Yateley Common Management Committee Notes

4th March 2026 – 7.00pm Oak Room, Yateley Town Council

Present: Cllr Bob Harward (Chair YTC) Cllr Tim Davies (HDC) Nicki Paton (HCC) Jean Cheadle (HCC) Chris Gazzard (BAL) Gill McCallum (Admin Officer YTC)	**In Attendance:** 4 members of the public **Apologies:** Zoe Cotton (HIWWT) Cllr Stuart Bailey (HDC) Mark Crisp (RSPB**)** Mike Mann (Yateley Society)

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
4.	**Questions from Local Residents** • Resident asked Chris Gazzard about access to the fields, he apologised and said he was chasing.
5.	Site Managers report – report circulated before meeting • Teams working but not at full capacity and working with just 4. Recruitment in progress and starting early March. • Winter works went well, clearing scrubland and pulling birch at Castle Bottom. Difficult at Yateley because lots of archaeology. Will try west next. • Bird surveys starting this month and waiting for national bird survey to include nightjars and woodlark. • Resident asked about amphibian survey at Wyndham's Pond and Nicki Paton confirmed it has been done. Amphibians right down and concern raised by resident. • Enquiries from new volunteers but weather has been off-putting however, Jean Cheadle has contacted Surrey Choices who have been involved and helped. • Resident asked how volunteers are recruited and Nicki Paton confirmed mainly through social media. • Chris Gazzard suggested contacting corporate groups, but Nicki Paton commented that most people want to help in the summer months. • Cllr Phelps-Jones asked about the archaeology research and Nicki Paton confirmed that Carol White from Winchester university did some digs around 2008/9. Small finds but dated 8000 years old. A new volunteer would like to pick up on that work moving forward. She has worked at the British Museum and therefore has some helpful contacts. • A resident commented that in the past a trench had been dug where pottery and syrup of figs bottle was found in the past. • Cllr Davies commented that you can't avoid finding pottery in any dig in the UK. He confirmed that Reading Uni did some digs in the past. Nicki Paton confirmed they are in contact with Reading and students have been doing hydrology reports at Castle Bottom. • Cllr Davies mentioned that Hart DC was looking to introduce beavers at Fleet Pond.
6.	**HIWWT South MoD Report –** • **Circulated in advance – no comments.**

7.	**Blackbushe Airport Manager's Report** – reports circulated before meeting • Cottage Farm signs up and noted that people were using the site. Tenants still in farm for the time being. • Soil assessments done and environmental management plan to be done annually. • Grass short and ecologists will be brought in to see how it will be managed. • Fair bit of activity with the masts and being replaced • Top end fenced out and not common land and another mast may be erected soon. • Concerns around the Go Cart track where tyres have been removed. Dumped fridge removed. Complaint about Oil spills. • Signage will be going around the disused runways. Information and content due from RSPB before they go up and around 10 locations for signs. Map will be on one side showing people's rights – no motorcycles, fires etc. Info from RSPB about history and work. • New red gate to go in near go cart track to look smarter. • Resident said he has been trying to meet the RSPB for weeks; Chris Gazzard deferred him to Mark Crisp.
8.	**RSPB Report –** • **Circulated before meeting – discussed missing and vandalised signs.**
9.	**Any Other Business** • Cllr Davies has received an email from HCC about Sims metals. Members of public have expressed concerns about alarms going off. HCC have inspected and concluded that nothing is happening on the site. Parsons metals, who took over the site have gone into liquidation. Concerns that metals could be seeping out and Environment Agency are monitoring. • Car fire and fly tipping outside entrance. Sims are still responsible for items left before the site closed. • Cllr Harward mentioned that soil contamination from metals and oil is likely to be profound as the company was there for many years. •
10.	**Next Meeting Date: Wednesday 1st July 2026 at the Oak Room, Yateley Town Council** **Wednesday 4th November 2026** **Wednesday 3rd March 2027**

The meeting closed at 19:40hrs