

Minutes of the Bromyard Downs Common Association

Ordinary Meeting

Wednesday 3rd June 2015

7:30 - 9:30 Oak Room Falcon Hotel Bromyard

Attendees

James Hawkins (Chair)	Lauren Smith (Secretary)	Clive Brazier (Treasurer)
David Boddington	Ben Hiley (Vice Chair)	Graham Cooper
Dave Cave	Ray Pullen	Nick Hinchcliffe (NT)
Helen Allan	Hannah Welsh (P Manager)	Anne Sayce
Alan G		
Guest Speakers	Tim Hoverd - Archaeologist	Jane Cabara - Pond's Officer
Allan Grantham	Anne Sayce	

1. Welcome & Apologies for absence;

George Thompson	Neville Turner	Ben Turner
Andrew Morris	David Grant	

2. Action points from the last meeting

- 2.1 Proposal for the BDCA to take over ownership of common from Hereford Council – Further research has been carried out we are waiting for further information from Hereford Council until we can take any further action – **On hold until all information is available**
- 2.2 Byelaws – assess current byelaws and bring up to date - Previous Sub Group lead is no longer a member of the committee — Clive Brazier volunteered to take over the lead for a small group to redraft the byelaws **Action – Lauren to email all members to recruit volunteers and arrange an initial meeting**
- 2.3 Lease of Quarry – Ben has received an email from Helen Beale from Hereford Council proposing an initial 3 year lease with a get out clause for either party. The Current state of boundaries and buildings to be maintained, insurance to be BDCA liability – further information and costs to follow. Once all information is received and confirmed it is proposed to vote at the next meeting to take over the quarry as it is considered to be a valuable resource for the BDCA– **Action ongoing**
Not everyone knows the quarry and it's lay out and photos were requested to show at the next meeting - **Action Ben H**
- 2.4 Dog mess bag dispensers need erecting around the Downs – **Action James H will arrange for the dispensers to be put up around the Downs. Hannah to arrange publicity**
- 2.5 Simplification of management plan – **Action** Graham ongoing
- 2.6 Full expenditure details to be circulated to all committee members to approve – **Action - Hannah to circulate once available**

- 2.7 Health and Safety Policy and site risk assessments – This is now drafted and is with the Hereford Nature Trust. The policy will be presented to the next Steering group and BDCA meetings - Action **Hannah ongoing**
- 2.8 Equipment Log – in hand this will now be presented at the next volunteering day on 11th June – **Action Hannah**
- 2.9 Hay and Fire Break Cut – James has this in hand but it is proving difficult even with the offer of free hay, due the surplus of hay from last year- **Action Ongoing**
David Boddington voiced his concerns over blanket cutting as this would severely suppress self-propagation of certain species and could there be exemptions possible under the ELS scheme to leave areas uncut? - **Action Hannah/James H to discuss with Natural England**

Minutes of the April meeting approved and signed

3 Financial Report

- 3.1 BDCA finance breakdown attached
- 3.2 Helen asked why we were unable to claim back VAT – Under the rules as funding is from a government backed scheme we are unable to claim back government funding.

4 Brockhampton Group Parish Council Update

- 4.1 The Brockhampton Group Parish Council AGM took place on 16th May 2015, Janet Fellows was re-elected as Chair , The Council is a member short for Norton Parish
- 4.2 The Clerk presented two estimates for material to refurbish the Bromyard Downs carpark; however, there was some confusion as to what the estimates were for and why we were not sourcing from local timber merchants so no firm outcome as yet.
 - Ben H has since spoken with Janet Fellows and the suggestion is that a joint meeting and work party is convened
 - Concern now is that this issue is hanging on too long – It is imperative that the main carpark should be cleaned up as soon as possible ready for the summer
 - **James Prosed that the BDCA release £500 of funds prior to a contribution from the BGPC:** to finance and start the clearance work, refurbish the seating and improve the bridge access to the Downs
Motion carried by the committee
 - **Action** - Ben H to meet with Nick Hinchcliffe (NT) to arrange transport of logs for a work party to reset log barriers and improve bridge access.
 - **Action** - James to see if he knows of any hop poles available
- 4.3 The BGPC received a letter from the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust voicing concern over the recent cut back of scrub from the roadside which would have due to the timing have destroyed grass snake and reptile habitat connectivity . This could jeopardise funding

Hannah reiterated that the HWT was concerned over the lack of communication with the BDCA over the action and wanted to voice its position

5 Downs Management Plan

5.1 Tim Hoverd Archaeologist gave an introduction to the work the archaeological team would be looking to complete over the next two years of the delivery phase of the project

The work if funding allows will comprise 3 small research excavations to further knowledge concerning the three areas of historic interest

- The Mercian Marquis World War II resistance bunkers
- The earthwork remains of the Butts rifle range
- Squatter Settlements

National Trust permission is required for the excavation of the bunkers which reside in Warren Wood, so discussion with the National Trust will guide the timings of the excavation. It may not be convenient this year as the National Trust already has an archaeological dig scheduled so may have to postpone until next. If this is the case it may be feasible to start the survey of the Rifle Range this summer.

The squatter settlements as the 3rd project will be subject to the funding available after the first two projects are completed

5.2 Jane Cabara was introduced as the recently appointed Ponds Project Officer. With only a couple of days on the job Jane has still to familiarise herself with the ponds on Bromyard Downs but has been travelling around with Nick surveying at ponds at the National Trust and on Bringsty Common. 13 ponds have been selected for the 20 month project which aims to encourage the Great Crested Newt to breed by ensuring a network of good quality ponds are available throughout the area

Washcroft, The historic drover's pond was not selected for the project due to the invasive weed within the pond. However, as all funding for the pond project was successful, there may now be enough funding to include this pond in the project.

5.3 Heritage Lottery Funding annual review should be undertaken annually as a lesson learnt exercise to monitor progress, what went well and what can be improved. It was suggested that a smaller sub group should be formed to undertake this process

Action – Lauren to lead set up group and arrange meeting

Volunteer's for Review group – Ben Hiley Helen Allan David Boddington
 Nick Hinchcliffe Hannah Welsh

5.4 High Priority Tasks for June & July

Hay & Fire Break Cutting	Dog poo/control & awareness
Litter Campaign	Create and manage website
Publish regular newsletter	Engagement events and activities
Maintain QGIS database	Specialist Invertebrate survey
Archaeological survey – delayed August	Archaeological digs - delayed August

5.5 Four main focus areas

1 - Maintenance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical work – Volunteer training – Hay cut Preparation • (Restricted at the moment due to nesting birds)
2 – Surveys and monitoring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bats, Glow worms, Moths, flora • Invertebrate's • QGIS database update – Hannah & Lauren
3 – Publicity & Promotion / awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog & Litter campaigns • Newsletter & Website • Concerns with 4x4 vehicles • Promote awareness aim to get parents involved through PTA • Aware that launch event on Downs due to weather cancellation didn't go down well with disappointed attendees so need to make up ground and in future events to go on whatever the weather
4 – Events & Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bioblitz • Summer safaris – Ted Green – Dowsing • Awareness days – Hannah to set up marquee on common to promote the management plan – agreed by BDCA

5.6 **Actions for Committee**

Attendance at Gala area to be made available in the History Society Marquee but as Hannah is unavailable we need volunteers to be available to chat with the public
Action – let Lauren know if you can spare any time

Hannah will send round the link to the new website to the committee
Action all members, if able, to access the link and feedback to Hannah asap

Bioblitz 25th & 26th June, volunteers needed to attend and help with the day
Action all members – Let Hannah know if you are able to attend and help in any way

Action all members - Newsletter- please forward any anecdotes, concerns or news to Hannah for inclusion

Spring & Summer Events schedule

25 th & 26 th June	Bioblitz – Annual wildlife recording event
--	--

Events to be arranged

Butterfly transects	Dormouse check training	Bat surveys
Glow Worm Surveys	Bird Surveys	Reptile Surveys

Oral History training & cultural history project with rural media centre		
Volunteer work Days	Schools Programme	Set up nature trails

5.7 Proposal to consider the offer from Archie Miles of production of 2,000 Bromyard Downs photo books produced by Archie Miles at a one off cost of approximately £10,000, (full details and costs available if required). Herefordshire Wildlife trust as our partners are also considering the proposal

Mixed comments for and against,

- We are only just starting the project and to use up the promotional budget of £4,500 and overspend by a further £6,000 appears rash at this time as we would be gambling on making a return on the money and we would have no copyright which would be retained by Archie Miles.
- Other promotional free leaflets/booklets would have no profit return and may just sit on shelves unused but the money was specifically allocated for this purpose
- Most members welcomed the idea and would like a book on the Downs however, Is this the type of book we want – coffee table book versus a progress based book based on historical fact and the evolving project
- Consider exploring other local options – Archie Miles is well known in his field and we would be paying for his expertise and contacts in going with his proposal
- Explore further funding from local sponsors – this has proved difficult in the past

Motion proposed - not go with this proposal at this time – Ben Hiley
Motion carried by a majority

6. Public Member questions

6.1 Letter received from Mr SL Langridge expressing concerns with the consequences of clearing ditches and tidying up on the higher points of the downs which although very good will now allow excess water to wash down the lane eroding the lane surface and filling up the ditch, which has not been cleared since 1997 and is no longer functional

The committee have agreed in conjunction with the pond project which is now underway to instigate a water survey to assess the situation and find a route to direct excess water –

Action James H and Ray Pullen to conduct a site survey and report back to the committee to assess next course of action

Action Lauren to write to Mr Langridge and apprise him of the committee's decision

6.2 A local resident has expressed concern over the brash which has been left at the top of the racecourse – which if now burnt could be harbouring hedgehogs and small mammals and the ruts which have been left making walking difficult

The committee volunteers will ensure the brash is moved to a less conspicuous spot, but intend some to be left as a valuable species habitat. If any is burnt it will be

moved and burnt separately to ensure no small mammals are harmed. Some ruts have now been filled but we will ensure any further maintenance work needed is carried out

Action – volunteer party to tidy up brash piles and infill ruts

- 6.3 Mr Alan *Grantham* noted that although the new signs wooden signs for Bromyard Downs look very nice were they really necessary? As there were already two signs in both the vicinities pointing to Bromyard Downs

In mitigation some of the signs had been overgrown with scrub when the signs were ordered and now the scrub has been cleared are again in full view. We agree this was possibly an impulse spend, as we had fund money at the time which needed to be spent before the end of the first year or would have been reclaimed.

7. Any Other business

To aid in ensuring meetings are well publicised a full list of meeting dates have been drawn up these will be published on all notice boards and will go out with the first newsletter to all residents and commons rights holders to ensure all commoners are informed and invited to attend meetings.

We will ensure a formal letter is posted to all commoners for the annual AGM

8 Date of Next General Meeting – Tuesday 14th July 2015 – 7:30 Falcon Hotel Bromyard

Future meetings to note

Date	Type	Time & Venue
Tuesday 14 July 2015	Ordinary	7:30 – 9:30 - Falcon Hotel Bromyard
Wednesday 16 September 2015	Ordinary	7:30 – 9:30 - Falcon Hotel Bromyard
Tuesday 10 November 2015	Ordinary	7:30 – 9:30 - Falcon Hotel Bromyard
Wednesday 13 January 2016	Ordinary	7:30 – 9:30 - Falcon Hotel Bromyard
Tuesday 1 March 2016	Ordinary	7:30 – 9:30 - Falcon Hotel Bromyard
Wednesday 12 April 2016	Ordinary	7:30 – 9:30 - Falcon Hotel Bromyard
Wednesday 11 May 2016	AGM	7:30 – 9:30 - Falcon Hotel Bromyard

Meeting Close

Lauren Smith
BDCA Secretary
01885 488223
<mailto:laurenc@smithaam.plus.com>

Latest finance update attached;

BDCA FINANCES

DATE	MONEY TO	MONEY FROM	DOC	DESCRIPTION	EXP(-) INC	BALANCE
31/03/15				opening balance		9336.79
29/04/15	secy		100053	falcon room hire	-10.00	9326.79
29/04/15	warren fm		100054	catering for celebration event	-225.00	9101.79
29/04/15	treasurer		100055	stamps stationery	-13.30	9088.49
29/04/15	falcon		100056	agm room and refreshments	-37.00	9051.49
03/06/15	falcon		10057	falcon room hire	-10.00	9041.49