

**WOKING JOINT COMMITTEE
22 JUNE 2022**



**OPEN FORUM IN ADVANCE OF FORMAL MEETING
VERBAL PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Question 1: Mr Robert Shatwell (Chairman, Hoe Valley Neighbourhood Forum)

Mr Shatwell raised the issue of the applications he had made for three areas to be designated as Village Greens. The first at Elmbridge Lane recreation ground had been objected to by Woking Borough Council as there was a statutory right for residents to use the land, although no evidence of this had been offered. The other two, at Luke Road and St Peter's Road, were the subject of trigger events. Mr Shatwell asked if Woking BC had a particular reason for not voluntarily agree to overturn the trigger events or designate the land at Elmbridge Lane recreation ground. He explained that the community would like to plant a jubilee orchard at the St Peter's Road site, at a cost of approximately £2,000, and would be reluctant to do this if it turned out that the area was going to be developed in the near future.

Response:

The Divisional member Cllr Forster explained that there are no plans to develop any of the three sites. The application for the Elmbridge site would be going to the County Council's Planning and Regulatory Committee in the week following this meeting, and the other two sites are making their way through the appropriate process. The land at Elmbridge Lane is held under Section 15 of the Housing Act, therefore access is open to everyone not just adjacent residents, and there is no precedent for S15 land being designated as a Village Green. Cllr Forster stated that he will attend the Planning and Regulatory Committee meeting to request a designation.

Question 2: Mr Robert Shatwell

Mr Shatwell raised the issue of the dangerous condition of the river Wey bridge at Fisher Farm that carries the footpath. The footpath is subject to a diversion meaning pedestrians have to travel up to two miles on the detour. Mr Shatwell felt that as the body responsible for the footpath the County Council ought to replace the bridge; negotiations with the owner had been going on for too long without any action being taken, and in the meantime individuals still used the bridge putting themselves at risk.

Response:

Cllr Forster replied. The Fisher Farm bridge is privately owned. The County Council is continuing its talks with the owner, and while it would consider making a contribution to work to repair or replace the bridge it will not pay for a private asset nor can the Council demolish it. The option of a separate narrow footbridge has been looked at, but there are access issues because of the private land at the site. Cllr Forster asked that individuals observe the closure of the path at this site because the condition of the bridge does put them at some risk and also they would be trespassing on private land. He hoped that negotiations would bring about an acceptable solution.

The Chairman asked Cllr Forster to keep Mr Shatwell informed of the outcomes of meetings and discussions on both the above issues as appropriate.

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