



**Open Spaces Committee  
Minutes  
Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

Meeting held at via zoom video conferencing - started at 6.30pm.

Parish Councillors in attendance: Chairman Max Harwood (MH), Adrian Collins (AC), Laura Craven (LC), Zoe MacLehose (ZM) and Mairi Rennie (MR).

Clerk: Debbie Harknett

There were two members of the public in attendance.

**Chairman:** Max Harwood

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**Clerk:** Debbie Harknett

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- 1) **It was noted the meeting would not be recorded.**
- 2) **Apologies for absence were received** and accepted from Mike Galley (MG).
- 3) **There were no declarations of interest.**
- 4) **The Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022 were approved for signing by the Chairman.**
- 5) **Representation from the public** – incorporating agenda items 10) and 11)
  - a) MH reminded the meeting the landowner had been told by the Forestry Commission (FC) that a felling licence was not required, despite informing them he would be felling over 5 cubic metres. Following a meeting with Jane Hull, FC, Nick Heasman SDNP and Kate O’Kelly, CC the matter was investigated with a report back from the FC. We made a formal complaint in conjunction with NH & KOK to the Forestry Commission. Today we have received an apology from Dr Anna Brown, FC who said the incident was a regrettable error of judgement that no site visit was carried out and with the promise that lessons have been learned. We need to look forward and consider how best to protect other trees in the parish.

AC joined the meeting.

- b) A MOP felt it was essential that we continue to pressurise the FC and didn’t feel the FC response was helpful. The FC relied on information supplied by the farmer which should have been checked. She felt the complaint could go further with photos, maps, measurements etc being sent to their legal department as the burden of proof is on the owner to show the extent of planned felling and woodland shouldn’t be converted to agricultural land.
- c) Another MOP explained the 14 trees felled that were a mixture of oak, beech and ash that had been a feature of the landscape for a lifetime - more than 50 years. He felt the FC should be asked what further action they are going to take and to seek a joint meeting to form a clear action plan for the future protection of our trees. Furthermore, can we ask that the FC inform us of all future felling applications.
- d) A MOP asked if the FC could be asked to put pressure on the landowner to restock the felled tree line.
- e) After discussion, it was agreed to write a simple letter to the FC asking what lessons have been learned, what measures they have taken to prevent a similar situation recurring and to seek a meeting with NH/KOK/FC/PC for forward planning/protection of trees in the parish. It wasn’t considered helpful to debate the information submitted by the landowner.
- f) AC’s suggestion of an article in the R&T News to give some publicity to tree felling, landowner responsibilities and constrains from TPO’s/conservation areas/SSSI was supported. It was further noted tree surgeons have a responsibility for removing trees with TPO’s or without a necessary felling licence.

Two MOP’s left with thanks.

**6) Actions from last meeting were noted**

- a) Fyning Information Board is now in-situ.
- b) A new wildflower meadow has been created at entrance to Parsonage by Nick Heasman, SDNP and a disease resistant Elm tree planted which removes the need for a flower planter.

7) **Woodland management** - MH noted that apparently the price of wood has dropped because of the recent storm and the amount felled as a result of ash die back that has resulted in the surfeit of wood.

8) **Footpaths:**

- a) Irrigation pipes have been reinstated near Black Bridge blocking the path and need to be climbed over. Agreed to monitor for 21 days (from 24 March) and report if still a problem.
- b) LC noted the diagonal path across to bluebell wood has been planted. Agreed, wait to see what happens when crop has grown and report if necessary.
- c) MH noted the finger post at Terwick Church (by edge car park) has fallen over; Clerk to report.
- d) AC noted a tall fence has been erected adjacent to a footpath in Rake. He will check the height and Clerk will check if there are any planning requirements.

9) **Play areas/outdoor gym** - The handyman has been asked to replace the retaining logs at the village playground; he is expected to carry out the work this month.

10) **Felling of trees at Fyning** – discussed under 4) above

11) **Protecting trees in the parish** – discussed under 4) above

Clerk noted we had been asked if we had a tree warden – suggested we ask one of the MOP who attended meeting tonight.

12) **Fyning information board**

LC noted she is still waiting to hear from the school; MH will chase. Agreed to try to update information in accordance with the season and to let LC have any suitable material to laminate – MR suggested copy of original donation 'for the poor of Rogate' document and AC will consider the geometry of the area given its circular boundary, possibly with the inclusion of a marker in the centre of the circle.

13) **Eco Rother Action (ERA)** –

- a) To consider grant towards 'freshwater watch' MH reminded the meeting of an email (previously circulated). He has spoken to the Angling Club who are already monitoring the water for invertebrates (they are a measurement of health). They have found signal cray fish and Himalayan balsam. He will put the two groups in touch with one another.
- b) Wildflower area near Frogs Hole, Terwick – MH informed the meeting ERA have met with the property owner and would like to work together to form a wildflower area on the verge and have asked to Parish Council to apply for the necessary WSCC Highways licence. Members were unanimously in favour to take the proposal to full council for approval.

14) **The next Open Spaces Committee Meeting** is scheduled to be held at 6.30pm on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 via Zoom video conferencing.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.53pm.

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Chairman

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Date