

CROWBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

To all Members of the **ENVIRONMENT** Committee (with copies to all other Members for information).

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT** Committee to be held at the Town Hall, The Broadway, Crowborough on Tuesday 27th September 2016 at 7.30 pm when it is proposed to transact the following business:-

J. A. Burches,

Town Clerk
19th September 2016

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public are invited to put questions or to draw relevant matters to the Committee's attention, prior to the commencement of business. This is for a period of up to fifteen minutes and shall be limited to three minutes per person.

2. APOLOGIES

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4. MINUTES

4.1. Minutes – 26th July 2016

4.2. Matters Outstanding

3.2.1 Community Match funding for parking schemes (7639)

5. GUEST SPEAKERS

5.1. Trevor Leggo, CEO, SSALC re. Community Wardens

5.2. Ranger Dan to give a presentation on the Pocket Park

5.2.1. Update on the Ponies

5.2.2. To review Ranger's report of tasks completed against Management Plans and other work – report attached

6. RAILWAY REPORT

Report from John Coleman.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

7.1 Dog Waste

7.1.1. Complaint about dog fouling on the footpath between Glenmore Road East and Old Lane. Request for signage and a dog waste bin and a query about who owns the path.

7.1.2. To note that the emptying of dog bins has been transferred to Environment from SRC. Details of costs for supply and emptying new dog bin (annually) in case we want more

7.2. More information/options for litter bins as discussed at last meeting

7.3. Britain in Bloom – to note that a meeting has been set up on 10th October 2016

7.4. Ghyll land purchase update

8. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

8.1. Bus services

8.1.1. To welcome the new 228/229 service which came into operation on 4th September.

8.1.2. Wealdlink update from Chairman following meeting on 10th August

8.2. Street Lighting – Structural Testing 2016 – work completed?

8.3. Motorbike on Footpath between Luxford Lane and Welland Close (report to follow)

8.4. Items for the Strengthening Local Relationships (SLR) Agenda (attached)

9. FINANCE

9.1 Management Account Reports to 31st July 2016 and 31st August 2016

10. URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING and/or INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

Rangers Update for The Environment Committee 27th September 2016

Overview

This report principally covers the key management activities in relation to The Country Park, The Ghyll and Bluebell Wood. It also covers other biodiversity/management activities relating to other areas as and when appropriate.

Community engagement

A one hour presentation on the role of the ranger was given to a group called 'Community Plus' on Friday 15th September. The group is made up of over 55 years old's and meets at Beacon Academy during term time.

The local cub scout group has been in touch to ask if there are tasks that the cubs can assist with in order to gain their badges. This has been welcomed and a meeting with the scout leader is anticipated in due course.

1. The Ghyll

Overview

1.1. The following general activities have been taking place and are ongoing throughout the Ghyll during the period:

- Path improvement continues in excessively wet areas using locally sourced crushed sandstone. The sandstone is proving particularly effective and additional sandstone will be ordered next Spring to continue the works.
- Continued control and removal of Rhododendron and Cherry Laurel
- Ongoing control of Himalayan Balsam
- Removal of areas of derelict barbed wire fencing
- Removal of any large debris/rubbish thrown into reserve.

Poundfield Farm land

1.2. The purchase of the 5 acres of adjoining woodland formerly called Poundfield Farm has now completed. An ecological review of the area will now be undertaken to determine how best to manage the land as part of the Ghyll Nature Reserve. There may be grants available to remove the coniferous trees and consideration will also be given to the possibilities of introducing small ponds/glades as appropriate.

Pony Meadows and Bracken/Bluebell slope

1.3. The three ponies are once again proving most efficient at controlling the sward and bramble/bracken. The ponies were initially booked for only 6 weeks this year due to the cost increase. However, they may need to be retained for a further two weeks in order to ensure that the meadow length is at it optimum for biodiversity for next year.

1.4. The pony fields/bracken slope and the path that runs between these two areas has been carefully managed to ensure maximum wildlife value this year. Surveys undertaken by members of Crowborough Conservation have reflected that the number of reptiles sighted has seen a significant increase a result.

1.5. The large glade area in the bracken area referred to in the previous report has also seen an increase in herb layer plant species. This area will be raked clear of all old bracken this winter with a view to increasing the display of Bluebells next spring.

Jubilee Meadow

1.6. Some of the Ghyll' s woodland edge in Jubilee Meadow is due to be cut back near the path that drops into the wood this winter. Volunteers may be invited to help with this work. An additional kissing gate/stile may be considered for this entrance given the frequency of motorcycle ingress at this point.

Heatherview/Medway

1.7. Work on a new drainage ditch which will hopefully help to address the previously reported 'annual surface water drainage' problems at Medway should commence during September/October.

2. The Country Park (CP)

Overview

2.1. The following general activities have been continuing throughout the CP since the last report:

- Control and removal of Rhododendron and Cherry Laurel saplings
- Control of Himalayan Balsam – This is of concern as this year has seen more Balsam than last year, despite the fact that all balsam was removed before it went to seed last year. It is possible that seeds are washing into the reserve and this is being investigated.

Vandalism

2.2. The two large information signs have now been damaged to the point that they will need to be replaced. It is possible to simply order replacements but consideration is being given to producing new ones. It may be that two different signs will be designed in order to provide more information to walkers as they complete the circular route. It is also possible to introduce a new 'blackboard' type sign which could perhaps be updated with information about what wildlife may be present etc. (this would be similar to how the National Trust properties provide information about their gardens etc.).

Ponds

2.3. The top pond has an invasive species called Parrots Feather. This is being kept under control to ensure that it does not get out of control.

2.4. An electro fishing contractor will need to be appointed this winter in order to remove the fish as their presence is significantly reducing the value of the pond for newts, toads, frogs and dragonflies/damselflies.

Central Glade

2.5. The central wild glade in the Country Park needs clearing back this winter as the saplings are beginning to shade out the area. Volunteers are being sought through Crowborough Conservation to help with this work.

3. Bluebell Wood

3.1. Work to increase the aesthetic beauty and wildlife value of the wood are ongoing. This has involved removing saplings and cutting back brambles from path edges to increase the opportunities for wildflowers etc. In order to increase the spread of wildflowers it will be appropriate to selectively remove one or two of the large Sycamores each year over the next few years.

Items for the Strengthening Local Relationships (SLR) Agenda

1. Condition of Whitehill Road/Croft Road surface between the Scout Hut and BP garage
2. Walshes Cottages/Aldervale Cottages (Fermor Road) – footpath condition
3. Green Lane speed cushion condition/repair
4. Beacon Road – soil encroaching onto footpath on the stretch by Woodlands Care Home
5. Burdett Road – loose-noisy drain cover
6. Forest Rise – surface condition
7. Woodland Way/Rotherhill Road – surface condition