

REPORT

MEETING OF THE CASTLEMORTON COMMON CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

Castlemorton Parish Hall

Thursday 24 November 2011 7.30 pm

Present: Mr L Bartlett, Mr A Bunn, Mrs A Calvesbert (Chair), Mr R Chamings, Mr R Dawe, Mrs L Hartman, Mr C Rouse, Mr D Smallwood, Mr M Snookes, Mrs B Wilkes.

Apologies from Mrs S Windle and Mr R Gillard.

In Attendance: Ian Rowat (Director), Rob Havard (Conservation Officer), Fiona Macklin (Admin Officer), Jenny Grantham (Deputy Conservation Officer), Mr A Golightly, and a total of 4 members of the public.

1. Election of Chairman for 2011-2012.

On the proposal of Mr R Chamings, seconded by Mr R Dawe, Mrs A Calvesbert was duly elected Chairman for the year.

2. To receive the minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 18th May 2011.

It was **AGREED** that the minutes should be **SIGNED** by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

Swinyard Car Park. The Director stated that during busy times the Wardens placed a sign on the barrier stating that it is a free car park but cars still parked on the road. There is also an issue with closing the barrier if cars remain after closing time as there may be people who are ill or have other reasons why their cars are still in the car park after closing time. A Warden was posted there in summer to talk to people. Mr D Smallwood stated that the signs were too small and should be sited where they can be easily seen.

Anti-Social Behaviour. The Director stated that this is generally a summer issue. Things usually occur after the Wardens have finished their duties. Next year will probably see some of the same issues return.

Illegal Parking. The Director stated that MHC had not been putting notices on illegally parked cars. This was because it would create more difficulties and would be poorly received, and every illegally parked car would have to be given a notice.

Mill Pond. The Conservation Officer stated that a survey had been completed on the Mill Pond Dam as it is leaking. Work was due to begin soon and the trees will be cleared from the downstream side. Specialist dam engineers will oversee the work. A new Act of Parliament has gone through that states all water-bodies and dams must comply therefore the dam must be maintained and there are also Health and Safety issues. The dam wall will be fenced to keep cattle out but will allow people and sheep to have access. There is a 50 page report and members were invited to contact the MHC office if they would like to see the report.

Signs at the Gullet. The Director confirmed the signs have been completed.

4. Sheep on the road (Hollybush and Coombe Green area)

Mrs B Wilkes stated that this has been raised by the Parish Council. Drivers coming from Ledbury into Hollybush can be met with sheep on the road. The same problem occurs for drivers coming from Gloucester towards Coombe Green. The Director stated that if someone can pinpoint where a sign is needed MHC will contact the local authority. Mr R Dawe asked if a sign could be placed by the bus stop before turning into Gullet Quarry as there have been fatalities there in the past.

5. Creation of vehicular access across common land (re: Marlbrook Farm area)

Mrs B Wilkes stated that this was also an issue raised by the Parish Council. There is a gate that has been put in that crosses the common. The Director stated that new owner wanted to close off one access to the field which was a metal gate with a padlock, and put in a new access further down the track. It is an agricultural access only into that field not a general right of way. The Director confirmed that he would write to the owner so the matter can be corrected. Mr Dawe requested that a bigger 5 mile an hour sign be erected at Marlbrook Farm.

6. Malvern Hills Byelaws and their interpretation

Mr Dawe complained that turf had been taken at Hollybed Street. Mr Chamings informed Mr Dawe that if a complaint is made in writing to allow MHC to look at the issue.

7. Dog worrying of stock on the commons and the way it is handled ie. Warnings, training, other consequences

The Conservation Office confirmed that MHC can give warnings but to take a case to court requires evidence. It was explained that MHC are working in conjunction with a local dog trainer to provide a six week sheep safety course for dogs and dog owners which if completed sees a 50% refund of the cost of the course.

8. Clarification of when one is eligible for payments via the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, how many stock does one have to have etc

The Conservation Officer stated that people need approximately 40 sheep for it to be worthwhile to graze the commons. Under the Scheme MHC are required to deliver certain outcomes.

9. Ditches, Culverts, Debris

Mr L Bartlett asked if work on the ditches and culverts could be carried out in the dry weather rather than in wet seasons. The Conservation Officer clarified that the ditches around the edges of the common generally are not owned by MHC. The ditches on the SSSI have received maintenance and tree stumps have been removed from some ditches. If there are concerns about particular ditches people were invited to contact the office. The Conservation Officer confirmed that a telephone call would be made to Severn Trent Water regarding the monitoring of water released from British Camp dam.

10. Common Foundation

Mr A Golightly informed members of the national body for commons and commoners. It was stated that information could be gained from the website www.common-threads.org.uk. Mrs A Calvesbert confirmed that information would be gathered and a decision taken at the next meeting of the 4C's as to whether membership to the Commons Foundation should be sought. In the meantime, members were encouraged to look at the website.

11. Public Questions

A member of the public asked if the leak near Mr Bunn's farm was fixed. Mr Bunn confirmed it had been.

A member of the public asked if a leak near Hunter's Hall spreading water across the common has been fixed. The Conservation Officer stated that Severn Trent Water would be contacted. The nearest postcode to this leak was WR13 6JB.

12. Information

The Conservation Officer informed members of work at the Mill Pond and stated that a 50 page document is available for viewing at MHC office.

The Conservation Officer outlined the scrub plans for the common and confirmed this information will be included with the minutes.

Mrs A Calvesbert formally thanked the Director for all his work with the 4C's.

13. Date of next meeting

17th May 2012 at 7.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.