

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 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at 7.30 pm when it is proposed to transact the following business:-

  
Town Clerk  
23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016

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**ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

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**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 – 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016
- 4.2 Matters outstanding not included on this agenda

**5. RAILWAY REPORT**

- 5.1 To receive the report from John Coleman (attached)

**6. BRITAIN IN BLOOM**

- 6.1 To review paper and proposal from Cllr Greg Rose (attached)

**7. COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH**

- 7.1 To receive an update on the request for volunteers (Cllr Greg Rose)

**8. WARDEN WORKING PARTY**

- 8.1 To receive an update from the working party meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> November (Cllr Greg Rose)

**9. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

- 9.1 To receive the report from the Ranger and consider future project funding requests (attached)
- 9.2 Review of request list for litter bins / dog bins / bus shelters (attached)

**10. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**

- 10.1 SLR – to note minutes of meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> October 2016 and receive any updates from Cllr Richard Stogdon
- 10.2 To receive an update from Cllr Richard Stogdon regarding outstanding S.106 monies
- 10.3 To review the list of highway improvements requested (attached)
- 10.4 To consider new request for yellow lines and speed limit reductions from St Johns panel meeting (attached)

**11. FINANCE**

- 11.1 Management Account Reports to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016
- 11.2 To agree to move the poster boards budget (code 4605) out of Environment budget and into C&E
- 11.3 To consider the draft committee budget for 2017/18

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

Meeting Attended - Railway Line Parishes Committee, Meeting 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016

Southern was represented and apologised for the continuing poor service which is now quite unacceptable particularly on strike days when only two trains run in each direction on the Uckfield line.

Staff issues, Network Rail infrastructure failures, train defects, a next to impossible time-table, short trains and short turned journeys all contribute to a pretty miserable travelling experience for regular users and will certainly not encourage others to take the train.

Those concerned claim to be doing the best they can in the circumstances - but this is clearly not enough. A recent report by the House of Commons Select Committee apportioned the blame for the staff problems on the DfT, GTR and the RMT. There does not appear to be any resolution in sight for these problems.

There is rather more hope elsewhere.

The extended platforms are all available and the works have generally been well received..

The last two of the recently received trains should be added to the working fleet by now (one of these two had not been put into traffic, as mistakenly reported last time.

The new car park in Uckfield is now seen as successful. The revamped High Street also is now seen as an improvement by many people in the town. However, at all the other stations on the line there is a severe shortage of parking spaces and the Committee will use every opportunity to press for more car parking spaces being made available.

The fourth track along the approach into the low level at London Bridge is in place and should be operational in the New Year.

The Committee will discuss and submit its response to the 2018 Timetable Consultation regarding the Uckfield Line services trying to ensure that if anything there may be some small improvements. As reported before there is little chance of anything major being possible because of the nature of the line as it is at present. In fact some services elsewhere will probably be curtailed.

The new trains for Thameslink services are now entering traffic and, as expected, are not in keeping with passengers aspirations. These trains will be running the peak hour services between East Grinstead and London Bridge (and northwards through the core tunnel)

The London and South Coast Corridor Study is to be published this week. Its conclusions will almost certainly decide the future of the Lewes - Uckfield replacement and of BML2.

## OTHER

The Chancellor's Autumn Statement will be made on Wednesday of this week. The Treasury have said that this will contain an announcement of £1.3 billion for road improvements. No mention as yet of the rail projects that presumably will be funded as part of the future infrastructure plans.

The Wealden Line Campaign have forecast a positive future for BML2 which has received expressions of interest from the City and international investors

Report following meeting with South East in Bloom

10<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Cllr Greg Rose

Present: Cllr Greg Rose, Caroline Miles, Peter Holman

Following The Environment Committee's expression of interest in South East in Bloom, Caroline and I met with Peter Holman from SEIB with the intention to get a better understanding of what's involved, the process and associated costs. The meeting was open to all Councillors.

South East in Bloom isn't really about hanging baskets, it's about environment, horticulture & gardening, conservation and a long term 'future plan' for improving the local areas.

Entrants are judged against criteria rather than each other.

Crowborough entered in 2005 and scored a basic level certificate. We are in possession of the scoring sheet and whilst we scored well for 'hanging baskets' and 'verges,' the main downfall was that no presentation was prepared to talk about what we did as a Council for conservation, preservation, and the ongoing improvement plan. There was also no score for community involvement.

Having read the full Entrants Manual, I believe we are already doing the majority of what would be expected to achieve a high score.

Categories which could be of interest for Crowborough Town Council to enter:

- Village or Town Centre / 1 sq. km
- Country Park
- Conservation Area
- It's your neighbourhood

Costs for entering are approximately £50 per category, however for the 'It's your neighbourhood' category there is no charge.

Being awarded one of the higher Gold, Silver or Bronze awards is hotly contested. The honour and publicity is very much the reason for entering, alongside raising public awareness about all the good work that The Council does to keep the town looking its best. Whilst also encouraging the public to get involved by looking after their own area as well as experience the local green spaces.

The closing date for entries is February 2017.

Proposal

To enter South East in Bloom 2017.

To form a working party to deliver Crowborough Town Council's entry / entries into South East in Bloom 2017 with a budget of up to £250 to cover potential fees.

Rangers Update for The Environment Committee 29<sup>th</sup> November 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 wildlife biodiversity/management activities relating to other areas of the town, as and when appropriate.

**Tree Safety Inspections**

All three areas are currently having their annual 'in-house' safety inspections as we head into winter. Storm Angus also resulted in a need to undertake additional inspections. The high risk areas where trees present the most danger (e.g. Bluebell Wood and the main paths/entrances to all reserves) are checked each week and/or monthly in any event. A diary record of these checks is also kept.

**Wildlife Flora and Fauna Surveys**

Work is currently being undertaken in order to identify local bird experts who can provide additional help with the collection of annual wildlife survey data. This is in order to ensure that we have a good record of an increase or decline in the number of species present year on year. Contact has been made to both bird and reptile specialists at this stage.

Contact has also been made with a Natural History Museum ID expert in order to undertake an up to date moss and lichen species survey of the Ghyll. It is hoped that this survey will take place during 2017.

**Planting of new Elm trees**

Contact has been made with a project which would like to plant disease resistant Elm trees in the nature reserves. This would be highly beneficial for our reserves and meeting is being scheduled with a view to hopefully begin planting in 2017.

**Invasive Species**

As per the respective management plans, the invasive plant species maps are currently being updated for all areas. This is to ensure appropriate management control is undertaken over the winter period.

**New WDC SANGS site**

Two meetings have taken place with WDC regarding the new SANGS site at Alderbrook. The initial meeting was in relation to the area of land at Adam Close and which is being handed back to WDC as part of the new site. The follow up meeting was to advise WDC on management/design and to also facilitate an introduction of the WDC team to the High Weald AONB Team. It is not clear at this stage how the site will be managed in the future. However, given that the site is in Crowborough, a close working relationship should be maintained.

**1. The Ghyll**

**New land at Poundfield Farm**

1.1. The transfer of this land took place in September/October 2016. However, due to time constraints, the plan for managing the new 5 acres at Poundfield Farm is still currently at an outline stage. Initial surveys/planning has however highlighted that the following key management activities will be required over the course of the next year:

Activity	Proposed action	Date
1. Review boundary plans/documentation	Consider any issues arising and engage with residents as appropriate.	Dec/Jan 2016/17
2. Install new access gate	The new area provides the opportunity for vehicular access to this side of the reserve. It is proposed that a new 5 bar gate and fencing be installed.	April 2017
3. Write to new neighbours	Write to all residents to explain that the land now belongs to CTC etc.	January 2017
4. Remove plantation conifers	At this stage it is thought that the removal of the conifers can be managed in-house. Extraction options will need to be considered. This could include heavy horses given the difficulties presented by the wet/soft nature of the woodland floor.	Winter 2017
5. Map all none native invasive species	Identify and map in order to determine appropriate control measures.	Winter 2016/17 - Rhododendron/laur el  Summer 2017 – Knotweed/Himalaya n Balsam

#### Pony Meadows and Bracken/Bluebell slope

- 1.2. The pony fields/bracken slope and the path that runs between these two areas has been carefully managed to control the bracken, keep the paths open and ensure maximum wildlife value this year. Surveys undertaken by members of Crowborough Conservation have reflected that the number of reptiles sighted has improved as a result.
- 1.3. The new large glade 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 improving the habitat, making new vista's and to increase the display of Bluebells/wildflowers next spring.
- 1.4. The Bracken in the pony fields will once again be cut back in places (by approx. 25%) this winter. This is to keep it under control and improve the habitat.

### Jubilee Meadow

- 1.5. 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. This is as per the management plan and is designed to ensure maximum wildlife biodiversity. Volunteers may be invited to help with this work.
- 1.6. An additional kissing gate is now being considered where the meadow drops into the Ghyll. This will help to stop antisocial and potentially dangerous motorcycle ingress at this point.
- 1.7. Some new small educational information boards are proposed for installation along the circular meadow path. These would provide information about how the meadow is managed and 'species to look out for'.

### Heatherview development/Medway

- 1.8. Work on a new drainage ditch to try and address/reduce the previously reported 'annual road surface water/ice drainage problem' has been further assessed during a site meeting with a contractor. As a result of the meeting a new meeting has now been requested with the developers of the adjacent land in order to discuss options.

### Burdett Road Car Park

- 1.9. The post and rail fence along Burdett Road is now so dilapidated that it is failing regularly with 'repairs to repairs' now being undertaken. It is proposed that the entire length be replaced in 2017.

### Dormice

- 1.10. The last dormice survey of the year is due on the 24<sup>th</sup> November. The plan is to remove all unoccupied boxes this year due to disturbance and a possible decline in the quality of the habitat in the Jefferies Wood area. The boxes will remain down for two winters whilst habitat management work is undertaken by the ranger. The boxes will then go back up and be surveyed again from Spring 2018.

## **2. The Country Park (CP)**

### Stream Erosion

- 2.1. Stream erosion control measures appear to be working well. There is further work required now that it is clear that initial prevention measures are holding. Unfortunately, the large Alder which was immediately upstream of the erosion has now had to be removed due to disease. It has been coppiced below the disease, so it is hoped that the tree will recover as its root system is critically important for holding the bank together in future.

### Vandalism

- 2.2. As per the previous report; The two large information signs have now been damaged to the point that they will need to be replaced soon. The cost to replace the information panels has now been quoted at around £360. It is possible to simply order 'like for like' replacements from the original supplier, but consideration is still being given to producing new ones as the cost is broadly the same if we design our own. This is still under consideration but time constraints may mean that like for like replacements are the only realistic option.

It is also proposed that vandal proof Plexi-glass be ordered. This will be installed to protect the new signs. All existing signs which do not currently have this protection will also have this glass installed.

## Ponds

2.3. As per the management plan, the two ponds require ongoing and additional management over the course of the next year.

- *Top Pond* – The pond has invasive fish which were placed there (without permission) a number of years ago. Their presence significantly reduces the value of the habitat for dragonfly, newts and frogs species etc. The plan specifies that the fish be removed and that regular surveys be undertaken to demonstrate how the pond is improving or decreasing in wildlife value over time. It is therefore proposed that an electro-fishing contractor be appointed and that before and after ecological surveys be undertaken. The pond also needs to have some of its weed removed and this will need to be undertaken using a small digger.
- *Bottom Pond* – Work is required in order to improve the aesthetic enjoyment and wildlife value of the pond. The management plan recommended the placing of large rocks to reduce disturbance (by dogs), the introduction of more plant species and that the surrounding trees be carefully managed to allow light and low foliage. A digger will be used to move adjacent available rocks this winter and the trees will also be cut back.

## Glade improvement/creation

2.4. 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. This will take place in January 2017.

2.5. Much work has been undertaken with the help of the regular volunteer this period. This has been focused on improving and enlarging the glades/open areas around the country park. Further similar work is planned for the next period and over the winter in all areas.

## **3. Bluebell Wood**

3.1. In order to improve the beauty and wildlife value of the wood over time, the following work is currently underway:

- Selective thinning/removal of all of young sycamore trees (up to approx. 30ft)
- Complete removal of obvious derelict holly trees
- 25% reduction of other poor quality holly trees
- Tidy up and topping of 50% of remaining holly. This should lead to an overall improvement in the attractiveness and wildlife value of the remaining specimens.

Note: it is important that changes are made very gradually in this tiny fragment of woodland. This is to ensure that the ecology is not adversely affected and that the remaining trees are not put at risk of being blown over due to sudden exposure to high winds.

3.2. It is proposed that two large sycamores be removed next year in order to allow more light through the canopy. This will also stop these trees from causing damage to other trees etc. due to their size.

3.3. It is also proposed that new native hedging be planted in strategic places. This will provide an attractive 'car park screen' to make the wood more attractive for users, eventually reduce wind throw risks to the trees, catch litter from the car parks and provide more resources (nesting and feeding) for wild birds and small mammals (Bank voles etc.).

3.4. The low post and rail fencing is failing/missing in places and it is further proposed that repairs be undertaken next year.

3.5. There are several examples of good tall 'dead wood' stumps in the wood. These are of high wildlife value for birds and insects. In an attempt to make the woodland more attractive to bats, there will be upward slots sawn into some of these trees. These slots will hopefully provide valuable additional roosting opportunities.

Finally, an update on the Pocket Park Nature Reserve will be provided at the meeting on the 29 November.

Daniel Colborne

Ranger



**Proposed Ranger Projects for financial year 2017-2018**

The following is a proposed list of projects which will require funding for the period April 2017-2018.

The proposed projects cover The Ghyll, The Country Park and Bluebell Wood. A separate costed project plan will be produced in relation to the Pocket Park Nature Reserve (at the Beacon disused tennis court site).

Area	Proposal	Estimated Cost
<b>Ghyll</b>		
	1. Continued path improvement – Path improvement work is proceeding as planned. It is proposed that a further 20 tons of crushed sandstone is purchased in order to continue improvement work on the main paths through to 2018.	£480
	2. Leaflets and Path ‘way markers’ – Whilst we have a leaflet/map for the Country Park, we do not have one for the Ghyll. In addition, the main routes through the Ghyll are not physically marked. This has led to feedback that users have either got lost, or have not felt confident to explore. It is therefore proposed that leaflet/maps and small ‘way marker’ posts should be introduced.	£400 (way markers) £800 (leaflets)
	3. Kissing Gates - It is proposed that two new kissing gates be installed as follows: a. At Jubilee meadow (at the point where the meadow drops into the woods. This would further discourage the antisocial use of motorbikes into the Ghyll). b. Where the twitten enters the wood from Green Lane (down from Poundfield Stores). Once again, this will discourage/restrict the use of motorbikes.	£260  £260
	4. Educational information Boards – It is proposed that 3 additional small (A4) educational information boards be installed along the circular path at Jubilee Meadow. These would focus upon how the meadow is managed to encourage as much wildlife as possible and specific species to look out for.	£950
	5. Replace Post & Rail fence along Burdett Road – The existing fencing is now becoming dilapidated. It has been repaired numerous times and has now reached the point where we are repairing repairs. It is therefore proposed that we replace the whole road facing length.	£600
	6. Newly purchased (5 acre) Poundfield Farm area – Due to time constraints, the detailed management plan will now be produced this winter. However, at this point, the main initial project which will require funding for next year, is to install a post and rail fence with a 5 bar gate at the end of the current access track.	£500 (there is a surplus gate at the yard so the costing is just for fencing)

Country Park		
	<p>7. Improve Lower Pond (as per Management Plan) – The current management plan recommends that improvements could be made to increase the aesthetic attractiveness and wildlife biodiversity of the pond (and reduce damage being done to wildlife by dogs entering the water) by moving large rocks into strategic positions. This work will require the use of a digger to move the rocks.</p>	<p>£500 (for digger hire with diver. This also covers the cost of 7.)</p>
	<p>8. Stream erosion control. – Stream erosion control at the top bridge is going to plan. However, a few additional large rocks are needed. A digger is required in order to extract and place the few additional rocks. The digger hired for 6. will be used to undertake both projects on the same day.</p>	<p>See 6. above.</p>
	<p>9. Top pond management. -The Management plan recommends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Periodic surveys of the pond to show whether the biodiversity of the habitat is improving or declining. (The presence of introduced fish is highly likely to be reducing the viability of the habitat for amphibian and Dragonfly species).</li> <li>b) Removal of the invasive fish (Rudd)</li> <li>c) Control of pond foliage.</li> </ul> <p>It is therefore proposed that a survey be undertaken in late March 2017 in order to record the current biodiversity status of the pond, that the fish then be removed. A follow up survey would then be undertaken in either 2018 or 2019.</p>	<p>£1500 (for survey, fish removal and foliage control (possibly using a digger))</p>
	<p>10. Replace damaged Information Boards and install Plexi-glass screens on all reserve notice boards to prevent/reduce damage in future.</p>	<p>£360 for two A2 Vinyl printed notice board posters.</p> <p>£400 (for Plexi glass protective screens)</p>

Bluebell Wood		
	<p>11. Improve Post and Rail fencing - The low fencing is now failing/missing in places. It is therefore proposed that the fencing be replaced and/or repaired where appropriate.</p>	£400 (max)
	<p>12. The woodland would benefit from some additional native species hedging in places along it's outside edge. This would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Reduce the amount of litter being blown into the wood from the surrounding car parks</li> <li>b. Improve the woodland experience for users as it would screen the car park from view</li> <li>c. Reduce the strength of the wind entering the wood. This will improve the habitat for nesting, increase food resources and provide cover and protection from wind.</li> </ul>	£300
	<p>13. Remove two large Sycamore – As per the management plan and good woodland management practice; Smaller sycamores and derelict holly is currently being removed by the ranger. However, in order to improve the quality of the wood, it is important that some of the larger sycamore trees are removed, over time, before they can cause long term damage. It is therefore proposed that two of the larger trees be removed this year.</p>	£650

BUS SHELTER REQUESTS

Location	date	request from	usage	cost	ESCC appval	Score	Priority	Notes
A26/Sheep Plain	Mar-15	Sussex Housing & Care	Low	£4,150				considered Nov 12/Jan13 at request of ESCC. Passenger data confidential as commercial service. Not taken forward in 2013 or 2015
Bricklayers Arms, Whitehill Road	Mar-15	via Cllr Kay Moss						insufficient room for a shelter. Visibility issues for traffic using adjacent access road. NOT TAKEN FORWARD
Whitehill Road/Cranborne Gardens junction	Mar-15	Greg Rose at Env Comm meeting 24.03.15						CTC to review and bring to Env Comm meeting 1.06.15. Insufficient room. NOT TAKEN FORWARD

Agenda Item 10.3

Highway requests/community match funding 2015

Scheme	Cost	CTC funding	Other funding	community benefit	risk	score	priority	Notes
Hurst Hill - 2 solar powered speed control signage	15,000							request from Police Panel meeting. Considered at Env Com meeting 24.03.15. Low priority for ESCC - suggested match funding request
A26 Beacon Road - reduction in speed limit from 40mph to 30mph	12,500 - 14,500							residents petition to ESCC Lead Member Sept 2014. CTC asked to match fund. Brain Banks/Mark Dunn attended Env Comm meeting Jan 2015 to explain that reduction in limi not feasible.

**New requests from St Johns panel meeting**

Yellow lines in:

- Elim Court Gardens/London Road
- Goldsmiths Avenue/Beacon Road
- Ghyll Road/St. Johns Road

Speed limit reduction:

- to 30mph on Rannoch Road.

Agenda Item 11.3

		2015/16	2016/17	2016/17	2017/18	RBS Next	5 Year Plan
		Actual	Budget	Projection	Proposed	Year Budget	Budget
<b>Environment Committee</b>							
<b>801 Highway Facilities</b>							
4000	Salaries	11,007	11,100	12,664	12,700	41,600	11,322
4001	Employer NI Contributions	222	250	357	380	2,600	550
4002	Employers Superannuation	2,268	2,300	2,350	2,450	6,240	0
4016	Miscellaneous	3,275	2,000	1,046	2,000	208	2,030
4601	Street Lighting	23,773	28,000	28,000	28,000	37,440	28,420
4602	Litter Bins	1,140	600	600	600	1,560	609
4603	Seats	0	1,000	418	1,000	2,600	1,015
4604	Bus Shelters	98	500	500	500	6,240	508
4605	Poster/notice boards	0	600	7	600	520	609
4651	Planting	9,278	9,000	11,071	10,000	15,600	9,135
4652	CCTV	9,428	9,500	14,434	10,000	12,480	9,643
4654	Environmental Improvements	3,322	6,000	171	6,000	6,240	6,090
4659	PCSO	30,709	30,000	30,000	30,000	31,200	0
4661	NWCT / Dial-a-ride	2,886	3,000	3,770	3,000	0	3,045
<b>Highway Facilities Expenditure</b>		<b>97,406</b>	<b>103,850</b>	<b>105,388</b>	<b>107,230</b>	<b>164,528</b>	<b>72,976</b>
1005	Income - poster boards	625	800	857	850	1,144	812
1050	Income Miscellaneous	1,961	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Highway Facilities Income</b>		<b>2,586</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>1,144</b>	<b>812</b>
<b>Highway Facilities Net Expenditure</b>		<b>94,820</b>	<b>103,050</b>	<b>104,531</b>	<b>106,380</b>	<b>163,384</b>	<b>72,164</b>
<b>802 Environmental Projects</b>							
4000	Salaries	11,670	13,500	13,659	13,700	0	13,703
4001	Employer NI Contributions	491	250	768	800	0	254
4002	Employers Superannuation	0	2,500	823	900	0	2,538
4402	The Gyll	10,576	12,000	10,020	12,000	0	12,180
4475	Country Park	2,821	6,000	4,893	6,000	0	6,090
4656	Bluebell Wood	975	3,500	6,279	3,500	0	3,553
<b>Environmental Projects Net Expenditure</b>		<b>26,533</b>	<b>37,750</b>	<b>36,442</b>	<b>36,900</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>38,318</b>
<b>Environment Committee Summary</b>							
<b>Expenditure</b>		<b>123,939</b>	<b>141,600</b>	<b>141,830</b>	<b>144,130</b>	<b>164,528</b>	<b>111,294</b>
<b>Income</b>		<b>2,586</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>1,144</b>	<b>812</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>		<b>121,353</b>	<b>140,800</b>	<b>140,973</b>	<b>143,280</b>	<b>163,384</b>	<b>110,482</b>

Net expenditure budget of £143,280 represents an increase of 1.6%