

Minutes of the Bromyard Downs Common Association

General Meeting

Tuesday 7th June 2016

7:30 - 9:30 Falcon Hotel Bromyard

Committee Attendees

James Hawkins (Chair)
Hannah Welsh (PM)
David Grant
Nicki Howard

Lauren Smith (Secretary)
David Boddington
Jo Stoddart
Jan Densham

Ben Hiley (Vice Chair)
Graham Cooper
Gill Churchill
Karen Rock

Public Attendees

Sue Cooper

Duncan Douglas

Judy

1. Welcome & Apologies for absence;

George Thompson
Ray Pullen

Nigel Shaw

Clive Brazier (Treasurer)

2. Action points ongoing from previous meetings

2.1 Quarry Lease Update

Hereford Council have forwarded the details to the BDCA to consider taking on the lease of the Quarry at a cost of £1 per year, plus annual insurance costs to cover public liability of £10 million.

- The Insurance will on average cost the BDCA around £500 per year
- Hereford Council is keen for the quarry to be used as a leisure resource for overnight use i.e. youth groups, camping, educational survey base.
- As the Quarry is not part of the Downs and is a separate lease we must note that the actual quarry could be considered for sale at any time if an eligible interested party were to make an offer

Proposal to cover the insurance costs - we make representation to all the local parish councils i.e., Avenbury, Stanford Bishop, Bromyard Town and Brockhampton Group to help in the funding under educational use

General consensus at the meeting indicates all in favour of taking this forward if we can secure funding

Action - Gill Churchill to collect the necessary funding forms for completion and forward to Lauren

2.2 Western Power damage at Washcroft will be remedied after the hay cut

2.3 Staggered Posts to be set at Downs's entrances to stop vehicles to be arranged in the next week – James will supply equipment and liaise with Ben to arrange 2 or 3 volunteers to help

2.4 Notice Boards - Waiting for the newly elected Brockhampton Group Parish Council to consider supplying new notice Boards – Ben to resend quotes already sourced

3 Actions from Last Meeting

- 3.1 **Drains Survey** – James has completed 70% of the survey and will pinpoint areas which will need work once completed - On going
- 3.2 **Blocked culvert** - James has photographed and sent to Belfour Beatty to request clearance – Action Closed
- 3.3 **Hedge trimming damage** letter still to be sent although James has had a word with the person involved – Address to be sourced and letter sent – Action Lauren
- 3.4 **Muddy Lane** – residents are waiting for the work to be completed by John Poyner who will invoice the BDCA direct – Ongoing
- 3.5 Hunting item on main agenda
- 3.6 **Western Power additional poles** – James is having ongoing discussions with Western Power to try and secure additional wayleaves.- Ongoing
- 3.7 **Ponds Notice Boards** – Notice boards have been agreed and will be placed shortly If anyone has any comments re siting the boards they should discuss with Hannah or Jane as soon as possible – Action Closed
- 3.8 **Assets Register** has been updated and a copy has been lodged with the equipment store at Warren Farm – Action Closed
- 3.9 **Jubilee Oak** – Survey completed and Hugh Davies has volunteered to carry out the remedial work
- 3.10 **Management Plan focus Group** – New members requested to meet with Hannah and Lauren – Volunteers
Gill Churchill, Jan Densham, Nicki Howard, Duncan Douglas, Jo Stoddart, Judy?
(And anyone I may have missed)
Action Lauren to arrange meeting to monitor spreadsheet and pinpoint work needed
Action Hannah – send round the drop box invites and link to the HLF and BDCA documentation store to new members

4. **Finance Update**

Income from the lottery stands at £16,747.20
Outstanding Hereford wildlife trust - £16,829.00
Current Balance = £10,683.68

5. **Parish Council Update**

After the recent AGM the parish council have elected a new committee
Chair – Paul Friend
Vice Chair – Janet Fellows
Clerk – Position currently being advertised
Lengths men – Currently being agreed
BGPC - BDCA Representative – Karen Rock

6. **Update on Management Plan**

- 6.1 **HLF Finance spreadsheet** - Spending is generally on track with £18,000 capital works fund still to be utilised

Short Term Projects

- Interpretation boards will hopefully be erected in time for the Open day on 25th June
- **Additional leaflets** are being developed

- **Two boards** for the main carpark are being completed
- **Two successful visits** to Coppets Hill and Malvern Conservators have been carried out. Two very different commons but a many identical problems identified
- **Training** – Hannah is attending a bid writing funding workshop
- **Grazing** – will commence at Hill field Coppice area shortly – Comments received from the Malvern road residents to the effect they are already missing the sheep and will look forward to their return – The bluebells in the area are the best that has been seen for some time
- **Surplus Budget**
Taking into account the Contingency fund, Inflation the BDCA budget and Capital works there is over 35k available to spend over the next 11 months.
This can be utilised on the necessary draining and ditching identified to ensure the Downs is brought up to spec making it easier to maintain over future years;
Fencing & Machinery
Action - any ideas for additional equipment to be forwarded to Hannah
 - Storm Shelter – Health and Safety
 - Litter Pickers

Longer Term Projects

- **Evaluation** - After the summer we will need to consider Resources for Change - To prepare we should be collating feedback from events and training days any comments such as the Malvern Road residents comments on the sheep should be recorded ready as evidence of the progress of the project – Ideas for feedback
 - Notice in carpark
 - Note on Facebook and webpages
 - Hannah to man a Gazebo for the day and collect comments from visitors
- **Dog Poo Campaign** – Maintain the public awareness campaign by spraying the offending dog poos fluorescent pink to highlight the problem in areas on the Downs **Action** Hannah to send out e-mail to recruit spray painting volunteers
 - A problem was highlighted regarding a few dog walkers who utilise the Downs for commercial dog walking which under the byelaws is not allowed; when someone is walking several dogs at once they are unlikely to be picking up all the dog mess produced.
 - Noted that some thought the dog mess on the Downs had actually gone down as a result of the campaign although the dispenser were regularly topped up with bags it was felt that some were abusing the system and this should be monitored. There are still issues over the fact that actual bins are not being supplied and some filled bags had been posted back into the dispensers.
 - Hannah has been making enquires on running some dog training and awareness sessions funded by the BDCA
Action – ongoing keep revisiting the campaign to highlight the problem
- **Common People Project** – The junior group from the conquest will be filming on the downs on the 9th and 10th July
- **Bi-Annual meeting of Interested groups and parties** – This was an idea taken from Malvern Hills Conservators – The object of the meeting would be to gather

together representatives from all the groups who use the downs, i.e. Ramblers, Dog Walkers, to discuss any issues they have and work together to solve issues
Action Hannah to arrange a meeting in the autumn

- **Volunteering** – Our new sculpture Oscar the Barn Owl has been erected in the main car park by our volunteer group
 - Hannah is keen to ensure some of the volunteer group can step up and take the lead in organising days and work – Duncan has offered his help in taking this forward
- **Malvern College volunteers** – They are keen to do block weeks of work at the optimum times - 8 weeks in the Spring and Autumn
Action – Hannah to work with Graham C to take this forward
- **Leaflets** – The 3 Bromyard Downs Information leaflets text have been emailed to the committee to comment- First impressions was that there was too much text
Action - Hannah – to finalise drafts with illustrations and email to the committee for comments
Action – Committee to feedback to Hannah with comments
 - Question rose as to the focus of the target audience and where the leaflets should be distributed.
 - There is no commercial gain in distributing to too far afield so keep to local tourist sites and offices
 - Ideas for distribution – Online website and Facebook – Local caravan parks – Tourist office
 - Hannah asked for names of local illustrators who may be able to contribute – any ideas to be forwarded to Hannah
- **Seed Collecting** – Hannah has spoken with the Meadows network that are looking to collect local seed – They would pinpoint a 3 acre area and using their seed collecting equipment harvest the seed from that area. Then seed is then sold as a local seed mix;
 - General feeling was that this could have an adverse effect on the area harvested and that 3 acres was quite a large area from the Downs grassed areas – Consensus reached that the committee were not keen to allow seed collection from Bromyard Downs on this scale.
- **Peter Hall** Moth specialist from Bringsty common has asked to trial a seed selection from Bromyard Downs to plant on Bringsty Common. The trial would only cover a small area and collection would be by hand;
 - The committee agree to allow the trial to go ahead
- **Wider Commons Network**, this is an ongoing item. We are waiting for HWT to propose the next meeting. This will evolve country wide

Events

- **Downs Open Day 25th June** – Hannah has requested volunteers to donate cakes and make teas – Idea put forward to ask for donations to help cover costs and raise funds
 - The event will include a Moth Breakfast a Wildflower walk and Cider and Apple juice bar**Action** - volunteers needed to help in setting up and pulling down, please contact Hannah

- **Gala Weekend** - There was some confusion last year as to the manning of the BDCA section of the History Tent. We feel to ensure there is people on hand to answer questions that we set up a rota of volunteers who can help
Action – Lauren to set up rota

6.2 Summer Management

- **Hay and Fire Break Cut** – It was difficult last year due to a glut of hay to find anyone to cut and take away to ensure we meet the ELS criteria for our grant payment
 - James has started to make enquiries this year but so far no takers
 - Karen mentioned that the Equine rescue centre may be interested –
Action - Karen to send contact details to James
 - Advert to be put in Hereford Times

6.3 Purchase of Tractor - Currently we rely on volunteer vehicles to haul equipment and logs around the Downs. It is felt that the purchase of a small tractor and flail could not only be used for haulage but could be used to clear the fire breaks and maintaining margins and walkways, instead of having to hire a tractor and driver each year at a substantial cost

- Cost of a suitable vehicle would be in the region of £4,500
- Cost of Flail £2,000
- Insurance between £140 and £190 per year
- Diesel and oil costs would be ongoing
- Maintenance would be carried out by volunteers

Proposal - made to put a proposal to the Steering group to release the money for purchase of a tractor and flail– **Committee Agreed**

6.4 Hunting – Only a few comments received from the newsletter item – However taking the comments received and the committee and residents views into account coupled with the damage caused to the Downs by taking the brash and felling trees, it was felt that we should write to Clifton Hunt relaying the residents' concerns and requesting that the committee is notified when the hunt intends to traverse the Downs and also reaffirming that hunting in any form is banned under the byelaws.

Action – Lauren to Draft

6.5 Parking notices – Agreed as drafted Hannah will purchase parking ticket pockets to stick the notices to cars. The notices were also agreed with Hereford Council. The second proposal to introduce an annual parking charge to residents parking on the Downs to be held until the next meeting

6.6 Rubbish and Fly tipping – Held until the next meeting

6.7 BDCA Event – Picnic and Hobby Horse Race has been scheduled for Sunday 18th September – Our first action will be to arrange a site visit to map out a general lay out of events and stalls

Action Lauren to arrange

6.8 BDCA Volunteers and Roles – We need to spread out the work load of the committee and a list of work and responsibilities have been drawn up

Action – would all committee members take a look at the list and see if there are any areas you would like to take on as a lead (*If there are no volunteers we will need to allocate members to each role but we would rather you took on the roles*)

you prefer) – Please let Hannah or Lauren know your preferences and we will confirm at the next meeting

New meeting Schedule It was unanimously agreed to cut down slightly with BDCA committee meetings from our current 6 week to an 8 weekly schedule

7. Public Member Questions

Duncan Douglas asked we were taking forward the training for under 25s, Hannah confirmed that we could if anyone was interested and to have a word direct James also noted that members of Young Farmers clubs could have training funding from the club

8. Any Other Business

It was asked if volunteers could have HiViz Jackets with the word volunteer scribed, to wear when litter picking and general work on the Downs – Hannah confirmed this was already in hand

There is concern from BDCA volunteers over the spray training and that although several people had been trained that no direct member of the regular volunteer group been invited to the training although both Nicki and Ben both regular volunteers had put their names down. It had been considered that enough people had been trained and no further spray training had been planned. However, as those trained were outside the regular volunteer group there is concern from volunteers over the future work once the funding has been completed.

Date of next ordinary meeting

Wednesday 27th July 2016 – Falcon Hotel Bromyard 7:30 – 9:30

Meeting Close

Lauren Smith
BDCA Secretary
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BDCA Meeting Schedule for the coming Year	
27th July 2016	<i>All meetings currently scheduled to meet at the Falcon Hotel Bromyard From at 7:30 to 9:30</i>
20th September 2016	
16th November 2016	
17th January 2017	
15th March 2017	
AGM – Wednesday 10th May	
28th June 2017	