

# Minutes of the Bromyard Downs Common Association

## General Meeting

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

7:30 - 9:30 Falcon Hotel Bromyard

### Committee Attendees

James Hawkins (Chair)	Lauren Smith (Secretary)	Ben Hiley (Vice Chair)
Clive Brazier (Treasurer)	David Boddington	Jo Stoddart
Nicki Howard	Jan Densham	Hannah Welsh
Gill Churchill	Karen Rock	Ray Pullen

### Public Attendees

Alan Grantham                      Ann Sayce

#### 1. Welcome & Apologies for absence;

George Thompson	David Grant	Graham Cooper
Nigel Shaw		

#### 2. Action points ongoing from previous meetings

- 2.1 **Bi-Annual meeting of interested groups** – Hannah to arrange for the autumn - Ongoing
- 2.2 **Leaflets finalised and printed** – action closed
- 2.3 **Management Plan focus group** – Dates have been circulated for the meeting in November, location to be agreed
- 2.4 **Drains Survey** – Quotes have been received, work to commence in the autumn  
Action Closed
- 2.5 **Muddy Lane drainage work** – Work has been partially completed and an initial invoice for the initial cost of £1,000 has been sent to the Parish Council. The BDCA has agreed to contribute £496 towards costs

#### Minutes of the last meeting approved

#### 3. Finance Update

Current Balance = £9,105.27

#### 4. Parish Council Update

An extraordinary meeting had been called to discuss the request from the BDCA for a contribution from the Parish Council towards the initial set up and running costs of the Quarry

Concerns were raised over children's safety and fencing of the rock face

Councillors require further information and will be sending a letter to the BDCA to request a site visit – James and Ben both offered to attend once the request has been received`

**Action** – Monitor - letter from Parish Council

Although Clive attended the meeting as a parish council member, he was unable to contribute to the discussion as the clerk ruled he had dual interests as the BDCA Treasurer

## 5. Downs Management

### Project Update

- 5.1 Grazing Compartments have been mapped and fencing will commence at the next volunteer day.
- 5.2 There has been interest in acquiring a rare breed flock on behalf of the BDCA, possibly a hardy hebridean breed suited to grazing on a common.  
If we went along this route there are several concerns which would need to be carefully considered
- Who would take overall responsibility
  - Registering CPH for common
  - Register & maintain ear tag numbers
  - Daily Monitoring & Medical care
  - Handling area required
  - Consent of existing commoners
  - Electric fencing may not be adequate for maintaining a full time flock
  - Hannah is looking into permanent fencing which will require an application to the SoS
- Action** – James and Graham to discuss
- 5.3 There have been complaints from Dog walkers who feel victimised but this had been in the minority to the positive feedback. The provision of waste bins is still an issue – we need to continue with the line that waste bins are too expensive as we would have to pay to have them emptied  
It was noted that the council do have one bin on the Downs at the end of the drive to Quarry farm – Alan Grantham noted that he usually has to ring the council to have it emptied – It is not emptied automatically.
- 5.4 Tractor and flail purchase had been approved by HLF; Ben has located several possible tractors  
**Action** - Ben and James to take forward
- 5.5 Hannah has proposed mechanical cutting back and scraping of some of the heather and spreading seed on October to encourage active regeneration of natural heathland areas – Hire of the machinery cost approx. £350/500  
**Action** - Hannah to take forward
- 5.6 Reminder that all contractors must have public liability as required by Hereford Council as without the BDCA are potentially liable
- 5.7 Tracks and rides have been input into QGIS - Lauren will be taking this forward but will need some refresher training

- 5.8 We have saved some money with the recent interpretation boards which we should now consider using ideas to take forward;
- Interpretation boards by schools
  - Plaques to mark recent archaeological digs – as the bunker dig is on National Trust Land we would need permission  
**Action** Nick NT to check if possible
  - Sculpture trail
  - Toposcope
  - Racecourse markers
  - Plaque on coronation trees
- 5.9 There are several options to explore on refurbishing benches - Do we go forward with supplying new benches for the main car park from the lottery funding, repair those already on site or request funding from the Parish Council – Need to consider and discuss at the steering group meeting
- 5.10 Good feedback from the commons people project – films are now on line and will be screened in schools next spring
- 5.11 A History Centre exhibition to celebrate the end of the project showing Bromyard Downs Past and Present will run from March until 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017
- 5.12 Training:
- Livestock checkers – Graham and Joe are attending with Jan and Jo also keen
  - Dog Training has been carried out although 8 had registered an interest only 3 turned up on the day
  - Further chainsaw training for Nicky, Mark, Duncan and Fraser has been arranged
  - A tractor driving course will be arranged for Ben, Jan and Nicky
  - Further spray training to be arranged for Ben and Jan
- 5.13 Events
- Fungi foraging arranged for November 9<sup>th</sup> meeting at 10:30 in the main carpark anyone wishing to attend should email Hannah
  - Bonfire work party – 3<sup>rd</sup> November
  - Christmas Get together – Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December
  - Next User group meeting 18<sup>th</sup> October Falcon Hotel 6-8pm
- 5.14 Schools and Education:
- Need to re-engage the schools to keep momentum going and remind them about the resource box – Idea put forward to run a poetry or writing competition  
**Action** James to e-mail schools and arrange
  - Wildplay are holding a science session with QE school on the 6<sup>th</sup> October
  - Graham is leading on contacts with the University of Worcester and Malvern College need to ensure we carry out Risk assessments and have adequate Health and Safety in place  
**Action** Graham C to check and confirm
  - University of Worcester - Christine Corcoran (Worcester Geography Department) has scheduled student field trips to look at rural accessibility for disabled people
  - Due in April 2017 students will walk from the carpark along the race course
  - A further research project is also being considered into access for blind people in rural areas possibly for next September in conjunction with RNIC – Project would pay for a bus to transport the attendees

- BDCA could receive recommendations on simple improvements to the site to aid rural accessibility for disabled people
- Wheelchair access to the downs has been raised several times the BDCA could take this opportunity to look again and consult Hereford Council footpath officer for their views.

**Action** – research and take forward

- 5.15 Project evaluation – Irene will be contacting members of the BDCA during September to gather together views for the evaluation
- 5.16 Exit strategy and the setup of a commons network still need to be considered- revisit next meeting
- 5.17 Grazing and Hay cutting – Some lessons learnt from the problems encountered this year, although the cut was ok bales were left on the Downs for too long and not cleared – next year ensure there are a list of Dos and Don'ts for anyone cutting the Hay and ensure machine operators produce a certificate of public liability
- 5.18 Hobby Horse Event and picnic was enjoyed by many and some good feedback was received we raised approx. £180

Suggestions as follows;

- More signage from Stourport road
- Transport across the Downs to the event for the less able
- Ensure visibility from the Road as some people didn't know where to go
- Consider other areas
- Different Races – running with Dogs etc.
- Keep it more of a fete with games for children

Send letter to Royal Oak thanking them for their contribution

## **6 Public Member Questions**

- Alan Grantham raised a concern that although the top Downs have been cut there is still a lot of Bracken encroachment on the lower downs which should be dealt with – BDCA to check and take forward
- Ann Sayce mentioned that she had raised with James previously for the removal of black bags which have been fly tipped on the Downs – James confirmed he had had a word with Hereford Council to remove and would ring again to remind them

## **7. Any Other Business**

- Ray noted that concerns had been raised that Martin had not utilised his chain saw training which the BDCA had funded; Ray said that Martin had been unable attend any of the volunteer days as they had clashed with his work days. but had been working on the downs were possible and had cleared a tree which had been left blocking golf lane.
- George Thompson HC will be meeting with James and Hannah in early October
- Noted that a resident on the Malvern road has been approached by Hereford Council to purchase land adjacent to the Downs with a view to setting up

another traveller site. Some concern over this proposal as we already have a site nearby.

**Date of next ordinary meeting**

**Wednesday 16 November 2016** – Falcon Hotel Bromyard 7:30 – 9:30

**Meeting Close**

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

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