

## REPORT

### MEETING OF THE CASTLEMORTON COMMON CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

Castlemorton Parish Hall

Wednesday 9 November 2016 8.00pm

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Present: Lionel Bartlett, Mick Davies, Matt Gardner, Roger Gillard, Peter Hancock, Chris Rouse, David Smallwood, Med Snookes, Julian Taylor (Chairman), Dermot Weaver, Barbara Wilkes, Sue Windle.

In attendance: Director, Conservation Officer, Secretary to the Board, Ms A Brennan, Mr A Golightly.

**1. Appointment of Chair**

On the proposal of Mr Snookes, Mr Taylor was re-appointed unopposed.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

There were none.

**3. To receive the report of the meeting held on 11 May 2016**

On the proposal of Mr Davies, seconded by Mr Gillard, the report of the meeting held on 11 May 2016 was approved by the meeting and signed as such by the Chairman.

**4. Matters Arising**

The Conservation Officer reported that MHC's "Good Neighbour" leaflet would be revised and re-printed in 2017.

There were minor Severn Trent works near the junction of New Road and the Gullett Road and a road cone had been left by Woodlands.

The Conservation Officer and Mr Hancock had met to look at the ruts near Eight Oaks and decided to monitor them.

The Conservation Officer had passed on to AONB officers the comments which had been made at the last meeting about the BT poles by Huntsbridge. They were aware of the poles but had had no success persuading BT to move the apparatus underground. The Director agreed to continue to put pressure on BT wherever possible to put services underground.

The Director reported that the car park machine at Swinyard's car park had been badly damaged by vandalism in late October. If anyone had any

information, please pass it on to the police. He was monitoring the situation in relation to cars parking outside the car park and partially blocking the road and had looked at the possibility of installing dragons' teeth posts on the verge to prevent inconsiderate parking.

MHC had made a series of press releases in relation to sheep worrying, as well as using Social Media and signage on the common during lambing. Mr Gardner had noticed no difference as a result, but Mrs Wilkes thought that more dog owners had put their dogs on leads in response to the signs.

A cow belonging to Mr Gardner had been hit by a car on Welland straight within the last few days. It had been logged as an RTA. The police would not give Mr Gardner the driver's details, forcing him to go through his insurers. Unless the accident caused injury to a person, it would not be included in WCC Highways' accident statistics. Mrs Wilkes stated that she always registered stock casualties with the police and obtained an incident number. The Director asked if all graziers could let MHC have details of incidents involving stock, in order that MHC had the information to aid their discussions with Highways. The Conservation Officer said that in the New Forest signs were present stating how many animals had been involved in RTAs. It was suggested that someone should contact Mr Shale to collect his data.

Mr Snookes was asked if he could provide information (within living memory) on how many stock used to be grazing the common.

## **5. Report from MHC Conservation Officer**

The Conservation Officer reported as follows:

### Stock numbers and grazing

There were currently about 60 cattle and 500 sheep grazing the common (plus a horse and a pony).

### Update on mowing and scrub clearance

About 3ha had been cleared around Hancock's Lane/Welland. It was planned to undertake some work at Rot Cot and by the Mill Pond.

### Securing Commons grazing

MHC were still looking at the legal framework for undertaking any work.

## **6. Incidents/ byelaw infringements**

The Director said that besides the damage to the parking meter, there had been several reports of young drivers speeding. The police were aware. The Director asked the committee to report any sightings of people flying drones as this activity was against the byelaws. The same byelaw also prohibited the flying of any powered model aircraft. MHC would give permission to appropriately qualified and insured drone pilots in appropriate circumstances.

## **7. Ditches**

Mr Taylor asked if information about ownership of ditches would be provided in the Good Neighbours leaflet. The Conservation Officer confirmed that it would include guidance on all types of boundaries. Mr Taylor was asked a lot of questions about land management when he was out walking. The Director said that whilst land management issues would not be appropriate for the Good Neighbours leaflet, consideration was being given to producing a newsletter next year and the sorts of things Mr Taylor was being asked would be good items to include. It was agreed that it would also be a good idea to provide information about living near the common to the residents of the new estates in Welland. Mr Taylor pointed out that this would be a good opportunity to mention speeding traffic. Mr Smallwood said that the Castlemorton Parish Council were thinking of producing a welcome pack for new residents and the leaflet could be included. Mr Hancock confirmed that Welland delivered a newsletter to every household several times a year and again, communications from MHC could be delivered with them.

#### **8. Communications**

Mr Taylor asked that everyone passed their E-mail addresses to Sue Satchell. He suggested that MHC could let committee members know between meetings of any particular issues that might affect them. Mr Smallwood asked if E-mails could be sent or copied bcc. It was agreed that it was important to avoid circulating private E-mail addresses.

Mr Smallwood had sent an E-mail to the Operations Manager at MHC about the non-adopted section of Hancocks Lane. He had not received a reply. The Director apologised but said he was still looking into the matter and was awaiting information on cost of repair. [*Please note the best E-mail address to use for MHC is [conservators@malvern hills.org.uk](mailto:conservators@malvern hills.org.uk)*].

#### **9. Birtsmorton Parish – Securing Coombegreen**

There was nothing further to report – it was not possible to progress the matter until MHC were in a position to move forward. There had been a thistle clearing exercise, which had been well supported and a good community event.

#### **10. Report from CCA**

Mr Snookes had nothing to report other than that CCA were organising some social events. He also noted that local people were asking questions about land management issues and had received very positive feedback about cattle being back on the common. He also felt that more people were putting dogs on leads when stock were around but that there had been an increase in the number of walkers. He commented on the increasing number of trees along Welland straight. The Conservation Officer said that the area he was referring to would

be cleared in due course. Selected areas were being cleared in rotation. Mr Smallwood suggested that MHC should concentrate on removing small trees and saplings before they grew too big.

### **11. Reports from other represented bodies**

Mr Hancock said that Welland Parish Council were keen to do something about traffic speed on the common. There was a discussion on the use of speed cameras but it was unlikely that action would be taken on the B4208 unless there were personal injury accidents.

Mr Gardner said that graziers should also report incidents of stock worrying to the police, so that these were reflected in national statistics. Mr Weaver said that there had been a successful prosecution at Worcester Magistrates Court of an individual whose dog had attacked his stock. The Conservation Officer asked to use the case as part of publicity to promote responsible dog ownership and asked Mr Weaver to pass on details of the case.

Mrs Wilkes confirmed that hard-core currently on the common by Richanal would be moved as soon as it could be arranged.

Mr Taylor asked who had rights of estover (a right to take fallen wood). The Secretary to the Board said she could only answer this by reference to the commons register – her recollection was that it was a relatively small number of commoners. Mr Taylor suggested that, when trees were cut down, there might be some elderly people who would appreciate some logs. The Director said that if anyone saw outsiders cutting trees, they should phone MHC's office immediately. The Conservators did, from time to time, leave cleared wood for local residents to help themselves. [*Provided this can be done without taking a vehicle onto the common*].

The Secretary to the Board reported that she had ascertained that none of the current staff knew how to access the 4C's web site but investigations were still ongoing.

### **12. Information and Any Other Business**

There was a water leak by Woodlands. The Conservation Officer said Severn Trent had finished work there, and a compensation claim had been paid in respect of "wear and tear" to the track that served Woodlands.

Mrs Windle asked what the position was on carrying out controlled burning on the common. (Vegetation control on Coombegreen). The pits there were archaeological sites and the Conservation Officer suggested speaking to the County Archaeologist. He agreed to send Mrs Windle the link. She asked what the requirements were for using temporary fencing to graze the common. The Director thought that there were H & SE guidelines for electric fencing signage but she should also check the general law in relation to temporary fencing on Common Land.

Mr Hancock pointed out that the phone boxes in the area were going to be removed. The Director said that MHC had no use for the boxes on their land and they were a maintenance liability.

Mr Taylor said that 2017 was the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the “rave.”

**13. Date of next meeting**

17 May 2017 8pm.

**The meeting closed at 9.40pm**