

Minutes: Committee Meeting / Friends of Woolwich Common Group

Date: 6th August 2019, 7pm

Location: Music Room, Woolwich Barracks

Attendees:

Jeremy Ellis (JE)	- Co-Chair
Carolyn Roberts (CR)	- Co-Chair
Gaye Rose (GR)	- Treasurer
Chris Allen (CA)	- Secretary
Jenny Sherrell (JS)	- FoWC member
John Braybrook (JB)	- Major, Station Quartermaster, RA Barracks, MoD
Patrick McFeely (PM)	- R A Barracks, MoD

Scheduling of next meeting

Date for next full FoWC Meeting agreed: Tuesday, September 10th 2019, 7pm

Location: Cricket Pavilion, Barack Field

Action – CA to communicate to group & social media

Bunds

JB: Funding has been released, staff are yet to be released. Expect to be complete by end of the year. As PM is moving away from Woolwich Barracks, implementation of plan will be handed over to JB and PM's replacement.

Agreement that bunds unlikely to affect wildlife.

Conservation Plan

JB: Conservation Plan – has a Protected Marking of *Classified* and cannot be openly distributed.

Japanese Knotweed:

Contractors *Tivoli & Amey* to spend half a day with FoWC and identify all areas of Japanese Knotweed.

Amey contact Judy Chapman along with Tivoli representative to meet with FoWC.

Action: JB to send contact details for Judy Chapman to CR & GR

JB highlighted the proliferation of Ragwort; a danger for horses if eaten.

Brambles

JS highlighted the report from London Ecology Unit (1998) which recommended that the Grounds Maintenance Contract should cover reducing brambles by 20% each year, which she believes was done until about 8 years ago.

Action: CR/GR to send copy of London Ecology Unit report to JB.

JB explained that the priority for his budget had to be for the maintenance and improvement of facilities for his staff, and he would not be able to provide resources for tackling the brambles nor removal of the waste. FoWC can however raise the subject with the Amey/Tivoli contacts.

Action: FoWC committee - FoWC to discuss internally how to take this matter forward – grants for a chipper? Working with other groups, eg bramble beating as in Shewsbury House?

Nature audits

Tree audit: JB to discuss with Amey. Start date and duration to be confirmed. The results will be circulated when complete. Already aware that there are 5 London planes and 1 Dutch elm, to be monitored as priority. The tree references are on silver tags attached to the trees.

Regarding the Council's plans to plant more trees across the common; suggestion from JB that Cllr David Gardner writes to DIO who are likely to approve. Suggestion of trees around the edge of the common in the triangular area encompassed by Circular Way / Haha Road / Academy Road which does not have rare acid grass.

Action - CA to add council tree planting to the agenda for the next group meeting and to email DG prior to the meeting regarding this.

GR – The FoWC have had a butterfly audit, highlighting rare Marble Whites.

No audit of birds and mammals are done. **Action: FoWC committee - to try find some experts to help regarding this.**

Ownership of Common / Repository Woods

JB - Mjr General of the DIO had requested that the DIO enter negotiations with the Royal Borough of Greenwich regarding handing over ownership of Common to the Council.

Repository Woods (known at the Barracks as “The Dell”) is use by the Barracks and is also fee & “greening point” generating for the Barracks, therefore if the plans to sell the Barracks go ahead (circa 2028) the Dell will likely be one of the last areas to be sold.

The “greening points” come from the Dell Angling Society (<http://www.dellangling.co.uk/wps/>) which use the pond there and also pay an encroachment fee to the DIO.

The Common is not deemed to generate “greening points”.

Action – CR / GR to research the Dell and whether should be included with the Common if in future it is transferred to Trust ownership.

Action: CR / GR / JE to email any sales particulars they have regarding the sale of the Dell / Repository Woods to JB.

Fun Fairs

JB - All future licences for Fun Fairs on the Common have been revoked, due to various issues regarding damage & crime. Contracts/licences were directly between the Fun Fair companies and the DIO.

Car parking for the Tall Ships & Eid events are to continue.

Olympic Committee funds & re-instatement of area

JB - LOCOG (London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games)– gave DIO £300k to reinstate the Common after it hosted the shooting events. DIO contractors didn't then remove the associated rubble, bricks and bases for the porta cabins. This rubble still proliferates the lower area of the Common.

JB – the issue is currently with the Mjr General. The DIO has been instructed to resolve this within next year, giving the Regional Infrastructure Community £1.2m to resolve.

AOB

JE – requested that of the 70 hours / week litter-picking done by the Barrack's litter-pickers, it would be good to concentrate a regular amount of time to the path south of the QE hospital car-park due to the amount of cigarette butts.

Action: JB / PM – allocating 3 man-hours a week to this area.

Action: JE – to chase follow up meeting with the hospital to cover the promised actions (notices, bins, staff communication etc).

Grass Cutting

JS – Request that the cutting of the lower section of Common is delayed until September to help the plants and wildlife. **Action - JB to consider this.**

CR – Request that the cuttings are removed from the Common. JB – Removal of cuttings is not included in the contracts. **Action - CR to include in discussion with Tivoli / Amey.**

Planning permission for widening of Baker/Stadium Road

JS – plans to widen road by hospital approved by RBG, including removal of some trees. JB/PM not aware of these plans.

Action: JS to email plans to JB. CA to forward John's contacts to JS.

Action: PM to inspect the red markings / figures along the road which indicate the anticipated road widths.

Group Roles

Action: CA to add to agenda for next group meeting: JS to be invited as a Co-Chair of FoWC.

DIO Roles

Tobias Ellwood MP was the MP in charge of DIO, but this has now changed to James Cleverly MP (MP for Braintree). JB is familiar with him and he may be more sympathetic to the FoWC conservation aims.

Publications

JB shared the latest issue of Sanctuary, the DIO publication regarding conservation on their land.

Action: FoWC committee to have a look at it and submit an article or case study via JB.