

## 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



### Summary Minutes for the meeting held on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023 at 7pm in the Black Barn

Abbreviations may be used to identify individuals:

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

Item ID	Description	Minutes
06/23-1	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies received in advance from JKl	Present: NKe, CSm, BHa, CSw. CHa from 19:24. RLa from 19:40 Rgr, PGr
06/23-2	<b>Declarations of interest:</b> (see * * for any relevant minute details)	
06/23-3	<b>Approve the minutes of the meeting held on 30th May 2023</b>	Approved
06/23-4	<b>Major items to AGREE</b>	
06/23-4	<u>ATV funded by JM</u> Decision required on whether to accept JM offer and go ahead with purchase.	JM has discussed funding an electric ATV for use on the site. The conservators discussed whether to accept if approved considering additional costs such as insurance and maintenance. The four conservators present voted in favour, with further actioned needed to address insurance, how best to purchase, tax implications and security of storage.
06/23-4	Stall for Kite Festival	Rgr proposes joint stall with Friends of Therfield Heath & to explain to public what we each do.  Related to this, Chair reports that Sir Oliver Heald MP has given permission for us to publish the chair's letter to him. It was discussed whether we could refer to the summary position published in The Listing instead but it was decided to go with the full letter which is available on the website.
06/23-4	<u>Draft code of conduct</u>	The draft was reviewed by all in attendance. Further changes were discussed to be updated, circulated for comments and readdressed at the next meeting.

06/23-4	<u>Clerk replacement role</u>	<p>HR committee has produced a role description for a larger role, replacing clerk who has resigned. More hours, broader responsibilities, higher salary. Discussed with some changes.</p> <p><b>Approved</b> that once those changes are made, advert to be placed. Suggested sites: Environment Jobs, LinkedIn, our Facebook pages and website. Open for applicants in July, interviews in August.</p>
06/23-5	<p><b>Event and other requests</b></p> <p>Approval sought for requests received by clerk</p>	
06/23-5	<u>Memorial bench request</u>	<p>Request to pay for repair of a bench (on 5<sup>th</sup> hole) and memorialise a golfer with connections to the site.</p> <p>Concerns expressed from some about conveying sense of ownership of property on a common. Also, memorial benches can encourage leaving of flowers, wreaths etc which may enrich soil, or contain plastic.</p> <p>Conversely, refurbishing an existing bench is seen as a positive</p> <p>Votes in favour: 3</p> <p>It was <b>agreed</b> to go back to the requestor and support the request.</p>
06/23-5	<u>Yoga classes</u>	<p>Location would need to change because the current proposal is likely to overlap with use of the area for Archery. The other side of woods, in the area to be used for the Kite Festival, was suggested, as the grass should be short enough.</p> <p>Since this is a limited series of events but for a commercial use, a request for a £50 donation was agreed. No need for licence, but this would be necessary if the request were for a more regular usage.</p>
06/23-5	<u>Plastic-free picnic from Royston Environmental Group</u>	<b>Approved</b> , including erection of gazebo
06/23-5	<u>FoTH guided Flower Walk</u>	<b>Approved</b>
06/23-5	<u>Café request to mark out 5-a-side pitch</u>	<b>Approved</b> , no charges since this benefits a key tenant.
06/23-5	<u>FoTH Photography course walk</u>	<b>Approved</b> , but with a reminder about no commercial usage of photos, which would require a media licence.
06/23-6	<b>Other updates or major items for discussion</b>	
06/23-6	<u>Public engagement meetings</u>	Consultation needed to make Countryside Stewardship Scheme application valid on a common.

		It was <b>agreed</b> to provisionally book the Town Hall for 25 <sup>th</sup> July, although unsure if all info in place by then.
06/23-6	<u>Stakeholder engagement meetings</u>	21 <sup>st</sup> Sep <b>agreed</b> for stakeholder meeting.
<b>06/23-7 Health &amp; Safety, Accidents and Incidents</b>		
06/23-7	<u>Accident and Incident reports</u>	Report from a Conservator of an incident involving broken leg on the heath, requiring rescue with off-road vehicles. Clerk will file details in incident log if provided. Other incidents noted were nuisance on Sun Hill Common from noisy teenagers and fly tipping.
<b>06/23-8 Leases, Licences and Tenants etc</b>		
06/23-8	Any further engagement with Runners?	Concerning the container in their use, this will be followed up in the next month in light of their providing additional info of the content of the container, and progress towards a licence template.
06/23-8	No progress finding valuer for MF Tennis	<b>MF Tennis are operating a commercial business within Royston Tennis club, to appropriating address this a valuer is being sort to assess the business.</b>
<b>06/23-9 Finance Matters</b>		
06/23-9	Accounts and budget report to end May available.	
06/23-9	Pleo update	Clerk quickly ran through the presentation on Pleo and how to manage the account. Discussion held around this, further details of policies not discussed or agreed.
06/23-9	Barclays update	The mandate appears to be all updated and correct.
<b>06/23-1 Heath &amp; Greens Conservation update</b>		
06/23-1	<u>Update from Ranger</u>	<p>Victoria memorial refurbishment work complete, but some paving slabs cracked and will need replacement before long.</p> <p>Rgr has asked Natural England about appropriate use of timbers for the steps.</p> <p>NHDC have said they will in future investigate fly-tipped waste to try and identify the culprit. That may mean waste can't be cleared up immediately if there's any prospect of id.</p> <p>Rgr recommends replacement of dog bin posts as some are rusting and breaking. A councillor has been contacted who can advise and approve new bins etc.</p> <p>Volunteer groups still successful – running at different timeslots to avoid hottest parts of the day. Corporate volunteers are readily available but lack of tools for them to work effectively is an issue. There is a suggestion to appeal for donations of unwanted tools.</p> <p>Tor grass removal continues.</p>

		<p>An update was requested about giant hogweed, especially around Chapel Green and the Rgr will investigate.</p> <p>There was discussion around whether the maintained areas especially between café and golf clubhouse are being maintained adequately for leisure purposes, as the grass is quite long. Rgr and others say that no complaints had been raised from the public as far as they are aware.</p>
<b>06/23-1</b>	<b>Projects updates</b>	
06/23-1	<p><u>Governance reform</u></p> <p>Meetings planned monthly on 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays.</p>	First meeting proposed 13 <sup>th</sup> July is likely to be postponed due to availability.
06/23-1	<p><u>Licence templates</u></p> <p>Any review or actions required?</p>	These have been reviewed and will be fed back to Greenwoods and arrange meeting.
<b>06/23-1</b>	<b>Legal Actions, Disputes, Wayleaves and related issues</b>	
06/23-1	<p><b>Update from the Clerk</b></p> <p>(Clerk)</p>	Thanks expressed by Conservators to outgoing clerk, as this was his last monthly meeting.
<b>06/23-1</b>	<b>Actions/Updates from previous meetings</b>	
	(Items in green are done or being progressed, no update necessary. Others are uncertain or open)	
<b>06/23-1</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	<p>Advice needed from Greenwoods re encroachment on common</p> <p>Cinema event statutory approvals. Some believe s38 should be needed – Scouts need to be made aware, even if we choose not to insist this year. Belief noted that we should have clear guidance on event holders' need for s38, so that the onus is entirely on them and they have the info needed to seek consent in good time, or to understand why Conservators might turn down their request without it.</p> <p><b>Agreed</b> to prepare that info.</p> <p><b>Agreed</b> to movie night inform organiser of the above. Conservators also wish to insist that there be no sale of food or drink on the heath, so as not to undermine Café business.</p>
<b>06/23-1</b>	<b>Dates of next meetings</b>	
	Conservator meeting 7pm, 27 <sup>th</sup> July 2023, Black Barn	Governance meeting on 13 <sup>th</sup> will be cancelled. Governance will be the focus of the main monthly meeting.