

# CLAPHAM RECREATION GROUND TRUST

## NEWSLETTER 5 – MARCH 2018

Dear Clapham and Patching residents

### Maintenance

You will have noticed that we have been busy clearing the overgrown margins of the Recreation Ground, which had been seriously neglected over many years as Arun District Council carried out only basic maintenance. Once this work is complete, there will be considerably more land available for the primary purpose of the area – recreation – and it should be relatively easy to keep it tidy in future. Everyone's thanks are due to Charlie, who has been carrying out this work, as well as mowing the grass regularly ever since he became a Trustee last May .

We hope that it will be possible to install a fence and pedestrian gate in due course along the Southern boundary. This would help to keep dogs out and children in.

We have taken expert advice on the condition of the Memorial Chestnut. As was already known, it is suffering from severe Canker and has perhaps another 10 years of life. It would benefit at some point from removal of the 6 lowest branches and reshaping, but this is not urgent.

### Clapham Parish Council

The Council have decided that they would like to resume discussions about a lease for the whole of the Rec. This was proposed some time ago by the previous Trustees, but discussions were halted because of uncertainty about the legal position with regard to 'The Junction', which is currently occupying the site without a lease. If the Parish Council does take over responsibility for the land, this is an issue on which they will need to take legal advice.

The Trustees are happy in principle to issue a lease to the Parish Council and are ready to have the necessary documents drawn up just as soon as the Council confirm that they will bear the legal costs. The lease (and accompanying sub-lease for the shop/café site) would follow very closely the wording of the ones prepared for Arun District Council and the Post Office Trust in 1990/1, with any necessary minor adjustments.

Leasing the land to the Parish Council could be the best solution for the Trustees and for the village as a whole. It would ensure that the land is properly maintained, while the Council's existing insurance already covers a potential playground. The cost would, of course, fall on all Council Tax-paying residents of Clapham, which would mean an increase in the Parish

Council element of the Council Tax. Whether the Council decide to offset all or part of this increase by charging rent for the shop/café site is up to them. Do by all means let the Council know what you think would be fairest to all – their next meeting is on 29<sup>th</sup> March.

## **The Community Shop & Café**

Our offer of a lease to CPCSCP Ltd, as outlined in the previous Newsletter, has been rejected. The main obstacle appears to be the proposed rent. If, however, the Parish Council do take a lease for the whole of the Rec, the sublease for the shop/café site would be prepared alongside the Council's lease. As mentioned above, the amount of rent charged (if any) would then be for the Council to decide.

## **The replacement children's play area**

The Clapham Playscape Project Group have made the difficult, but constructive, decision to stand aside. We thank them for their efforts and ideas.

We have had an extremely positive meeting with the Clapham Playground Restoration group (CPR). The meeting was chaired by Jerry Fox. CPR have now written formally to us, requesting permission to install play equipment on the Recreation Ground, and we have replied giving our formal agreement. We will also help them with any applications for grants.

We have agreed to keep in regular communication, and to meet as appropriate. We met on site on 3<sup>rd</sup> March to look at the area we are considering making available. This is about twice the size of the previous area; to minimise inconvenience to the nearby householders, it is centred on the mid-point of the Southern boundary.

Many of the questions we are asked have already been addressed in the Q&A on the villages website (<https://www.claphamandpatching-westsussex.org.uk/q-a>) – others will be added as they arise.

As always, if you'd like to contact the Trustees about anything, our email is [crgtrustees@gmail.com](mailto:crgtrustees@gmail.com)

The Trustees

March 2018