

**St Catherine's Hill & Town Common Management Steering Group
Minutes of Meeting, Thursday 14 November 2013 – 2:00pm
82 Hurn Road, Christchurch**

Present:

Amanda Collins (SBW) – AC	Chris Gordon (WCRA) – CG
Cllr Sue Spittle (CBC) – SS	Robin Harley (CBC) – RH
Gary Powell (ARC) – GP	Jade North (UHP) – JN
Nick Squirrell (NE) - NS	

1. Welcome and Introduction

1.1 SS welcomed the group.

2. Apologies

2.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Margaret Phipps (CBC/HPC), Clive Sinden (CBC), Peter Holloway (CBC), Cllr Tavis Fox (CBC) and Yvette Greatrex (HPC).

3. Minutes of meeting on 20 June 2013

3.1 These were agreed by the group as a true record

4. Matters Arising

4.1 Under 4.4 GP pointed out that ARC were not approached by the gun club in relation to spraying

4.2 Under 4.5 RH said that the entrance ladder boards are still on his to-do list

4.3 Under 4.6 CG gave an update on the proposed interpretative granite plinth. He explained that a small group of representatives will visit the company on 19 November. He felt that we were looking at around £2500 as a rough total and asked AC if Sembcorp could make a contribution. AC agreed to a £500 contribution. Similar amounts had been pledged by FSCH, CBC, WCRA and ARC.

4.4 There was a discussion about gun club firing times as there appeared to be little adherence to these. RH said that the times should be available on-line. (see http://www.christchurchgunclub.org/html/cgc_calendar.htm)

4.5 SS said that she had spoken to James Fitzharris and that he was keen to provide information at the next site history day.

5. Felling Licence Application Update

5.1 RH explained that following agreement at the last meeting, felling licence applications had been submitted by ARC, CBC and Sembcorp. AC said that Sembcorp had received a letter to say that they are exempt from the licensing process. RH pointed out that there was a typo on the public register, which stated that a much larger area that was correct had been listed for felling. He had reported this but no changes had been made.

5.2 RH said that the licences were at the Statutory Consultee stage and that a positive reply had been received from NE already. He said that Carolyn McPhie, the Tree and Landscape Officer at CBC was considering taking a report to Committee. SS

said that given the plan had gone before Community Services Committee and been adopted, surely this was not necessary and should be dealt with under delegated powers. SS said that she would talk to Carolyn about the matter.

- 5.3 NS queried if there had been much damage on site following the recent storm. RH replied to say that a few limbs had fallen but generally damage was not too bad, considering the weather.

6. Dipwell & Hydrology Update

- 6.1 RH said that dipwell monitoring had continued on a monthly basis as agreed. He and Chris Dresh from ARC had met Ron Allen, the hydrologist on site to show him the year 1 work proposals. RH prepared notes from the meeting and sent them to Ron Allen for agreement. In general Ron was happy with everything proposed and praised the cautious approach that we are taking. In a couple of areas he advised some closer monitoring for erosion, following works.
- 6.2 CG asked for the dipwell information and notes to be sent electronically. All agreed that this should be made publically available.
- 6.3 NS asked about standing water. RH said that while most ponds on site had been dry all summer, there was still standing water in some of the ditches at the edges of site, where water continues to seep from springs all year round.

7. Implementation of Year 1 Felling Proposals.

- 7.1 RH pointed out that although everything seemed to be going very well, once management work starts there will still be members of the public who either do not approve of the works or had no idea that anything was planned. To help address this some information was planned to be erected on site. This will be circulated to the group beforehand.
- 7.2 In addition RH said that a guided walk had been held on site to talk about management but there were no takers. He would talk to GP and provide one or two additional dates to offer more walks over next couple of months.
- 7.3 NS suggested that a letter is prepared ready to respond to members of the public who are not in agreement. This could include web-links to the management plan and dates when key events took place (e.g. adoption of plan). RH said that he prepared this information to send to the Forestry Commission and it would not be much work to adapt the wording. NS said it was important to focus any response on the real concerns. It was suggested that an FAQ sheet would be helpful
- 7.4 GP pointed out that that anticipated capital funding from NE was not available as all money had been allocated for this year elsewhere. Both ARC and CBC have HLS maintenance funding which they can use in the first year but it is not an ideal situation and cannot happen in future years. NS said that an underspend elsewhere was likely and that some capital funds may still be available.
- 7.5 GP has applied on behalf of ARC and CBC for capital funds for the 2014-15 season and is awaiting a response.

7.6 GP had contacted Landmarc as potential contractors as he has used them at a difficult site in Surrey and thinks they would be well suited for this work. GP will arrange meeting before Christmas, along with RH and any other interested parties. CG agreed to attend on behalf of the group. NS said that as the work is phased there is a carrot of several years work if they do well in year 1. NS also suggested Meyrick Estates as a potential contractor.

7.7 RH said that we need to think about vegetation mapping as this was within the plan. The idea is to record the vegetation composition at fixed locations over time, to measure the recovery rate, following management works. NS suggested also calculating the amount of needle litter under the pine woodland for a fixed area.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 NS said that NE had been reviewed and that they are not being merged with the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission. However, there will be some restructuring and a move from functional land management to a more integrated approach. It is likely that the Dorset and Hampshire teams will merge from April 2014.

8.2 RH mentioned that the Countryside Service had suffered several break-ins and had lost computer equipment amongst other items.

9. Date of next meeting

9.1 Next meeting to take place on Tuesday 14 January at 2pm with venue to be arranged.