

**HEALEY AREA FORUM**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**Thursday, 13 September 2018**

**PRESENT:** Councillors O'Neill and Wazir, S. Acton, G. Bowden-Witts, J. Kennedy (Chair), M. Barnett, D. Barnett, B. Kilduff, Christine, J. College, J. Sutton, A. Tully, J. Murphy, B. Brown, C. Grimwood, M. Grimwood, S. Shaw, A. Evans, I. Wilson, N. Dixon, M. Lloyd, S. Lloyd, M. Davenport, K. Smith, T. Ayrton, R. Lord and Rev. H. Johnson.

**OFFICERS:** I. Trickett (Environmental Management) and G. Finch (Township and Engagement Officer)

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillor Heakin

**WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES AND CODE OF CONDUCT**

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The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and explained that the meeting had been arranged to discuss issues specifically related to the Common.

Apologies had been received from Councillor Heakin.

**ISSUES RELATING TO THE COMMON**

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Ian Trickett, Environmental Management attended the meeting for this item.

It was explained that a number of questions in connection with the Common had been received prior to the meeting. In some cases a written response had also been received. This question and answer sheet was circulated at the meeting.

Question 1

Response received prior to meeting

<b>Heritage Gardens</b>  <b>Repairs are needed to the area including damaged flagstones and general maintenance</b>	<b>Heritage garden maintenance lies with the Council. I will ask Tracy Hibbert to look at the site with David Illingworth. Tracy manages In Bloom landscaping projects and David Illingworth manages day to day maintenance. Between them they should be able to come up with a plan of action.</b>
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A general discussion took place concerning the neglect of this area and the work that was required to improve the area.

Outcomes:

1. An action plan was now in place to improve the area.
2. It was asked if consideration could be given to including this area in future 'In Bloom' competitions.

<b>Paths on the Common</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The paths on the Common have deteriorated following both the theft of some flagstones and the burial over time of others. The Common is often wet and boggy and the reinstatement of good quality paths would make it more accessible for a wider section of the community.</li> </ul>	<p>Paths on the common are not Designated Rights of Way but permissive paths through the site, so like a tarmac path in a park. As such it is our responsibility in EM to ensure they are safe within reasonable bounds. Problem is that stone flags laid with big gaps in them will never be a long term good footpath solution. If stone paths are to be maintained to a high standard they would need to be lifted, path area dug out and edged, weed suppressant membrane and crushed stone base before re-laying the stone paving. The report highlights the long term problem = risk of theft. We could spend a lot of money making it look great and then have it all nicked a week later. In this isolated spot that is a very high risk. EM would strongly suggest replacing with tarmac paths with side drains. Either way, this would be a major undertaking beyond our maintenance budgets, so either s106 or AMG but my understanding was that no decision had been taken by Members on the type of surface. If they make a decision we can get quotes here in EM.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Limersgate pack horse trail once ran from the Chapel to the pond, then to Binns Nook Road and Falinge Park. This should be reinstated with an acceptable surface that would allow access for wheelchairs and pushchairs and which would not allow pooling of water.</li> </ul>	<p>Limersgate pack horse trail would be nice to reinstate but there is no legal requirement on Council for us to do so, again it is suitable surface that needs to be agreed and then this would be Members decision to see if they would fund either from Township / Area Forum budgets or s106. If it is done in stone and then stolen it would go back to Township to fund replacement stones because EM do not have a budget to be constantly replacing stolen flags. For that reason EM would only accept maintenance if it was a tarmac path.</p> <p>In response to Ian Trickett's email and the designation of footpaths I can</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Who has the responsibility for and knowledge of the definitive map. This seems to have been inaccessible to the public for some time now. The addition of Limersgate onto the definitive map could support the case for the upkeep of the path.</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>confirm that the record of definitive rights of way are protected under Highways Act 1980 and other legislation against closure, obstruction, alterations etc. however a route not identified on the definitive map and statement but is actually visible on the ground and used by the general public is a permissive path or a desire route and does not receive the same protection as the definitive recorded routes.</b></p> <p><b>Any new paths implemented on the ground that have not proceeded through a legal process would only be permissive, should you wish a route to follow the legal process please contact me and I can explain the procedure, it can be however, a lengthy piece of work that can be time consuming for little gain for any applicant but if successful it will have the protection under current highway legislation</b></p> <p><b>Contact Officers - Ian Trickett / Julie Simpson</b></p>
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A general discussion took place concerning the following issues:

- Current condition of the footpaths on the Common
- If the footpaths are designated Rights of Way
- If Limersgate Pack Horse Trail could be reinstated
- Options concerning the materials that could be used if remedial work was undertaken
- Funding options

Question 3

Responses received prior to meeting

<p><b>Upgrading the Common</b></p> <p><b>The perimeter of Cronkeyshaw Common is 4.5 kilometres or 3 miles.</b></p>	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are 19 tree stumps remaining from felled trees. One option is to remove them.</li> <li>• There are clumps of trees and vegetation which may need attention.</li> <li>• Rushes are becoming more prevalent and need treatment</li> <li>• There is a suggestion for planting specimen trees</li> <li>• Suggestion of professional landscaping</li> <li>• Styles and location of benches should be standardised</li> <li>• Creation of wild flower areas, eg, near road with no name</li> <li>• Mowing of the Common (April-October) should be monitored so that wild flowers are retained. This would potentially save maintenance costs.</li> <li>• Consider Harriet Morley's report on the Common.</li> </ul>	<p>Tree stumps are not removed as standard. If the Area Forum or Township wish to be pay for them to be stump ground just drop an e-mail to Andrew Quinn and he can get you a quote</p> <p>Clumps of trees and vegetation that need attention – again will ask Dave Illingworth and Tracy Hibbert to look into that – sounds perfect for one of our winter maintenance interventions, they should be able to sort that out.</p> <p>Rushes and tree planting go together. If we plant trees that will cope with wet conditions like alder and willow they will help soak up excess ground water. I will ask Tracy and Dave to look at how many trees they think required and again if Township or Area Forum have some funding we can order and plant extra trees.</p> <p>Agree style benches should be standardised but that comes with a cost. What we can do is when any are replaced we go with standard design, or if Township / Area Forum / s106 can fund, again we can give you a price for a replacement bench program.</p> <p>Creation of wildflower area is a bit of an issue for us regards maintenance. We like the idea but are struggling to find farmer who will cut and bale it so struggling to maintain our existing. There is also a capital cost to doing this – have to spray out grass, rotavate, seed and roll.</p> <p>Mowing – interesting idea, we can easily stop mowing certain areas to see if any wildflowers emerge naturally – often damp grassland can be a sea of pink / blue in spring if there is cuckoo flower or speedwell present but we would only know that if we left areas long – you might just have long grass. Again I can ask Dave and Tracy to let you know if any areas look suitable for trialling.</p>
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A general discussion took place which supported the responses received prior to the meeting.

Outcomes in relation to Questions 2 and 3

1. An action plan be produced which includes a summary of the current condition of the Common supported with a strategy for improving the Common going forward. This will include reference to:
  - Health, Safety and Security
  - Maintenance of Equipment, Building and Landscape
  - Litter, Cleanliness and Vandalism
  - Environmental Sustainability
  - Conservation of Heritage and Nature
  - Community Involvement
  
2. The introduction of a quarterly walk around the Common. Dates for this to be distributed via the Area Forum meeting.
  
3. The setting up of a Cronkeyshaw Common Working Group. Residents who expressed an interest in joining this group are – S. Acton, D. Barnett, A. Evans, T. Ayrton, R. Lord, N. Dixon and J. Kennedy.

Question 4

Response received prior to meeting

<p><b>Syke Woods</b></p> <p><b>Who is responsible for the upkeep of the paths in the area leased by Walton Angling Club. This is a beautiful area but there are stretches of path that are inaccessible to many members of the public.</b></p>	<p><b>The fishing club have advised that their lease does not include maintenance of the paths only bankings/fishing pegs etc. There are no rights of way showing on GM maps, the land to the west of the reservoir is privately owned.</b></p>
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Outcome

1. Agreed that a site visit would be undertaken.

Question 5

Response received prior to meeting

<p><b>Conservation Area updates and developments</b></p>	<p><b>No change. Resources and capacity dictate that this is not a priority at present.</b></p>
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It was explained that this issue is being dealt with by the Conservation Officer.

<p><b>Parking and accessibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Suggestion for a parking area on the Common between Cross Lees and the Hunters Rest which has now been converted to three houses.</b></li> <li>• <b>21 parking spaces were withdrawn when the road with no name was redeveloped.</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Highways have stated that there is no additional parking provision available on the highway therefore the only possible way forward is to identify an alternative site. Because the Common has been suggested by residents I asked relevant services for their initial thoughts on this suggestion. Responses received are below.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Environmental Management would not support using part of the Common for a Car Park.</b></li> <li>- <b>Where does provision start / stop (2places, 5places, 10 places)</b></li> <li>- <b>Sets precedent for other applications</b></li> <li>- <b>Section 38 of Commons Act 2006 requires that the Secretary of State approves changes of use to Common Land</b></li> <li>- <b>Potential cost</b></li> <li>- <b>May be subject to planning application – possible objections</b></li> <li>- <b>Traveller injunction based on mapping exercise of the Common as it is now. Any changes could bring existing injunction into disrepute and would at the very least require new legal mapping exercise.</b></li> <li>- <b>To provide hard standing for cars on the Common increases the risk for traveller encroachment.</b></li> <li>- <b>Safeguards in place for future use of Common</b></li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Footpaths on Syke Road need upgrading</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Rochdale Township Committee would have to approve project of this nature.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Asked for inclusion on footway maintenance programme.</b></p>
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The Forum was informed that it was very unlikely, for the reasons stated above, that a section of the Common between Cross Lees and the Hunters Rest would be converted into a parking area.

Residents were unhappy that a number of wooden bollards had recently been moved closer to the highway. It was stated that this has caused more difficulty for residents when trying to manoeuvre their vehicles. It was explained that the bollards had been moved at the request of the Forum to deter vehicles encroaching onto the Common.

Although a traffic survey had been undertaken on Dewhirst Road / Syke Road recently some residents were of the opinion that speeding on Syke Road was a problem and asked if this issue could be revisited.

Following discussion it was stated that a petition, concentrating on traffic concerns, was possibly the best way forward. It was intimated that a petition would be organised and forwarded to the Council as soon as possible.

#### **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

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Thursday 18 October 2018, 6.30pm, Syke Community Base, Syke Road. This meeting will include the AGM