

Wortham & Burgate Parish Council

Minutes of Wortham & Burgate Parish Council Commons Committee meeting, held in Burgate Church Hall on Tuesday 26th July 2022 at 7:00pm.

Councillors present: Chris Williams, Chris Grocott, Jacky Bradley, Jenny Piper, Richard Thornton, Ian Hovey, and Nick Castle

In attendance: Jane Challis (Clerk), 1 member of the public

1. **To appoint a Chair of the Commons Committee** – Outgoing Chair Cllr Williams opened the meeting and invited nominations for Chair of the Commons Committee 2022/23. Cllr Grocott nominated Cllr Williams; seconded by Cllr Thornton and approved unanimously.
2. **To consider accepting apologies for absence** – None.
3. **To record declarations of interest from members in any item to be discussed** – None.
4. **To consider any dispensations from members in any item to be discussed** – None.
5. **Adjourn the meeting to allow public participation** – The member of the public was present for agenda item 8, and did not wish to speak at this point.
6. **Re-convene the meeting** - 7.02pm
7. **To receive the Clerk's report and any outstanding items/actions** – the Clerk asked whether any further action was required regarding the rusty manhole cover reported at the meeting held on 14th March 2022. Cllr Hovey confirmed that this had been dealt with and no further action was needed.
8. **To consider and discuss grazing of the Common** – Cllr Williams reported that the Grazier gave notice on 21st July 2022 that they will no longer be in need of grazing on the Common. They will top the section they have most recently been grazing, but no other areas. The Grazier was the member of the public in attendance, and Cllr Williams expressed direct thanks on behalf of the Council for all their work during the many years they had acted as Grazier. There was a discussion on how to proceed with the areas still in need of topping, with Cllr Grocott reiterating the Council's thanks to the outgoing Grazier. Councillors agreed that if a new Grazier could not be found, then a contractor to provide two cuts, one in July and one later on in the year, should be sought. Cllr Grocott will seek quotations for a contractor to top the remaining areas as it is unlikely a new Grazier will be found in time this year. This work will only take place when there is no longer a fire risk from the extreme heat and dry weather.

ACTION – Cllr Grocott as above

9. **To consider, discuss and agree to Capital Works** – After discussing, it was agreed that the following work is required: the ditch from the village hall to pond 10 needs clearing, ponds 7, 8, and 10 need clearing, and also the connecting ditches. Pond 9 is ok. The work needs to be carried out this autumn to maintain the clearing that was conducted last year. Cllr Grocott will seek quotations for the work.

Cllr Bradley asked who was responsible for the dead willow tree overhanging the road opposite the Manor House. Cllr Williams said that the Clerk has reported it to SCC as a Highways issue. They have advised no action needs to be taken which is clearly not the case, so the Clerk will speak to them about it again.

Cllr Bradley also reported that someone has installed a gate and chestnut fencing on the common near the old cart track, and is using it as a storage area. Cllr Bradley proposed asking the Clerk to contact the Land Registry in order to take the matter further, which was agreed unanimously.

ACTION – Cllr Grocott/Clerk as above

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10. **To consider and discuss a fire risk assessment for wildfires on the Common** – a resident has raised concerns regarding wildfires on the edges of the common adjacent to roads and housing, following the extreme high temperatures which have resulted in a number of field and wild fires locally. There was a discussion, with councillors agreeing that it is safer to leave the verges as they are due to the fire risk from using tools and machinery in the current high temperatures and dry weather.

11. **To receive items from Councillors** – Cllr Cole had forwarded concerns raised by a resident which he requested be considered by the Commons Committee. Garden waste has been burnt on common land adjacent to South View, Furze Way in Burgate which has resulted in damage to a young oak tree. Councillors discussed and agreed unanimously that a letter should be sent to SCC as this area of land is under their stewardship.

ACTION – Clerk to send letter to SCC as above

12. **To discuss any correspondence received** – discussed under agenda item 10.

13. **To receive items for the next agenda** – Capital works

14. **Date and time of next meeting** - TBA

15. **Meeting Close** – 7:25pm

