols to keep an eye on anti-social behaviour if the bench is placed somewhere less accessible.

Mr Metcalf reported that he lives approximately 100 metres from the bench and has not been troubled by noise or disturbances. All present agreed the bench should remain where it is so that it is accessible to the Police and can be seen by nearby properties to discourage anti-social behaviour. The Trustees all agreed that a bin should be installed in the vicinity of the bench so that litter is not deposited on the ground. This should help to discourage any vermin.

7 Footpath 22

A Wokingham Borough resident tripped and fell on the section of the footpath beyond the school fence at the far end of the Walter Recreation ground footpath sustaining facial injuries and a broken arm – this stretch of footpath is the responsibility of WBC.

The resident's husband wrote to the Administrator to inform the Trustees as he was not sure who was responsible for the section in question. It was confirmed after intercession by the Administrator with both WBC and BFC that the footpath is the responsibility of WBC. They are looking at longer term surfacing solutions, including tarmac, for their section.

The same resident also complained about the overgrown vegetation through the exit from the Walter Rec. out onto New Road. The Administrator ascertained that this area is a private road and that the vegetation belongs to a neighbour. The trust, parish and borough council therefore have no jurisdiction over this to take enforcement action. The resident who complained therefore cut back the overhanging vegetation himself.

Robins Forestry continue to maintain the footpaths, grass and vegetation on a regular basis at both Circle Hill and the Walter Rec. It has been noted by Mr Robins and CPC's own grounds staff that it has been inordinately difficult to maintain footpaths etc. this summer due to the climatic conditions which have led to rapid growth of all trees, plants and vegetation.

The Administrator (CPC Clerk) and Clerk from WWPC have arranged to conduct a site visit after the meeting today and inspect the footpaths at both the Walter Rec. and Circle Hill to determine any follow up action required.

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 the circulated Terms of Reference and agreed an amendment to paragraph 6, changing '£500' to '£1,000 for any incident deemed to be of an urgent nature'. Subject to this amendment the Terms of Reference were agreed.

11 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2021

The Trustees received and noted the Annual Accounts for year ending 31 March 2021.

12 TO NOTE THE HALF YEAR ACCOUNTS AND COMMENT ON THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET FOR 2022/23

Trustees noted the half year accounts which had been pre-circulated.

The trustees reviewed the draft budget estimates for 2022/23 which had been pre-circulated and made various amendments. It was agreed that some of the bigger projects such as Green Flag notice boards and bike jumps solutions could be funded via CIL applications to the two parish councils. WWPC is unlikely to approve a co-funded budget request for more than £4,000 which potentially limits the budget for the Trust to £8,000 as the two parishes split the cost 50/50.

The trustees agreed to remove the budget for bins and make a CIL application for this item.

- 13
- i) To receive, note and agree the annual tree survey by Tree Assessments UK and payment of contractor's invoice
  - ii) To agree the cost of the emergency tree works undertaken pursuant to the recommendations in the tree survey
  - iii) To agree the appointment of a contractor and quotation for all remedial works advised
  - iv) To agree the tree surveyor's fees for a winter inspection
- i) The trustees received, noted and agree the annual tree survey by Tree Assessments UK contained in the report dated 5 September 2021 and agreed payment of his invoice for the two sites in the sum of:  
£230.00 plus VAT– Circle Hill  
£181.25 plus VAT – Walter Rec.
- ii) The trustees agreed (retrospectively) to incur the fees of Nick Robins Forestry to undertake the urgent remedial works to a Hawthorn (tree 6 at Circle Hill) advised by Tree Assessments UK in the sum of £40.00 plus VAT. The works were undertaken by the mid-September deadline, the Administrator having already authorised these works due to the urgent nature of them.

- iii) The Trustees agreed to the appointment of Robins Forestry to undertake all the remedial works identified at Circle Hill and the Walter Rec. in the tree survey dated 5 September.

The Administrator has strived to obtain 3 quotations for the recommended tree works however due to existing work commitments two contractors have confirmed they are either unable to quote or unable to carry out the works within the timeframes required. Robins Forestry, the Trustees appointed grounds contractor, is able to undertake the works and is known to reduce his fees by 50% for work carried out at sites where he also has the ground contract. It is therefore believed that his charges are fair and reasonable. He has quoted as follows for the works outlined in Lee Garner's survey:

Walter Recreation Ground £780.00 plus VAT  
Circle Hill £4,985.00 plus VAT

The trustees agreed the award of the contract for the remedial tree works to Robins Forestry at a cost of £5,765.00 + VAT.

- iv) Lee Garner advised that one group of trees at Circle Hill is reinspected over the winter when there are no leaves on the trees. The trustees authorised the cost of this inspection at £60.00.

14 TO AGREE APPLICATIONS TO CPC AND WWPC FOR CIL FUNDING TO REPLACE 6 LITTER BINS AT CIRCLE HILL AND THE WALTER RECREATION GROUND

The litter bins at Circle Hill and the Walter Rec. are old style circular bins with open tops. These bins pose several problems:

- a) fly tipping of bagged household waste, and
- b) foxes, crows, squirrels and magpies raid the bins and scatter the contents.

The Trustees agreed to submit applications to CPC and WWPC for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to replace 6 litter bins at Circle Hill and the Walter Recreation Ground with Ranger style bins with closed tops and narrow slot side openings to help resolve the issues outlined above which are frequently encountered with the old style bins.

CIL funding application for a total cost of £3,300 to be shared between the two parishes (£1,650 per parish) are to be submitted.

15 TO CONSIDER THE PROCUREMENT OF TREES VIA A GRANT FROM THE QUEEN'S CANOPY FUND FOR CIRCLE HILL

In recent years considerable works have been undertaken, both in line with the woodland management plan and due to tree survey works, to remove areas of cherry laurel and rhododendron and to fell dead, diseased or dying trees. This has left some areas without trees or vegetation. The Trust has left the areas to recover in line with advice received from Trustees (Cllr Dye) and external professionals (Wildscapes), and due to budgetary constraints, particularly in the last 18 months as a result of the Covid pandemic.

The opportunity has now arisen to procure trees and plants free of charge via the Woodland Trust which is providing tree and hedging packs to community organisations to commemorate the Queen's platinum jubilee next year.

Following the fallow period and in line with the Trust's management responsibilities for the woodland, the Trustees agreed to procure trees via a grant from the Queen's Canopy Fund for Circle Hill. The trustees indicated a preference for either the 'Wild Harvest' or 'Wildlife' packs.

16 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Mr Metcalf informed the trustees that he had seen Brimstone Butterflies at Circle Hill which demonstrates that the woodland management plans and careful site management with the introduction of plants and trees such as Alder Buckthorn are having the desired impact.

The trustees would like to meet again in about 3 months.

17 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

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

Meeting closed 12.20pm

Signed .....

Dated .....