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BARKHAM PARISH COUNCIL & ARBORFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

COOMBES WOODLAND COMMITTEE

**Minutes** of the meeting of the Coombes Woodland Committee held on 22nd January 2024 in the Parish Office, Arborfield Green Community Centre at 10.30am.

**Present**: Cllr Barker (BPC) (in the Chair), Cllr Wrobel (BPC), Cllr Starkey (ANPC), Mr Steel, and the Clerk for BPC.

**CWC 24/001 To receive and accept any apologies for absence** Local Government Act 1972 Sch12

Cllr fox – Work Commitments

**CWC 24/002 To receive any declarations of interest on items on the agenda** (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1464)

None

**CWC 24/003 Minutes of the Coombes Woodland Committee Meeting LGA 1972 Sch 12 para 41(1)**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8th November 2023 were approved and signed as a true record. The minutes were signed by Cllr Barker

**CWC 24/004 To Co-opt resident members onto the Committee** Local Government Act 1972 S16

Details of resident not received, so co-option could not proceed.

Discussion of co-option of resident members discussed, as there had been more interest from Barkham Residents in joining. It was agreed that the CWC would keep under review its ability to co-opt additional members, should the need arise.

**CWC 24/005 Questions from members of the public in respect of the business on this agenda (allotted time 15 minutes)** Public Bodies (admissions to meetings) Act 1960 s 1 extended by the LG Act 1972 s 100

Adjournment of the Meeting will be called if any members of the public wish to address the Committee on any matters or concerns relating to The Coombes Woodlands. If you would like to ask a specific question to be answered at the meeting, please submit the question at least 24 hours in advance.

A resident attended to raise some points on the agenda items.

Agenda item 6.1- Management Plan – the resident wanted to ensure that any management plan would take into account the woodland status, and to make the committee aware, that some activities may not be suitable to be undertaken by the Councils.

Point 6.2 and point 7 – Relating to the tree survey works, there will be times during the year that may affect works to the woodland and trees being taken out, for example nesting season, which may affect the management plans.

Point 8- The resident suggested the use of a Facebook page as well as a Website.

Point 10 – Any labelling and signage should be kept to a minimum in an ancient woodland.

The committee discussed the points raised by the resident, and accepted that they would take into consideration the points raised when undertaking any works etc.

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**CWC 24/006 To review actions arising from the last meeting**

* 1. **To develop a management plan**

The Committeeagreed to continue to work to develop a management plan for the woodlands. The initial document drafted by Mr Barker for review and agreement by the committee, was accepted as the first

working document that will continue to be reviewed and amended as needed. It was agreed that the crossing of the stream needs to be looked at as a project, and that a map of the Coombes showing PROW’s etc is needed.

* 1. **Update on Tree Works from survey - Phase 1**

The Committee received an update as to the progress for the works identified to be completed in phase 1. The planning permission for all the works has been submitted to and accepted by WBC. The date for a decision is the 8th February. Quotes are being sought for the works.

**CWC 24/007 Quotes for Tree Works identified in the Tree Survey**

The committee agreed that the quotes for the works to the trees identified in the tree survey will be considered and agreed via delegated authority through emails, and reported at the next meeting of the Committee, and reported to the Full Council meetings. Quotes are expected by the end of the week, for consideration, ready for works to commence once permission is received.

**CWC24/008 Website** Local Government Act 1972 S142

The Committee agreed to the setting up of a dedicated website for The Coombes to inform residents, and allow interactions with Residents. The committee agreed that the hosting site suggested needed to be looked at in more detail as to which would be best for the website. It was agreed that a budget of up to £10 per month expenditure on the website fees, and that a decision would be made, once the investigations had been completed.

**24/009 Public Engagement**

The Committee agreed to the setting up of a ‘Friends of The Coombes’ group, to allow residents to join working groups etc to assist with managing The Coombes. A policy is required for this. Cllr Barker, Cllr Wrobel and the Clerk to BPC will meet with ‘Friends of Simons Wood’ volunteers to see how their group works. The Clerk will also research policies and risk assessments that will be required.

Mr Steel raised that it would be worth contacting the Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association, as they survey trees that may be veteran, and may be able to assist with cataloguing the trees in the woodlands. Cllr Barker will contact them to set up a meeting.

**24/008 To discuss the use of metal ID plates to identify items owned by the parishes.**

The Committee agreed that to start off with, the use of OS mapping and grid references will be used to locate areas of discussion, and will consider the use of ID plates if the need arises.

**CWC 24/010 AOB**

Cllr Starkey raised a request from ANPC that the budget breakdown be produced on a line by line, month by month basis. Cllr Barker informed that the budget has been broken down into areas, and the ANPC may not have seen the latest document. The RFO for ANPC had been sent a copy. It is not possible to do a month by month breakdowns, as items may change as the management plan is progressed.

Cllr Wrobel raised if a policy line could be added that all communications remain courteous. Cllr Barker stated that this will be addressed in the volunteers policy.

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Cllr Wrobel raised the planks that had been put down to cross the stream in the woodlands. It was pointed out that if persons attempt to cross a stream, that is not a formal crossing, the liability rests with them, if a person or company have installed anything to enable the crossing of the stream, then the liability rests with the person

who has installed it, or the land owners of the land. Due to this, the planks are to be removed from the stream, to remove liability from the Councils. A priority for the CWC will be to look at getting a formal crossing installed at the point. For this to occur, the planning implications need considering, as planning permission may be required. This will be bought forward as a project as soon as possible. Contact needs to be made with WBC countryside services to assist with looking into this, and to get an idea for costs.

Any logs that are in the stream should also be removed, to dissuade walkers from crossing there.

Mr Steel raised an agenda point for discussion at the next meeting. Please could the unofficial BMX area be added to the agenda.

**CWC 24/011 To set the date of the next meeting**

The next meeting will be held in February. The exact date is to be agreed, however, it was agreed that the meeting will be held in the evening.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 11.53am.