

## **Meeting of the Castlemorton Commons Co-ordinating Committee**

**Castlemorton Parish Hall**

**Wednesday 15 May 2019 8.00pm**

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**Present:** Lionel Bartlett, Phil Birley, Ann Brennan, Mick Davies (Chair), Matt Gardner, Peter Hancock, Julie Moore, Chris Rouse, Keith Stevens, Barbara Wilkes, Sue Windle.

In attendance:

From Malvern Hills Trust (MHT): CEO, Secretary to the Board  
16 members of the public, Jenny Phelps (Foundation for Common Land) and  
Charlotte Marshall (Gloucestershire FWAG).

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Don Lupton, Jonathan Bills, Stella Bunn.

### **2. Committee membership**

Mick Davies asked the Committee to remember Med Snookes and the contribution he had made to the common and to 4Cs.

Ann Brennan said she had been asked to represent the Common Association on the Committee.

### **3. To receive the report of the meeting held on 14 November 2018**

The minutes were approved by the meeting and signed as such by the Chair.

### **4. Matters Arising**

The CEO reported no further developments in relation to British Camp reservoir. Mick Davies asked Mr Bartlett to share with the committee any correspondence he had with Severn Trent. **LB**

Stella Bunn had sent in a report on the Castlemorton Facebook pages.

The CEO said the Trust would continue to look for ways to reduce unlawful parking outside Swinyards car park.

Ann Brennan said she would look at arrangements to update changes of ownership in the Common's Register and report back. (Next year) **AB**

The CEO had looked at the footpath close to the Welland boundary (which had been reported as flooding). It was not feasible to put in a drainage ditch, but MHT would look at installing some flat stones (end of summer).

**DB**

#### **5. Report from Malvern Hills Trust (including Conservation Manger's report)**

The Trust were aiming to try to proceed with a public consultation on the Charity Commission Scheme, notwithstanding they were still awaiting responses from third parties which were required to finalise some details. The CEO confirmed he had replied to a letter from Castlemorton PC, which had been circulated to Committee members.

Stock numbers were constant (70 cattle and 500 sheep). The Trust had purchased 28 acres by the Common which could be used as in-bye land. A further ½ ha of tree felling had been carried out since November, south west of Hancock's Lane. Five trees had been pollarded.

Bracken rolling would be carried out in July.

The Committee were asked to contact MHT if they had any suggestions for scrub clearance for next winter.

Members of the public present said, in response to a query from the CEO, that they believed the earthworks visible near Hunter's Hall, were the site of a war-time searchlight emplacement. The CEO would speak to an archaeologist to ascertain the best way of conserving the feature. **DB**

The CEO said, in relation to rights of estover, that it was the responsibility of commoners to ensure that they had the rights they were seeking to exercise, and to be aware of the boundaries of the common over which those rights were enjoyed. They should also be mindful of the general law and ensure they were not breaching other legislation, for example the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Rights-holders were only permitted to take produce for personal domestic use. It might be possible to co-ordinate with the estover rights holders when MHT was removing trees. The Trust would apply for a new Stewardship Scheme to replace the one which expired next year. Mick Davies suggested that, before the end of the year, a working group be set up to prepare for the new scheme. Ann Brennan asked if she could have some advice on estovers to E-mail to CCA members. The Secretary to the Board said estovers was a complex area. The Trust could not give advice, but could confirm the basic guidelines. **SS**

Chris Rouse raised the issue of anthelmintic resistance. Matt Gardner said in his view the issue could not be addressed by looking at the common alone. **JB**

## **6. Draft constitution**

Jenny Phelps suggested enquiring if a representative of Natural England could be brought onto the committee? **DB**

The revised constitution (attached) was approved unanimously. Mick Davies thanked the Working Group for their efforts.

Mick Davies asked whether the committee should be chaired by someone independent of the membership. Jenny Phelps said that other groups used an independent facilitator and she offered to help for a short time.

The Committee agreed to take up her generous offer.

Ann Brennan asked if the members should announce any conflicts of interest at the start of the meeting.

## **7. Signage on the common**

Barbara Wilkes asked if there could be additional signage from Rye Cross to Welland, as drivers did not notice the standard signs nor appreciate that the stock could be off the open common. MHT to give an interim report on their discussions with Highways on additional signage. (July) The CEO suggested that additional pressure from the bodies represented on 4Cs would be useful. **DB/JB/MD**

Barbara Wilkes also asked if seasonal signs could be erected to warn drivers about migrating frogs crossing Hollybed Street. The CEO would look into the Trust putting up signage for this purpose. (January) **DB**

Ann Brennan reported people were not happy with the quality of the signage warning dog owners of sheep and lambs. The CEO reported that the signs would be removed shortly and the Trust would look into more resilient signage for 2020. **DB**

The excellence of the temporary signs on Coombe Green Common was noted.

## **8. Incidents/byelaw breaches**

The CEO reported cars parking on the common and minor incidents at Gullet Quarry over Easter. There were other reports of unauthorised persons fishing in the Hollybed pond, and use of barbeques.

## **9. Stock visibility/casualties**

There had been 2 dog attacks on lambs.

## **10. Reports from CCA**

Med Snookes had sadly died since the last meeting. Chris Milne was now chair and Ian Flanders treasurer.

## **11. Reports from other represented bodies Report from Malvern Hills Trust**

Sue Windle reported that mechanical clearance of scrub had been undertaken, and one of Iron Age digging sites manually cleared. It was planned to clear others. The lamb signs had proved effective over the spring. There would be a fundraising raffle to be drawn at the Summer Bash at the Farmers Arms. She had pictures of very effective signs warning dog owners about lambs, which she would be happy to share. Mary Attridge said it appeared the road surface was subsiding on Hancocks Lane between the bridge and the Gloucester Road, and by the bridges. Lionel Bartlett also reported potential problems by the gate. **DB**

## **12. Date of next meeting**

28 August 2019

**The meeting closed at 10.06pm**