

## The Conservators of Therfield Heath and Greens

The Therfield Regulation Trust

c/o Royston Golf Club, Baldock Rd, Royston, SG8 5BG

Registered Charity No. 277881

Chair: Nick Keep

Clerk: Paddy Grove

Email:clerk@therfieldheath.org.uk



### Minutes for the meeting held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023 at 7pm in the Black Barn

Abbreviations may be used to identify individuals:

Chair or NKe: Nick Keep, CSw: Clare Swarbrick; HoC: Head of Conservation (Cheryll Wilson); Rgr: Ranger (Cat Wright); CSm: Colin Smith; CHa: Clive Hall; BHa: Ben Harrop; RLa: Robert Law; JKi: John King; Clerk or PGr: Paddy Grove

Item and Description	Notes / minutes
<b>03/23-1 Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies received in advance from ##	Present: RLa, CSm, CHa, NKe, CSw, JKi, BHa Rgr, Clerk
<b>03/23-2 Declarations of interest:</b> (see * * for any relevant minute details)	Chair has family connection to Johnson Matthey (relevant to item <b>Error! Reference source not found.</b> ) CSw and CSm are members of FOTH (relevant to item <b>Error! Reference source not found.</b> )
<b>03/23-3 Approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16th Feb 2023</b> (Clerk) - see Paper 1	Minutes are approved.
<b>03/23-4 Major items to AGREE</b>	
<b>03/23-4.1 <u>Confirmation of Stintholder and SDDR election results</u></b> (Clerk) Draft minutes of election meetings are in Papers 2 and 3. These are formally approved at the next election meeting (Feb 2024) but Conservators asked to confirm that the minutes reflect the business of the meetings. Formal record that Ben Harrop and Clare Swarbrick are re-elected for terms of three years as Stintholder and SDDR representatives respectively.	Ben Harrop and Clare Swarbrick were re-elected as Stintholder and SDDR representatives last month and were welcomed back by Chair. Nick Keep proposed as Chair of conservators by JKi, seconded by CHa. All agreed, NKe confirmed as chair. The passing of former conservator Duncan Ferguson was noted with sadness.
<b>03/23-4.2 <u>Barclay's account access</u></b> (NKe) Discuss latest status and decide on actions to resolve issues or mitigate serious risks arising from Barclay's blocking access to our accounts.	Issues with access to our bank accounts are yet to be resolved. Next steps were discussed and agreed Discussion about finding an alternative bank for future business. It was <b>agreed</b> we need to pick one that's integrated with our accounts software Xero.

	<p><b>ACTION 03/23-1.1A</b> Clerk find and circulate a list of Xero-supported banks as possible replacements for / supplements to Barclays</p> <p>Conservators will pursue complaints against Barclays for their poor support and customer service. Chair has started a dialogue with them on this.</p>
<p>03/23-4.3 <u>Countryside Stewardship</u></p> <p>Update for discussion and commitment from Conservators</p>	<p>Proposal for new CS scheme discussed and agreed, with acknowledgement that it will require support from existing related claimants of RPA payments.</p>
<p>03/23-4.4 <u>Licence templates for sports clubs and events on the heath and greens</u></p> <p>(CSw/Clerk) Should we engage our solicitors to draw up licence templates for sports clubs on the heath, covering standard terms, which we can customise with specific requirements as needed.</p> <p>Do we also need one for one-off event permissions?</p>	<p>Proposal is to work with solicitors to produce template licences (one for activities involving the SSSI, one for non-SSSI) which can be customised. It was <b>agreed</b> to start this conversation.</p> <p>It is hoped that the templates can also be used to generate some standard Terms and Conditions for events on the heath and greens.</p> <p>As a side-topic, the subject of a proposed means for sublicensing stints was raised. This would allow other sheep owners to license stints from stint-holders, as a means to increase the level of grazing on the heath. It was agreed we need to sort out the Countryside Stewardship application first, as it will likely affect the feasibility of such licences.</p>
<p>03/23-4.5 <u>Summary minutes on the website</u></p> <p>Clerk requesting decision: Should we publish summary minutes of these meetings on our website? If so, what content should / should not be included, and what is the process for reviewing and approving before publication?</p>	<p>It was <b>agreed</b> we should publish summary minutes for transparency. They should broadly say what was discussed, what was decided, with no discussion of who said what. Potentially confidential information about individuals or groups will be removed.</p> <p>Minutes and summary minutes of each meeting will be submitted for approval at the follow meeting.</p> <p>Open meeting minutes will not but published, but slides can be. Draft minutes of the election meetings can also go up on the website.</p> <p><b>ACTION 03/23-1.1D</b> Clerk publish January summary minutes, and slides presented at open meeting, and draft minutes of election meetings.</p> <p><b>ACTION 03/23-1.1E</b> Clerk prepare summary mins for Feb and March (this meeting) for approval at next meeting,</p>
<p>03/23-4.6 <u>Dog Bins</u></p> <p>Discuss and agree policy and actions</p>	<p>Bins have been replaced at Therfield Road car park. There was disagreement among Conservators as to whether this was agreed. It was noted that they have instantly been filled to overflowing.</p> <p>Discussions have been held with contractor to get reassurance they can be filled 52 weeks per year.</p> <p>We haven't got clear answers from NHDC on who's responsible for paying for installation and</p>

	<p>emptying of dog bins on common land, as it's not clear that the Conservators should be doing this and paying for it.</p> <p>It was <b>agreed</b> to get town councillor involved, as NHDC may listen to them if not to the Conservators</p> <p><b>ACTION 03/23-1.1F</b> In the meantime it was <b>agreed</b> to put a second bin near #447 (near Briary Lane entrance), bringing the total to 18 bins which is what we pay the contractor to empty.</p>
<p>03/23-4.8 <u>Benches</u></p> <p>(CSm) Discuss and agree policy and action for refurbishing and re-siting the metal benches.</p>	<p>One bench has been refurbished to a good standard and we have pricing for doing more. It was discussed whether we could get offer these as memorial benches for a fee. We have 28 benches in total on the heath, all of which will need refurbishing in due course.</p> <p>It was <b>agreed</b> to refurbish and replace benches where needed, but not to offer for dedication as memorials or seek any donations towards, as similar schemes have been administratively burdensome in the past. Conservators may choose to commemorate former conservators.</p>
<p>03/23-4.10 <u>Community Payback proposal</u></p> <p>Rgr to present proposals in Paper 8 for discussion and decision on actions</p>	<p>Volunteer hours would need to be documented as it feeds into CC annual report and s106 claims.</p> <p>Conservators generally supportive of the idea which was <b>approved in principle</b>.</p> <p>It was noted that some potential projects will need s38. All non-trivial projects to be notified to Conservators by Ranger in advance, to give them a chance to comment on and direct the work.</p>
<p>03/23-4.11 <u>Kite Festival move proposal</u></p> <p>Proposals for discussion and decision on actions</p>	<p>Proposal has been put forward by Rotary Club, involving car parking on the heath.</p> <p>There was some support for the idea, but some concern that the event dominates the heath to exclusion of non-festival attendees. The area used in previous years is not viable as it is within the SSSI and not appropriate to be mown short or have vehicles, rides, gazebos etc.</p> <p>Cars on the cricket pitch is a major concern, especially if the conditions were particularly wet (muddy) or v dry (dusty). Access on/off also likely to be tricky, as shortcuts will likely be taken across the verges to Baldock Road.</p> <p>Proposal was <b>rejected</b> unless car parking on pitch proposal is excluded or limited to single line of cars.</p>
<p>03/23-4.12 <u>Event requests</u></p> <p>Approval sought for event requests received by clerk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FOTH art sessions (Paper 6a)</li> <li>- Butterfly Conservation walks July/Aug</li> <li>- Scouts movie night (Paper 6c).</li> </ul>	<p>FOTH and BC event <b>approved</b>.</p> <p>Movie night: concern that it's too big (significantly larger than last year's event). Impacts other users and potentially too many cars. Conservators generally supportive of the event, but scale may be an issue. Not able to make a decision at this point</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fashion shoot</li> <li>- John Lawson Circus</li> </ul>	<p>Circus <b>approved</b>.</p> <p>Fashion shoot <b>approved</b> as long as they stay away from pasque flower areas (Church Hill). Suggested fee agreed</p>
<p><b>03/23-5 Health &amp; Safety, Accidents and Incidents</b></p>	
<p>03/23-5.1 <u>Accident and Incident reports</u></p> <p>HoC/Rgr to advise of any accidents or incidents on Heath &amp; Greens since last meeting, and any other H&amp;S-related items that Conservators should be aware of</p>	<p>No incidents reported</p>
<p><b>03/23-6 Leases, Licences and Tenants etc</b></p>	
<p><b>03/23-7 Finance Matters</b></p>	
<p>(Clerk) Review of budget vs actual spending year-to-date</p> <p>Discussion and approval of any requested updates to the budget for Q2-Q4</p>	<p>Not discussed due to lack of time</p>
<p><b>03/23-8 Heath &amp; Greens Conservation update</b></p>	
<p>03/23-8.1 <u>Update from Ranger</u></p> <p>Ground nesting birds signs – discuss and agree policy and actions</p> <p>Therfield Green path removal.</p>	<p>Not discussed due to lack of time.</p>
<p><b>03/23-9 Projects updates</b></p>	
<p>03/23-9.1 <u>Governance reform</u></p> <p>Seeking agreement to engage solicitors or other professionals to answer initial questions, understand likely costs.</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p>
<p>03/23-9.2 <u>Bollards installation on Therfield Rd</u></p> <p>(RLa, Rgr) Plans or progress?</p>	
<p><b>03/23-10 Legal Actions, Disputes, Wayleaves and related issues</b></p>	
<p><b>03/23-11 Update from the Clerk</b></p> <p>(Clerk) IT changes deferred from 3<sup>rd</sup> March, now proposed 24<sup>th</sup> March</p> <p>Annual report 2022 and independent examiner's report finalised by external examiners</p>	<p>IT switchover planned to happen the following day. Clerk will work with an IT expert known to a Conservator, who has volunteered his time.</p>
<p><b>03/23-12 Actions/Updates from previous meetings</b></p> <p>(Items in green are done or being progressed, no update necessary. Others are uncertain or open)</p>	
<p><b>03/23-13 Any Other Business</b></p>	
<p><b>03/23-14 Date of next meeting</b></p>	
<p>Conservator meeting 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023, Black Barn</p>	