

Shere Parish Council



Peaslake Farm Steering Committee Minutes

1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 Tanyard Hall 30 Station Road, Gomshall GU5 9LF

Present: Shere Parish Council Councillors C Carlisle, J Cross, G Reffo, P Carter, R Davey, and B Andrews  
Clerk & RFO S Hoyland

Friends of the Hurtwood (FoTH) Anthony Collins (Chairman), Mark Beaumont (Ranger), David Wright (Director), Assheton Don (Treasurer), Tim Metson (Director and owner of Coverwood Farm) and Zoe Horton (Trustee, Admin & Support)

- PFSC/22.7      **To accept apologies** and reasons for absence in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s 85(1) (LGA 1972) – **None**
- PFSC/22.8      **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs)** Declarations by Councillors on any of the agenda items below in accordance with The Localism Act 2011, ss.27-34 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012. (SI 2012 No. 1464) – **Councillors G Reffo and J Cross – declared that they are members of FoTH**
- PFSC/22.9      **Peaslake Farm Development** – to receive an update on the Peaslake Farmyard development if available – **Moved to after exclusion**
- PFSC/22.10     **Presentation/Questions on the proposals for Peaslake Farm Fields** from Friends of the Hurtwood and Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT) if available – [A presentation was given by members of FoTH.](#)  
The following questions were asked by Councillors present:  
**Q.** What is the motivation for FoTH taking on Peaslake Farm Fields (PFF)?  
**A.** FoTH are adjoining land owners and can contribute and make a difference. To develop farming and deliver community needs. Funding the maintenance through Countryside Stewardship, using the expertise of Shaun Page.  
**Q.** Would there be a management fee or sub-letting?  
**A.** No management fee and there would be a head lease with SPC (no fee) and a sub-lease with Tim Metson for grazing and hay (fee paying)  
**Q.** Water attenuation and fencing will be costly, will the FoTH be using reserves to pay for these?  
**A.** FoTH is confident funding is available for fencing and if not would be paid for by FoTH and reimbursed by the rent. Water attenuation could be expensive, they would take the advice of the experts. FoTH are not looking to create a wetland but instead to building a bund to hold the water back and slow it down.  
**Q.** How would FoTH balance agricultural use with maximum biodiversity/nature reserve? Is there a conflict, as ponding may reduce grazing and which is dominant, farming or biodiversity and nature?  
**A.** Grazing and hay cropping are used as part of the environmental plan. The water attenuation would not affect the grass and the yield would increase with the increase of biodiversity.  
**Q.** Fencing would protect the hedgerow and the fencing is only needed for the grazing. Biodiversity Net Gain Funding is potentially a lot of money tied to the land, for the benefit of the environment. Will the FoTH be increasing biodiversity above that of the grants available, without the BNG credits?

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**A.** FoTH are ready to move straight away and would investigate/look into BNG credits subject to interest from the community or need for the land. However, with a perceived change of focus from the government regarding the environment and planning, there is no real idea on how effective the credits will be.

A fairly common approach is farming and biodiversity – this would be financed outside of BNG credits by FoTH.

**Q.** Would FoTH collaborate with Surrey Wildlife Trust?

**A.** Yes

**Q.** How would the flood management be managed?

**A.** Advice would be taken from the relevant parties, including Surrey County Council Flood Management, taking into account the RPS Report and subject to liability

**It was stressed that SCC had estimated a 40% increase in water in the future and the flood attenuation was not to be backtracked on**

**Q.** In the last 10 years, have any land management contracts been terminated?

**A.** In 2015 Parklands and Shere Heath did not renew when the parcels of land were sold by Shere Manor Estate. One has been taken on during that period in Cranleigh

**Q.** Were FoTH involved with the forestry award just won by Shere Manor Estate and English Woodlands?

**A.** No the FoTH do not manage the woods, they currently manage the land in relation to public access and areas not woodland.

**Q.** Where would the water attenuation be?

**A.** The area from the retained land adjacent to the development to the gateway. The water would be collected behind a bund for slow release and due to the topography of the land, the bund would be lower than the houses. Any spoil from the bund would most likely be spread around the site after checks were made for contaminants.

**Q.** Would FoTH be happy to enter into a long lease, financing the flood works?

**A.** Yes, subject to demands and liability.

PFSC/22.11     **Exclusion of the Public and Press (Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960) – Excluded** the public and press for the following item of business because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

PFSC/22.12     **Peaslake Farm Fields** – to review proposals for the management of Peaslake Farm Fields using the agreed [Evaluation Criteria](#) and make Recommendation to Full Council.  
**A full evaluation was postponed until Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December, meeting to continue at that time.**

**Peaslake Farm Development** – to receive an update on the Peaslake Farmyard development if available – the Clerk gave a short update

**Meeting paused 1.12.22 to receive further information from Surrey Wildlife Trust**

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**Meeting continued 1pm on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at Tanyard Hall, Gomshall**

**Present:** Shere Parish Council Councillors C Carlisle, J Cross, G Reffo, R Davey, and B Andrews  
**Clerk & RFO** S Hoyland

**To accept apologies and reasons for absence in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s 85(1) (LGA 1972) – Councillor P Carter**

**It was confirmed that the meeting was still under Exclusion of the Public and Press (Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960)**

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### PFSC/22.12 Peaslake Farm Fields- continued from above

Surrey Wildlife Trust provided information explaining that due to the current economic situation they could not commit funds for the management of Peaslake Farm for the first year, until the potential income source of Biodiversity Net Gain Credits were introduced and investigated further. Therefore, a management fee would be charged to the council for works proposed – it was **Recommended to Full Council Not** to proceed with SWT, as the council could not commit to the management fee.

There was extensive discussion over the remaining bid for management of the fields.

The Clerk recommended that any agreement should include that any excess income, over the costs of managing the fields should be paid to Shere Parish Council

Councillor R Davey proposed the following:

**To Recommend to Full Council to draw up an agreement with Friends of The Hurtwood (FoTH) with a break clause if the details within the bid were not undertaken – Agreed three votes to two.**

Councillor R Davey put forward the following proposal on behalf of Councillor C Carlisle:

**To Recommend to Full Council to delay the decision for a further year for the Biodiversity Net Gain Credits to be investigated – Not Agreed, three votes to one against deferring, one abstaining**

#### **The following was also Agreed and Recommended to Full Council:**

- Excess income over the costs of managing the land to go back to Shere Parish Council
- Full Council must agree any proposed alternative flood management scheme to the one stated
- FoTH to provide annual report on the management of the fields
- The bid is attached to the agreement as commitments to be undertaken, failing to do so would cause a break in the agreement
- Heads of Terms to be provided by FoTH and agreement to be drawn up by the Council's Solicitors – Wellers Law Group (subject to confirmation of suitable property/land expertise)

**A further short discussion took place regarding the delays to the Peaslake Farmyard Development with Greenoak Housing Association (GHA).**

#### **The following was Recommended to Full Council:**

- to extend the contract by three months from 16<sup>th</sup> February to allow GHA time to investigate a further potential government grant to cover the increase in costs for the build.
- to stand by the financial agreement in the contract and not reduce the land cost.
- To request further information on costs, grants and ground conditions.

**Meeting closed**