

**MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL'S FOOTPATHS
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 21ST JANUARY 2014 AT 7.00PM IN THE
CIVIC CENTRE**

PRESENT: Cllr. C J Galbraith (Chairman), Cllr. R P Claydon (Town Mayor), Mrs J Deveney, Cllr. Mrs C V Galbraith, Mr S Jarmuz, Cllr. T G Luker, Mr B Rodman, Cllr. P C Smith, Mrs E Warren

APOLOGIES: Dr J E Cordwell

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs Y Milsom (Deputy Clerk)

381. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 17th September 2013

Proposed by Cllr. P Smith, seconded by Cllr. Claydon, that the minutes of the meeting held on 17th September 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. Agreed all in favour.

382. Holywell Leaze

a) Mr Jarmuz and the Cotswold Wardens were thanked for the hedge-laying work they had recently carried out at Holywell Leaze. Mr Jarmuz told members that the hedge will be finished in the Midlands style and that the Wardens will return shortly to complete this work.

b) Several maintenance items were raised by the wardens:

(i) When some of the brambles were removed the boundary fence adjacent to the Cotswold Way was found to be in disrepair. In places there is quite a drop from the Cotswold Way to the level of Holywell Leaze, which could pose a hazard. The Clerk would ask the Maintenance Manager to fully assess the extent of the problem.

(ii) The Wardens would be willing to build up the interior wall on the site if the Town Council provided the stone.

(iii) It was agreed to burn the debris left from the hedge-laying when conditions were suitable. Cllrs. Galbraith, Galbraith, Claydon and Smith offered to carry out this task.

c) It was suggested that the picnic benches on the site should be anchored down as they were often moved about within the site and this was affecting their structural integrity. Spiral ground anchors had been sourced at a cost of £19.15 plus VAT. It was agreed to purchase two per bench.

d) The original management plan for the site was devised by the Holywell Leaze Working Party, with the intention that the site would be a nature reserve as well as an amenity site. The area has evolved from that initial idea into a well-used picnic site and consequently the vision and action plan for the site needs to be reviewed. Members suggested that the two uses were not necessarily incompatible and that it would be good to achieve a balance between wildlife habitat and public use. It was suggested that a wildflower area could be created. Cllrs. Galbraith, Galbraith and Claydon would work on a new action plan which could be considered further at the March Footpaths Committee meeting. It was also suggested that any unused budget sums for Footpaths at the end of each financial year could be set aside in an earmarked fund rather than becoming part of the Town Council general reserves. This would then accumulate to fund more expensive work as necessary.

e) There is nothing on the site to inform passers-by that Holywell Leaze is a public area. It had been suggested that this could be remedied by turning around the Information Boards so that they are visible from the road and Cotswold Way. The Clerk would ask the Maintenance Manager to assess the feasibility of turning them around and to implement this as long as no significant cost was involved.

f) The agreement regarding the boundary fencing between the land and adjacent landowners needed to be finalised. The Chairman and Cllr. Claydon would discuss with the Town Clerk.

383. The Clump, Wotton Hill

a) The Chairman thanked Mr Jarmuz and the Cotswold Wardens for the clearance of undergrowth within the Clump, which had entailed approximately 18 hours of work. The debris had been burnt with the permission of the landowner. There were also three large bags of rubbish ready for the Council's Maintenance Manager to remove. The Wardens were returning to remove the ivy from the inside walls. It was noted that the Clump was a popular area for scattering the cremated remains of local people.

b) The Cotswold Wardens raised some maintenance points as follows:

(i) The inside walls need re-pointing. If it is done soon it will be a relatively small job. Mr Jarmuz would let us know when the ivy has been removed and we can then look into getting quotes for the work. The Clerk would find out if the Clump was listed.

(ii) Mr Jarmuz reported that the young trees that have been planted appear to be a different species from the mature trees and he was concerned that this would in time change the profile of the area. Several years ago, on the recommendation of the Town Council's arboricultural consultant, five Scots Pine and five Corsican Pine were planted. The current tree report recommends planting another ten each of Scots Pine and Corsican Pine. Members and the Clerk would look up the mature silhouette of the two different types of pine. The Clerk is preparing an analysis of the Tree Report. The matter will be brought again to the March meeting of the Footpaths Committee.

384. Mid-Cotswold Tracks and Trails Group

Cllrs. Mr and Mrs Galbraith had attended a meeting of the Mid-Cotswold Tracks and Trails Group. The main speaker was John Lane of Gloucestershire County Council's Public Rights of Way. Concerns were raised at the meeting about the awarding of the new Highways contract and the impact that this might have on volunteers, who may not wish to work with a profit-making company. The Horse Trust had organised the meeting to increase awareness of the funding available to groups who wished to work with the County Council and contractors to create or improve circular, multi-user off-road routes. This could involve, for example, resurfacing or arranging with a landowner to permit a new link across their land between existing routes. If members had any ideas for such a route they should inform the Clerk.

385. Correspondence Regarding the New Highways Contract

Correspondence had been received from the County Council regarding the new Highways contract, informing of the arrangements for staff and the relationship with volunteers. Members could not recall receiving any information as to which contractor had been awarded the Highways contract. It had been suggested that John Lane might remain as the liaison between parishes and groups and the contractor but this had not been confirmed. The Clerk would investigate and forward the information with the minutes.

386. Footpaths Survey

a) Mr Rodman passed to the Clerk information on paths he had surveyed. He also remarked that during the time he has been involved with the Footpaths Survey over 50% of the problems had been rectified but that there were some issues which had remained unchanged. An example was on CWE46, a narrow tarmacked strip at Little Acre, where there were still no footpath signs at either end of the path, even though this had been reported on several occasions.

b) CWE56 – The stiles on this path were in poor condition and were not safe. The Clerk would report this to the County Council. It was suggested that the farmer might be persuaded to exchange the stiles for kissing gates if these were offered free. However, it was noted that the farmer had been approached about this before and had been very negative towards the installation of kissing gates and that, also, the free kissing gates had all been installed elsewhere.

387. Any Other Footpaths Matters

a) It was noted that Mr P Kenny had resigned from the Town Council and so was no longer on this committee.

b) It was noted that the top rail of the barrier alongside the Nip-Nap has broken on the tarmacked section before the stiles. The Clerk would report to the County Council.

c) It was noted that on the Cotswold Way, before the access path to Hillside Cottage, the ground had been trampled to a quagmire by horses. It is very unpleasant for walkers.

d) The budget for Footpaths and Holywell Leaze for 2014/2015 would be £400.

e) CWE15 – The electric fence across the path had been removed following the sale of the land.

f) Dr Cordwell had sent some information regarding the backlog of Public Rights of Way applications. A business case had been presented to the Chief Executive of the County Council to employ additional staff which, if agreed, could lead to some progress in this area.

g) It was reported that water was almost flowing over the bridge at the end of Water Lane. The Clerk understood that clearance of the culvert had been carried out very recently. Mrs Deveney would inform the Clerk of the landowner's details in case further clearance work was required.

h) It was noted that the stream adjacent to Marchesi Walk was rich in white-clawed crayfish, which were a protected species.

388. Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 25th March 2014. The Chairman thanked members for attending.

This completed the business of the Footpaths Committee

Signed:

Dated:

Chairman of the Footpaths Committee