



Go Local On a Better Environment

**MINUTES AND ACTIONS OF CAVERSHAM GLOBE MEETING
28 May 2013 at 7.15pm, Church House, Caversham.**

Attendees. Judith Barratt (Chair), , Dave Kenny, Margaret Skinner, Jean Newbery, Jim McMaster, Jenny Hicks, Phil Bagge, Vickie Abel, Colin Potts, Cllr Richard Davies.

Apologies for absence: Richard Denney, Peter Trout, Jennifer Millest, Chris Burden..

Minutes of 23 April - Approved for publication with minor amendments.

1.Parks and Open Spaces and Tree issues:

- a) **Planters on Church Street** - These have now been treated with three coats of woodstain; alternate boxes have been planted up with new shrubs and bedding plants. A new rowan tree has been planted in the large box outside the Spice Oven. Thanks to everyone who helped out over two sessions, including staff from SSE. One further session to be arranged in June to apply the final coat to the planters on the BT frontage, and to renew the bedding plants there. Thanks also to the five Caversham Traders who have funded the new shrubs. Further suggestions of shrubs included Penstemons, fuchsia (Mrs Poppel), potentilla, geraniums.
- b) **Balmore Walk - Resurfacing of paths etc** The conservation grass cut of the slope and resurfacing of the main path with crushed limestone has not yet taken place. Railings also need installing on the new steps up from Hemdean Road. **Update: Dave Booth from RBC Parks confirms that the resurfacing will start in June and that railings have been ordered for the new steps**
- c) **Balmore Allotments** RBC had removed part of the fence at the top of the allotments to clear scrub and create three new plots. Some habitat had been lost. RBC is consulting over the proposed installation of a gate. Concern expressed about creeping urbanisation of Balmore Walk. View of meeting was that the fence should be reinstated and hedging planted to help screen it and the new plots - this would help compensate for the lost habitat. **Jenny would write to RBC; Keep in view.**
- d) **New trees at St Martin's Precinct** - concerns remain over watering of the new dawn redwoods by the bottlebanks. Query also raised at the meeting as to whether TPOs could be transferred to the new trees. **Cllr Davies to follow up with RBC planning natural environment team**
- e) **Hill's Meadow:** Landscaping of the grassed area has now been completed with new trees and shrubs, logs to prevent vehicle damage, and seeding of the enlarged fairground area - this is now greening over well. Soil on top of the earth mounds is still bare and appears not to have been seeded yet. Margaret pointed out that the conservation grass areas should not be cut until August or September - after the seeds have set. **Keep in View.**
- f) **Caversham Court gardens.** Vickie reported that head gardener Emily was leaving at the end of June, her replacement was due to be advertised shortly but there may be a gap before a new head gardener is appointed and in post.
- g) **The Withies.** Jenny reported that the stack of tyres and shed have now been removed.

2 Planning matters.

- a) **George Street Petrol Station** – Land at the back of the site was now being advertised To Let. Tree surgeons & the managing agents had been observed inspecting the row of conifers which screen the rear of the site, they had told Dave that all these trees may need to be felled. This has been reported to RBC Planning & Natural environment team to see if the trees might be protected with a TPO. No response yet. Carol had not received any response from Shell after writing with concerns over removal of trees/shrubs on the site frontage. **Keep in view.**

3 Finance Matters.

- a) A total of £199 had been spent on plants and shrubs for the planters; the traders have reimbursed us with £162 which will cover the bedding plants and shrubs, the remaining £39 for the rowan tree has been funded by Globe. Further funding would be needed to pay for autumn bedding plants and various options for grants were discussed at the meeting. **Keep in view.**
- b) Judith reported on plans for installing planters at the entrance to the Milestone Centre and the possibility of Globe help in obtaining a Green Grant was discussed. **Judith to follow up.**

4 Environmental Issues

- a) **Environmental Visual Audits (EVAs).** Calendar for June/July EVAs was discussed.
- b) **Flytipping/Litter** i) at the rear of Humphries (Promenade Rd) had been cleared by Globe supporters; ownership of the land was being investigated by RBC. ii) flytipping behind Gibbons (Church St) not yet resolved - RBC is investigating ownership. iii) rubbish behind the Prospect St Dry Cleaners (corner Oxford St) has now been cleared up. **Keep in view.**
- c) Margaret reported overhanging branches in Lower Henley Road. **Jenny would report to RBC.**
- d) Grass by the advertising hoardings at corner of George St & Gosbrook Rd has not been cut yet this year. Seems to have fallen off cutting schedule as both verges and parks have had at least two or more cuts. Unsure if this was RBC or Decaux responsibility. **Cllr Davies to pursue with RBC.**

5 Proposed new cycle & footbridge over the Thames Dave had attended the drop-in consultation at the Town Hall on 2 May. RBC staff had explained that the proposed location of the bridge was intended to provide the most direct link from the new Reading Station north entrance to Caversham and the river - if it was moved east of the play area (as suggested at our last meeting), it would be a less direct route and would impact on more trees. RBC's long term aspiration was for a new access route through the SSE site to the new bridge. In giving feedback to RBC, Dave had raised concerns about the possible impact on a row of 4x trees on the towpath in front of the SSE building and the extent of additional paths and lighting proposed across Christchurch Meadow. Jenny had also sent feedback. A detailed planning application is expected in the autumn.

6) Proposed leisure developments in Christchurch Meadow & Hill's Meadow Cllr Davies reported that RBC was about to launch a consultation on a proposed new café and leisure facilities for Christchurch Meadows, east of the play area. The proposals also included long-term moorings at Hill's Meadow. The consultation would be held during June. It was proposed that our next GLOBE meeting on 25 June be devoted to this consultation (after a short AGM the discussion could take place from 8pm with RBC staff attending). **To be discussed in detail at next Globe meeting, after our AGM.**

7 Globe Correspondence / Activities

a) **Thames 21** had organised a clean-up of the Danall through Hill's Meadow on Bank Holiday Monday 27 May with help from Globe members and Reading university students. Two shopping trolleys and a variety of other items had been retrieved, and some vegetation cleared. The flow had notably improved through Hill's Meadow after a number of blockages were cleared. Further events are to be arranged by Thames 21 locally and would be circulated via the Globe mailing list.

8 AOB

a) **Re Scout HQ Grove Hill** – need to check on our recently planted boundary hedging and whether “natural barriers” have been installed round native bluebells to protect them, as per their Lease agreement on the adjoining woodland. **Dave/Richard to follow up.**

**Date of next meeting Tuesday, 25 June 2013. 7.15pm Church House.
(AGM to start at 7.15 sharp to be followed by tea break & from 8pm discussion on RBC's proposed developments at Christchurch Meadow and Hill's Meadow)**