**Earlswood and Redhill Common Steering Group minutes.**

**Tuesday 24th July, 6pm, Town Hall**

**Updates from Steering Group members**

Simon Elson commented that the Terms of Reference are non-existent, and a new one should be agreed at the next meeting. There needs to be more direction of the group’s objectives and a better representation of all Earlswood Common stakeholders.

Simon Elson reported that he is due to carry out some conservation work to remove encroaching vegetation in Chain Pond. **DW and SE to look at the required works**.

Redhill Common was also discussed regarding ongoing management. **DW to have a site visit with Simon to identify required works**.

Simon Elson commented that the existing Earlswood Common management plan expired in 2013.

Newspaper extract read out by Reigate History Society regarding nature conservation on Earlswood Common and Reigate Heath. It was well received by the group.

Horley Piscatorial Society made the following observations/Enquiries:

The habitat improvement grant for the sum of £5k to allow the fishery to carry out works around the lake has not been released by the council. This was arranged by a previous council employee Emanuel Flecken. **DW to raise this issue**.

The top lake is now overstocked with fish as they were never returned to the lower lake following dredging works. The fishery requires that the water levels in the top lake are lowered to allow the fish to be netted and returned to the lower lake. The Environment Agency (EA) have agreed with the fishery that they can only carry out this work mid to late November 2018. In addition the EA may be in the position to offer a fishery management grant in the future.

**Horley Piscatorial to contact RBBC in November to discuss works**.

The Barley Straw bale has been sitting in the top lake for a long time and has been installed incorrectly. The correct method is to break up the straw and put into nets which allows for faster decomposition**. DW to raise issue**.

Were the impacts of pedal boats on the birds on the top lake assessed at any time? **DW to check to see if any ecological assessments relating to this were made.**

Earlswood Café and Boating reported/enquired:

There is a build-up of litter by the concrete wall around the lower lake at weekends. Is there a possibility of an extra litter pick at weekends? **DW to raise the issue.**

The car park bay lines are fading and inaccurate parking is happening as a result**. DW to raise the issue.**

Are the gates around the common and lakes being reinforced to provide protection against traveller incursions? **DW to raise the issue**.

The laminated signs about asking the public not to feed the ducks with bread are not visible enough. Some visitors are still using bread which is damaging to both ducks and the lake. A larger more permanent sign installation would be better**. DW to raise the issue**.

Redhill and Reigate Golf Club

Dog control is an issue on the golf course. There have been several incidents of dogs intimidating golfers**. DW to raise issue with Dog Warden**.

Tony Clinghan, manager of Redhill and Reigate Golf Club to send over drainage works plans for the Golf Course including the Common. **DW raise this/pass to drainage engineer**.

Friends of Swan group reported that the Egyptian Goose that had an injured leg seems to be in good health.

**Community involvement of maintenance work on Redhill Common**

DW reported that he had been approached by a resident of Whitepost Hill which borders a parcel of land on Redhill Common. The resident has expressed interest in maintaining this piece of land. DW suggested that they could be absorbed by the Simon Elson’s Reigate Area Conservation Volunteer group and can carry out some work under his supervision. This would ensure works are being carried out responsibly**. DW and SE to identify any works that are required.**

**Forest School activities**

DW reported that Hatchlands School in Redhill have expressed interest in undertaking Forest School activities on Redhill Common. It was commented that this may encourage unlicensed activity elsewhere on the Common.

**AOB**

Friends of Swan group

There have been alleged reports of Swan ringing on Earlswood lakes by a bird group based in Norfolk. There appears to be no connection to any regional/national bird ringing initiatives. **All members to pass on any further reports.**

Simon Elson

The hedge that was laid along Woodhatch road is in need of some maintenance. This would be a good volunteer task.

Concern was raised about the lack of updated countryside/conservation projects material on the Council’s Earlswood Common webpage. It was commented that at present there is more of a focus on recreation rather than nature. Could any ongoing projects be added to the webpage? **DW to look into this.**

**Date of next meeting** 6th November, 6pm