

Chesham Bois Parish Council

Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held remotely at 8.00pm on Monday 25th January 2021

PRESENT: Cllr C Woolveridge (Chairman), Cllr J Bailey, Cllr D Buckingham, Cllr D Conway Read, Cllr J Harbottle, Cllr R Harrison, Cllr R Hartley, Cllr D King, Cllr J Large & Cllr C Thomas.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs S Payne (Clerk), Ms N Nicholl & Mr C Grimsdale representing Heatherton School and 2 Members of the Public.

59.1 Questions and Comments from the Public.

A member of the public was concerned that the Heatherton School proposed improvements to the Common would urbanise that area of the common.

59.2 Presentation by Heatherton School on their Proposed Improvements to the Common to the West of Amersham Road.

The school are seeking permission to use small area of common land to the west of Amersham Road to create an outdoor learning environment for children to understand more about the natural habitat in their neighbourhood. An ecological study to look at the biodiversity of the area was commissioned by the school and reported on the existing biodiversity and highlighted how biodiversity could be enhanced.

The proposal includes the creation of a wood chip trail pathway, installation of information boards at points of interests, utilising existing cleared areas for forest school activities which will include natural seating and firepit; the installation of bug hotels, bat boxes and bird boxes and the creation of a wildflower meadow by removing existing brambles and planting wildflowers and wild grasses. The area will be screened from the Amersham Road through the maintenance of a natural barrier and there would not be external signage or a permanent structure. Heatherton School would commit to funding the creation and continued maintenance of the area.

Other local schools and uniformed groups have expressed an interest in using the area.

59.3 Apologies for Absence. Received from Cllr R Heath.

59.4 To Receive Declarations of Interest or Dispensations Relating to this Meeting.

None received.

59.5 To Consider the Proposal from Heatherton School for the Improvement of the Common to the West of Amersham Road.

Cllr Thomas's report on the proposal had been circulated to Council and noted. Heatherton School have been made aware of the regulations regarding common land and the requirement that open access to the public must be maintained. The Common, Woodlands & Burial Ground Working Group have considered the proposal and recommend that Council support the proposal subject to more detailed discussions regarding a formal licence agreement detailing the responsibilities of each party, rules on activities and accessibility, maintenance and a formal review process.

The working group would not recommend the construction of a shelter or firepit as outlined in the proposal.

The area should be kept as 'native wild' as possible and that the school have a dedicated budget in place for the continued upkeep and maintenance of the area.

Council would receive a copy of the proposals from the companies being considered by the school to carry out the work.

Council agreed in principle to the proposal for the creation of an outdoor learning environment on the common land to the west of Amersham Road taking into account the issues raised at this meeting. A more detailed proposal would be developed, agreed terms and reference and a licence drafted for Council's consideration.

Action: CWBGM WG

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.