

CODICOTE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE held on Thursday 21st May 2015, in the Parish Council Offices, 107a High Street, Codicote which commenced at 7:00pm

PRESENT: Chairman, Councillor J Grant with Councillors S Sanders, C Tinner and J Warwick

IN ATTENDANCE: Lorraine Ellis (Clerk)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**
Councillors D Connold (other commitments) and Ben Knapper (other commitments)
2. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN:**
It was proposed by Councillor Tinner and seconded by Councillor Sanders that Councillor Grant be Chair of the Committee for 2015/16. This was agreed **UNANIMOUSLY.**
3. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN:**
It was proposed by Councillor Grant and seconded by Councillor Tinner that Councillor Sanders be Vice-Chairman for 2015/16. This was agreed **UNANIMOUSLY.**
4. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S CODE OF CONDUCT:**
None.
5. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16th APRIL 2015:**
The minutes of the above meeting were taken as read and duly noted.
6. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:**
E017 Farriers Close: The Clerk reported that Councillor Gregory had provided a report for the Committee which stated:-

I have not carried out any spraying of weeds: once there was enough leafage to spray, it was evident that the problem was too extensive to use this method. There is a huge risk of any spray drifting on to established plants and damaging them.

It is my knowledgeable opinion that a program of work be planned to dig out and curtail this problem with no further planting carried out until next year. I would be happy to advise and work on this.

The Committee agreed to remove all weeds and approximately 4" of soil and replace with sterile soil. The Clerk to produce a specification for the work and obtain three quotations. The shrubs are to be retained and these will be marked for retention upon commencement of the work.

E002 Highways Streetscape: It was reported that a meeting had been arranged to meet with District Councillor Jane Gray, the Clerk and members of the Planning Committee to discuss a parking strategy for Codicote.

E003 Village Street Cleaner: The Clerk reported that Councillor Gregory had provided a report for the Committee which stated:-

I am satisfied with the response received from Mr Ellis. I am not aware of any recent complaints being received about litter; other than some instances of over-flowing bins. I think there has recently been a marked improvement in the state of our streets. The Committee agreed that Councillor Sanders should contact Councillor Ireland to discuss the position further.

Update on Codicote Quarry: It was noted that nothing further had been received from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Rob Egan and copy in Sharon Threlfall (HCC) and County Councillor Richard Thake to request an update on when a meeting with the new Quarry owners would be held.

It was reported that a banked area of approximately 20' x 6' of farmers land had been cleared opposite the entrance to the Travellers site in St Albans Road. The Clerk to report the matter to Hertfordshire Highways.

Yellow Fish project: The Clerk reported that Councillor Gregory had provided a report for the Committee which stated:-

The year group that studies rivers/water cycle is year 5. However, the curriculum is already so crammed that there is no capacity to accommodate this project. There is also concern surrounding children investigating the drains on the pavement edge and painting fish on the kerbstones.

The Clerk to inform John Thurlow of this outcome and indicate that if another group shows an interest in the project we will let him know. The Committee also agreed that the Clerk should advise the Scout Group of the project as they may be interested.

E016 Benches & seats – repair & maintenance programme: Councillors Sanders and Warwick agreed to undertake the review for consideration at the June meeting.

7. RIGHTS OF WAY (RoW) UPDATE:

E022 Councillor Tinner reported that that she had recently attended a Rights of Way training event. There were three main speakers:-

- Countryside Management Services (CMS) – an organisation who are able to produce plans of works, grants and volunteers for Parish Council
- Richard Cuthbert – HCC RoW Team Leader
- Tom Goldsmith - HCC RofW Enforcement Officer

Richard Cuthbert stated that they are unable to change the definitive map without a legal process which would be costly and also lengthy.

There was also an opportunity to walk around Kimpton and highlight issues eg overgrown paths, signs obscured by overgrown vegetation. The training was interesting and informative.

Councillor Grant raised the recent issues in Dark Lane and indicated that she had been in contact with Richard Cuthbert (HCC) following the recent issues with delivery vehicles using the track and becoming stuck. The Committee considered the

options of signage that could be installed and where:- ‘unsuitable for HGVs, No Sat Nav or unsuitable for motors’. Richard Cuthbert stated that the surfaced part of Dark Lane is an unclassified county road (UCR) maintained by Hertfordshire Highways, and the RoW Service maintain the rest of it.

Following the complaints from residents, it was agreed that the Clerk would contact Councillor Connold requesting that he undertakes a consultation process with the residents in this area. The Committee agreed that they would propose the installation of a sign ‘unsuitable for motor vehicles’. Councillor Sanders agreed to talk to Councillor Connold.

8. SINGLERS MARSH/RIVER MIMRAM RESTORATION UPDATE:

E023 Councillor Grant reported that she had recently attended an Asset Management meeting at Affinity Water. A holistic approach and a catchment management plan was indicated for the whole river and the way water re-acts and the clearing of the concrete culvert under the road. This work is currently underway. It was decided that a flood, hydrology and historical ecology model would be produced as residents were concerned, it is however a marsh.

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council own the land and maintain it, they believe that it should be allowed to flood, it is a flood plain. The Licence on Fulling Mill has been revoked and the intention is to increase the flow in the river Mimram to improve the ecology status of the chalk stream, it will be fully closed down in 2018. There will not be a hose pipe ban this year as the aquifers are full and there are plans for all households and premises to be metered. It was noted that the water table is very high at present.

9. ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE’S OUTSTANDING ITEMS:

E024 It was agreed that Councillor Sanders would meet with the Clerk to discuss the process and report at the next meeting. It is understood that the spreadsheet needs to be prioritised.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

E025 Thursday 18th June 2015

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8:28pm

Signed..... Chair of Environment

Date..... 2015