

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE 4CS

Castlemorton Parish Hall on Thursday, 22 November 2007 at 8 p.m.

Present:- Mr L Bartlett, Mr B Bowen, Mr A Bunn, Mrs A Calvesbert, Mr R C Dawe, Mrs M Dowding, Mr C Rouse, Mr M Snookes, Mrs S Thetford, Mrs M Watts, Mrs S Windle.

In attendance:- Ian Rowat (Director), Val Moore (Admin Officer), Rob Havard (Conservation Officer) of the Malvern Hills Conservators, Mr D T Jones.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** Angus Golightly, Fay Friday, Victoria Oaten.
2. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN.** On the proposal of Mrs Thetford, seconded by Mr Snookes, Mr Bartlett was **ELECTED** Chairman for the year.
3. **REPORT OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 24 JULY 2007.** It was **AGREED** that the report of the meeting held on the 24 July 2007 should be signed by the Chairman.
4. **MATTERS ARISING.** None.
5. **RESPONSES FROM USERS REGARDING APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO REPRESENT RECREATIONAL INTERESTS.** The views of 12 recreational bodies were sought, i.e. horse riding, cycling, walking, fishing, sub-aqua, hang gliders, orienteers, Worcestershire County Council Countryside Service and Malvern Hills Outdoor Centre. Seven replies were received, four suggested a representative from the Local Access Forum, two felt they did not use the common enough to comment and one felt it needed to be someone who could effectively speak for and network with other users and be a non resident of the Common. Ian Rowat had contacted the Chairman of the Local Access Forum who had suggested Lynden Hartmann who organises orienteering events on the Common and walks, jogs and cycles there and was an effective speaker. Mrs Thetford, proposed Lynden Hartmann, seconded by Mr Snookes. Mr Dawe, seconded by Mr Bunn, proposed David Jones. In the circumstances it was **AGREED** on the proposal of Mr Bowen, seconded by Mr Rouse to defer the decision until the next meeting and to invite David Jones and Lynden Hartmann to make a presentation at that meeting.
6. **CLARIFICATION OF THE POSITION REGARDING REPRESENTATION ON THE COMMITTEE.** Val Moore advised that the Parish Council had asked that provision was made to permit a member to nominate a substitute from the organisation that member represents if they were unable to attend a meeting. This was **AGREED** and following the amendments agreed at the last meeting, the constitution was adopted and signed by all representative bodies.
7. **REPORT FROM THE WORKING PARTY ON THE WEB SITE AND LEAFLET.** Mr Bowen advised that a number of meetings of the working party had taken place and Victoria Oaten was progressing matters well and liaising with the company producing the web site. As well as including information on the 4Cs and latest news on matters of interest, the Website would also contain an interactive map and items on the history, archaeology and wildlife. He asked anyone with photographs of the Common through the seasons to send them in so that they could be used on the site if appropriate.

Val Moore circulated a mock-up of proposed letter heading. As the working party had been considering a logo for the web site, Mr Snookes agreed to incorporate this on the letter heading and make any other adjustments he felt appropriate for consideration at the next meeting.

8. HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP. Rob Havard circulated a paper giving the background, progress, what would be involved and how it would work and suggested that the next step should be to arrange a meeting with Mr Dawes as the owner of Birtsmorton Common. He advised that four graziers had come forward as being interested in participating in the scheme. The report was noted and, subject to a clause being included in the agreement that if someone moved into the area and wished to take up grazing rights, they could be included in the scheme, it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** on the proposal of Mr Dawe, seconded by Mr Bowen, to apply for the Higher Level Stewardship on the Common and as a policy to support the grazing of the Common by local commoners. It was **FURTHER AGREED** on the proposal of Mr Bowen, seconded by Mr Snookes:

- that it was important for the Committee to have an independent oversight of the scheme to demonstrate fair play, although recognising that there would be details of individual commoner's personal details that would not be made public; and
- although there had previously been wide consultation, all commoners on the register should be contacted and advised of the scheme and invited to the next meeting of the Committee.

This was **CARRIED** by 9 votes with one abstention.

9. UPDATE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE COMMON AND WHAT IS PLANNED FOR THE COMING MONTHS. Rob Havard circulated two maps which highlighted work planned for the coming months in addition to the routine maintenance. This included felling previously coppiced birch, selective thinning of bird ringing site and pollarding oak and poplar trees in the vicinity of Hancocks Lane. This work has been endorsed by Dr Peter Holmes of Natural England. There would also be clearing around fruit trees, creation of rides and path clearing in thicket to the south-west of the Mill Pond, Golden Valley. On the proposal of Mr Dawe, seconded by Mr Bunn it was **AGREED** by ten votes, with one abstention, to support the work.

10. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVE BODIES.

10.1 Castlemorton Common Association. Mr Snookes advised that his members had asked that MHC look into the following matters:-

- Part of the parapet on the middle bridge on the road across the common was broken
- That grid references be put on the guide board on the common
- Burning policy
- State of the footpaths at Sunny Bank
- A request for spoil to be placed on the roadside adjacent to the stream

In answer to a question, Ian Rowat advised that whilst not condoning it, MHC accepted that local people would park cars on the Common adjacent to Boundary Cottage, Welland.

10.2 Graziers. Mr Dawe advised that there had recently been an incident of sheep worrying at Hollybed Common. The Chairman agreed to discuss the matter with Ian Rowat and advise Mr Dawe of the outcome.

11. FISHING. Ian Rowat advised that MHC would shortly be discussing the question of fishing on land under their management following complaints of wildfowl becoming entangled with discarded fishing line at the Mill Pond. He reminded members of the regulations covering ponds on the Common and with regard to the Mill Pond. It was recommended that MHC encourage the setting up of a fishing club which could be self-regulating and encourage good practice. This was **NOTED**.

12. HORSE BOXES. Following a query put to members by the Heritage Lottery Project Officer, Victoria Oaten, it was not felt appropriate to highlight on the website any areas of the Common suitable for the parking of horse boxes.

13. INFORMATION.

13.1 Dam Wall at the Mill Pond. Ian Rowat advised members of the work required to the dam wall following the excessive rainfalls in July which resulted in the earth wall being breached and the work required in the coming months to rectify the damage. This was noted. In answer to a question, Ian Rowat advised that specialist advice had been to leave the ash trees in the area but not to encourage any more to grow there. Members were also advised that Rob Havard would be suggesting to MHC that reed beds be reinstated in the area. This was **NOTED**.

13.2 Poaching by Cattle. Rob Havard circulated an article in the journal 'Conserving Rare Plants' that drew attention to rare plants thriving in muddy areas caused by cattle poaching.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING. This was planned for Thursday, 6 March 2008. However upon enquiry the Parish Hall was already booked for that evening and so the next meeting will take place on Wednesday, 5 March 2008 at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 10.15 p.m.