

Yateley Common Management Committee Notes

5th November 2025 – 7.00pm Oak Room, Yateley Town Council

Present: Cllr Bob Harward (Chair YTC.) Jean Cheadle (HCC) Chris Gazzard (BAL) Mark Crisp (RSPB) Andy (RSPB) Gill McCallum (Admin Officer YTC)	In Attendance: 7 members of the public Apologies: Nicki Paton (Hampshire Countryside) Zoe Cotton (HIWWT)
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1.	Apologies & Welcome Those present were welcomed by Cllr Bob Harward and the meeting was opened at 7.00pm
2.	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest
3.	Notes from previous meeting were accepted as correct Matters Arising:- none Updates – Blackbushe Airport – report circulated before meeting Chris Gazzard confirmed land exchange and appeal now gone through therefore, Ongoing Status will be removed from future agendas. Open to public and agreed openings and access points are in place. All fences are around perimeter and signage will be going up shortly. Yateley Society helped with the historical information for the signs. All documents will be on BAL website under Cottage Farm. Any issues to be reported to BAL.
4.	Questions from Local Residents - A resident queried the outdated DEFRA maps. Chris Gazzard confirmed the maps have not been updated for some time and advised him to contact DEFRA. He mentioned that it may not be treated as a priority. He confirmed that Harry Goodchild is responsible for Hampshire. - A resident commented that a car had run into the pin at the bottom of the flats at Heathlands Court. Jean Cheadle confirmed she would investigate.
5.	Site Managers report – report circulated before meeting - Jean Cheadle went through circulated report. - Firebreak management to make site more robust. - In process of taking up new SANG. - No recent fires since last meeting. - Bird tables may not be entirely accurate as depends on people taking survey. - Habitat checks ongoing. - Track maintenance ongoing. - Volunteers still improved and continue to recruit. - Social media numbers slowly rising. - Losing an assistant ranger so recruitment in coming months. - Cllr Harward asked about ground nesting birds and commented that they were everywhere this summer.
6.	HIWWT South MoD Report – report circulated before meeting
7.	RSPB Report – report circulated after the meeting - Most of the meeting points were covered in the RSPB report circulated. - Complaints regarding work but conversations have been positive. Work has been heavy to get the habitat ready as soon as possible. Intermittent phase looks messy but will be short lived. - Volunteers recorded a nice array of species including butterflies. Plants benefitting from sunlight. Winter thrushes thriving and general improved habitat for birds.

	• Flooding concerns, areas looked at for adding drainage, culverts and pipes. Will improve fire vehicle access in case of wildfires and maintain fire breaks. • When all the timberwork and felling is finished, will look to recruit volunteers. • Cllr Harward mentioned he heard an owl hooting that he hadn't noticed before. • Cllr Phelps-Jones mentioned she was on a walk last year and informed that the historical areas would be cleared. RSPB confirmed that they will be marking out areas however, they have been difficult to access as quite knotty. Chris Gazzard mentioned dispersal pans would be opened. • Mark Crisp confirmed that new notice boards would be put up following coordination with RSPB and BAL. • A resident commented that the area near Little Vigo is much noisier since the trees were removed. RSPB confirmed that non-native woodland has been removed and the area will regenerate and thicken up in time, as in earlier days. Light will get in and vegetation will grow. • The same resident asked for more communication and involvement in the process as he had left messages in the past but not been contacted and wanted to voice his concerns. Chris Gazzard reminded him that the area is being returned to heathland and some trees were planted post war as a timber crop but not meant to stay long term. • RSPB asked people to bear with the process and hopefully by year two it would back to normal, with heathers returning. • A resident asked who is now responsible for land around Little Vigo and Chris Gazzard confirmed it would be RSPB going forward. • Cllr Harward confirmed that in the long run the common would be returned heathland and how it should be seen. • Larger pine trees with more branches would remain for value to birds and wildlife. • There will be other types of trees to be retained in other compartments. • A resident mentioned that the previous report mentioned flood surveys. Hampshire keen for more water in Castle Bottom in the mire. Jean Cheadle confirmed she would like the mire to be reinstated for habitat. • Contour lines show water isn't flowing in other directions. • Yateley Society are hoping that surveys will be done for the Firgrove Farm site. • RSPB didn't think there will be a significant increase in water flow but would hope to mitigate, should that be the case. • Cllr Harward mentioned that planning applications would always consider environmental factors when making decisions.
8.	Any Other Business • A resident asked when Welsh Drive Bridleway would be opened. He hadn't received any response would like an update to the situation. • Chris Gazzard suggested that an alternative footpath might be put in place but contentious as must be safe as bridleway near BAL land. No unrestricted path will be put in place due to safety. BCA don't have right to approve an alternative route as BCA don't own the land. HCC, BAL and BCA and the landowner would have to agree a solution. • The resident commented that BCA were committing a criminal offence by enclosing the site and went on to ask whether BCA have ever been invited or attended YCMC meetings. Cllr Harward responded that they may have been in very early years.
9.	Next Meeting Date: Wednesday 4th March 2026 at the Oak Room, Yateley Town Council Wednesday 1st July 2026 Wednesday 4th November 2026

The meeting closed at 20.08hrs