

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

AMENITY LAND COMMITTEE

AGENDA

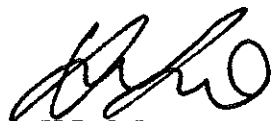
THURSDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2010

The meeting will commence at 7.30 pm at the Council Office, Cock Lane, Tylers Green, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP10 8DS

Ms K Wood **Chairman** (TG)
Ms J Johnson **Vice-Chairman** (TG)
Ms E Belcher (FH)
Mrs J Chalmers (FH)
Mrs S Digby (FH)
I Forbes (TG)
C Jordan (L)
R Smith (L)
L Willis (L)
D Johncock (ex-officio) (FH)
J Herschel (ex-officio) (TG)

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1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** At the time of the agenda distribution, apologies for absence have been received from D Johncock (ex-officio) (Other Business) and Ms J Johnson (Other Business).
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** To receive any declarations of interest by Members pertaining to Agenda Items.
3. **TYLERS GREEN COMMON (agenda page 2)**
4. **KINGSWOOD (agenda pages 3-6)**
5. **RAILWAY LAND (agenda page 7)**
6. **COMMITTEE FINANCES (agenda pages 8)**
7. **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT (agenda page 9)**
8. **DELEGATED ACTION (agenda page 10)**



H R O Jones
Clerk of the Council
5 November 2010

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The Council owns this land, which is registered as Village Green and lies within a Conservation Area.

TYLERS GREEN COMMON

Car Park on Old Common Road: Surface Work - INFORMATION

The work to complete the ‘*compacting*’, ‘*blading*’, ‘*rollering*’ and ‘*stoning*’ of the car park was completed in the week commencing 1 November 2010. By using materials and tools being employed at the Kingswood All Ability Track project, the work was completed significantly under the recommended budget of £600.

Widmer Pond Benches: EIIR Replacement – INFORMATION

Members are asked to note the following update on the proposed bench replacements at Widmer Pond:

- (i) District Councillor C Harriss was asked to consider utilising his Ward allocation Budget to fund the replacement and slab surfacing of one of two EIIR benches at Widmer Pond. Whilst Councillor Harriss was wholly supportive of the scheme, he indicated that his Ward Budget for the current Year was already mostly allocated, however, he would consider the remainder of its use for this purpose once this was ascertained.
- (ii) the Council Grounds Team were instructed to replace one of the benches before the end of 2010 (cost to be apportioned to the Benches and Signs Budget for the Committee’s General Amenity Areas). This work has been factored into the Grounds Team workload and is scheduled to be completed on time. It is noted that any other bench replacement proposals would in future be submitted by way of application to the Works, Services and Planning Committee.
- (iii) Penn Parish Council were asked to consider contributing to 50% of the cost at (ii) above. Whilst no formal agreement has been reached, it is understood that the matter is under consideration through the Joint CWPC/Penn Working Group.

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The Council owns this woodland. The land is maintained in conjunction with the Council's Forestry Consultants, UPM Tilhill.

KINGSWOOD

Kingswood All Ability Path – CONSIDERATION

Members are asked to receive a verbal update report from the Clerk in relation to progress in the completion of the extension of the disabled access path in Kingswood.

Whilst the Interpretive Board information is in early draft form, much of the information will be drawn from the following text that has been compiled and edited by local historians, Forestry Consultants, local Wildlife Groups and Parish Council Officers:

“Welcome to Kingswood

This All Ability Path is a 500 metres long circular route built in 2010 by the Parish Council with the assistance of The Forestry Commission, UPM Tilhill, Buckinghamshire County Council Rights of Way and Wycombe Wildlife Trust.

Woodland management

Woodland is far more than just land covered by trees. Many woodlands consist of a wide range of natural habitats providing space for fauna and flora, as well as providing opportunities for people to experience a little of what the natural world has to offer.

Although trees can be long-lived, they do not live for ever, and it is important for each generation to manage woodlands in ways which retain some older trees to reach maturity, and provide continuity, so that future generations can continue to enjoy their woodlands.

Ancient woodland management practices, such as pollarding and coppicing, are once again being adopted in many woodlands to maintain biodiversity. Pollarding, which involves removing or cutting back tree growth above grazing level, lengthens the life of a tree considerably. Coppicing, which involves the periodic cutting back of tree growth to ground level, also enables the trees concerned to live to a very old age, whilst keeping the coppiced area open for ground flora. The latter practice also provides a source of poles and material traditionally used for woodland crafts such as hurdle and besom making.

Both coniferous and deciduous woodland provide good habitats for birds, but dense conifer plantations and thick deciduous woodland create far too much shade for ground flora. Where the light is able to penetrate, for example in small glades and at the woodland edge, Spring-flowering plants such as violets, woodruff and wood-sorrel can be

found. The creation of open glades and sunny woodland rides enables a wide range of flowering plants to flourish throughout the Spring and Summer months.

Whilst many species of fungi have a beneficial mycorrhizal association with particular tree species, others cause decay and ultimately the death of trees. The retention of dead or dying standing timber and fallen or cut deadwood, where it is safe to do so, provides valuable habitats for many species of fungi and for a wide range of invertebrate species. The latter in turn provides a food supply for many animals and birds.

Whenever you visit woodland, remember to look beyond the trees. There's a complete ecosystem waiting for you to observe and enjoy.

Woodland Trees

Kingswood is classified as Ancient Woodland and has existed for at least 400 years. The wood has a long history of management which stretches back to the time when 'bodgers' worked beech into chair legs for the local furniture industry.

Beech is the dominant species at Kingswood, with Pedunculate oak, Ash, Rowan, Sycamore, Field maple, Whitebeam, Holly, Hornbeam, Wild cherry and Norway maple all present.

There has been a long history of beech woodland management throughout the Chilterns. In the past the timber was used locally in the furniture trade centred on High Wycombe and for firewood. The local furniture trade is no more but there is still strong local demand for firewood.

Oak is limited but is present on the clay overlying the chalk on the higher ground and can be seen adjacent to this path. You will also be able to see Wild cherry (look for the trees with the darker bark with horizontal rings) and ash. Most of the ash has grown from natural regeneration with seedlings germinated from seed produced by older trees. Beech grows well on the chalk soils and the Chilterns have historically been associated with beech woodlands. However beech does not tolerate drought conditions and is likely to suffer as a result of drier warmer summers predicted as a result of climate change. Research by the Forestry Commission suggests that trees established by natural regeneration are more likely to adapt to climate change than planted trees. Over the long term the species composition will change with beech losing out to ash and birch; oak should continue to have a place on the clay caps.

The under storey shrubs include hazel, quickthorn, holly and elder. Hazel would have been coppiced in the past for local uses but this practice has largely died out.

Recently this end of the wood has been thinned. A proportion of the trees have been removed to allow retained trees more room to develop whilst allowing more light to reach the woodland floor. This will benefit ground flora through increased light levels. Subsequent thinning operations will also allow further regeneration of tree species such as ash, birch and beech. Thinning also benefits holly which is very invasive and will shade out ground flora.

Tree age classes 50-55 years & 65-135 years predominate. The younger proportion of this range is represented in the east of the woodland with older stands in the west and north. On the western side where canopy trees are reaching 100-130 years, localised group felling has increased age diversity by favouring regeneration.

Accepting natural regeneration will lead to an uneven aged woodland that can be managed by ongoing thinning. Trees reaching maturity are removed whilst their younger neighbours are retained. This has advantages over the traditional timber production method of even aged stands that are 'clear felled' and restocked. There is less impact on the landscape, flora and fauna.

You may spot some dead trees; these are left standing (where safe to do so) to provide important habitat for woodland birds, insects, bats and fungi. Potentially dangerous trees are felled and left on the ground for invertebrates and fungi to colonise.

Woodland wildlife

Woodlands are home to a large diversity of animals, plants and fungi.

Plants range from tall mature trees to the mosses and lichens found on trees, stumps and deadwood or on the woodland floor. Some trees live to a healthy old age whilst others die prematurely due to damage, disease or fungal decay. All this is normal in a woodland, healthy, dying and dead trees all providing valuable habitats for wildlife.

When the heartwood of a tree decays, invertebrates find a home there. Woodpeckers may bore holes to reach these invertebrates, creating holes which can provide nesting sites for birds and bats. The more dead and decaying wood left on the woodland floor, the greater will be the range of invertebrates and the larger the food supply for birds and mammals.

Mammals such as bats, fox, badger, deer and grey squirrels are often found in woodlands. Whereas bats are protected and boxes are often erected to provide additional nest and roosting sites, control of non-native animals such as the grey squirrel is often unavoidable in order to safeguard regenerating woodland.

When walking through woodland, keep quiet and watch and listen. You may be surprised by what you see or hear.

Woodland fungi

Fungi can be found in most mature woodland. Although some species may be found throughout the year, a warm and wet autumn is the best time to search for them.

Fungal fruiting bodies span the whole colour spectrum, and grow in many different shapes and sizes. In woodland, they may be found growing on soil, trees, tree stumps and roots, fallen branches, twigs, leaves and fruit.

Identification of fungi is not always easy, and high magnification microscopic examination is often necessary. Although identification usually involves picking a specimen, do not pick

fungi unnecessarily. The mature fruiting body of the fungus produces the spores by which it reproduces, and other people may also enjoy looking at the fungus you have seen.

Only pick a fungus to eat if you are absolutely certain it is a edible species and in a suitable condition to eat. Some poisonous species are very similar in appearance to edible species, and eating even a small amount of one of the very poisonous species is usually fatal. If you wish to pick a fungus fruiting body to eat, cut it off carefully at the base of the stem and you will not damage the most important part of the fungus. Unless the fruiting body is very fresh, it may contain maggots and other small invertebrates.

Fungi perform a valuable role in a woodland. Look out for them, treat them with the respect they deserve and enjoy their amazing diversity.”

For Images, the logos of all Partner Organisations have been obtained, line drawings of flora, fauna and fungi and in conjunction with Wycombe District Council Print & Design Team, a map of the route is being prepared.

In addition to the four interpretive boards, two wooden Winder style Seats have been ordered and it is suggested that the Picnic Area tables be replaced and a new Wheelchair Friendly table be installed.

One consideration that the Committee may wish to consider is the possibility of an ‘Opening Ceremony’ which could include all Partner bodies who have helped to complete and fund the project and primary user groups (including local Schools). Such an event could take place in the New Year.

Members are asked to consider the Clerk’s verbal update report on the All Ability Path project and to comment/make any recommendations as appropriate.

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RAILWAY LAND

Railway Land: Future Development – CONSIDERATION

Following on from the clearance work along this stretch of Amenity Land carried out by Community Payback (Probation Service) under the direction of the Council, some Members have suggested that the Committee should consider further developments and long term aspirations for the site together with any maintenance considerations.

In particular, J White has kindly offered to draw up a suggested path route and proposals to be forwarded to Members for consideration prior to the meeting or tabled.

National Grid has provided a map of the Gas Marker Posts and its legal team is investigating what, if any, financial contribution is available to the Council. On 5 November 2010, National Grid confirmed that this procedure was continuing.

Members are asked to consider short and long term development options for The Railway Land, Loudwater together with any maintenance and budgetary considerations and to advise accordingly on any action necessary.

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COMMITTEE FINANCES

Income and Expenditure – INFORMATION

Members will find attached a copy of the Detailed Income and Expenditure Report for the Committee (**APPENDIX A**) together with a summary of the Council's Ear-Marked Reserves and notional 2011/12 Budget Reserves (**APPENDIX B**).

Members are asked to note the contents of the reports and to be updated by the Clerk, as appropriate.

Where questions arise on the Committee's finances, it is extremely helpful if these can be put to the Office at least two days before the date of the Committee meeting in order to allow any research using the Finance Package or external advice to be obtained.

Budget Setting – CONSIDERATION

At the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 21 October 2010 it was agreed that under the leadership of each Committee Chairman, Members be asked to submit proposals for Exceptional Items, New Votes or EMRs or other Budgetary changes prior to the forthcoming round of Committee Cycle in November, December and January for consideration prior to the Budget and Council Precept being set.

At the previous Committee meeting on 7 September 2010 it was agreed that Budget Headings be prepared in the Accounts Package for Spring Lane Maintenance, Totteridge Common Maintenance and Station Road River Bank Maintenance. The Package has been updated accordingly.

A revised DRAFT 2011/12 Committee Budget is attached (**APPENDIX C**).

Notional amendments have been made in line with advice from Members, including:

- the transfer of historic benches and signs votes to a single EMR under the Works, Services and Planning Committee heading (as ratified by Council on 2 November 2010).
- Spring Lane Maintenance
- Bin and Dog Bin Replacements on Tylers Green Common
- Widmer Pond Bench replacement

Members are asked to make any recommendations on the DRAFT 2011/12 Amenity Land Committee Budget for consideration by the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 18 January 2011.

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ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Approval of Accounts for Payment - CONSIDERATION

The Accounts for Payment are to be circulated at the meeting for the approval of Members.

Members are reminded to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interests in any items submitted for payment.

Members of the Press and Public are asked to be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of any Confidential Payments, such as payments to members of the Council Staff.

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DELEGATED ACTION

Delegated Action - INFORMATION

Since the last meeting of Amenity Land Committee the Clerk has authorised and processed the following permit:

- Tylers Green Middle School to use Kingswood for Cross Country from 20 September 2010 – 22 July 2011 (with the understanding that the All Ability Path work was taking place in November and December 2010) (23/09/10).