

Minutes of the Bromyard Downs Common Association

General Meeting

Tuesday 5 September 2017

7:30 - 9:30 Falcon Hotel Bromyard

Committee Attendees

Ben Hiley (Vice Chair)
Nicki Howard
Jan Densham

Lauren Smith (Secretary)
David Boddington

Ray Pullen
Nic Hinchcliffe

Public Attendees

Jo Allsopp

Judy

Roger Lowry

Ann Sayce

Welcome & Apologies for absence;

James Hawkins (Chair)
David Grant
Gill Churchill

Graham Cooper
Clive Brazier (Treasurer)
Karen Rock

George Thompson
Jo Stoddart
Nigel Shaw

2. Action points ongoing from previous meetings

2.1 **School poetry and art competition** – James had made initial contact with the schools - **Ongoing James and Gill**

2.2 **Wheelchair access to Downs** –Stones by Brockhampton School are due to be moved shortly to allow a wider access for wheelchairs – Buckenhill drive access point has be made wider and stones laid to improve ground access for wheelchairs.The small bridge by the official carpark also allows access. **Action closed**

2.3 **Memorial Bench quote** - James dealing - **Action ongoing**

2.4 **Closure of Dog bag dispensers** – Post notice on bins and eventually remove – Our thanks go to the volunteers who have up until now cleared the waste from the bins and picked up the bags which had been left littering the downs from irresponsible dog owners - **Action Lauren** to draft and prepare notices.

Action Ben to ring Paul Friend and discuss as this was a Brockhampton Group Parish Council initiative.

2.5 **Deputy Post holders,**

- James and Ben as Chair and Vice Chair will cover each other.
- Jo Stoddart will cover as note taker at meetings if Lauren as secretary is not available.
- No cover as yet for treasurer, but possibly the chair would deal if Clive is not available.
- Jan Densham and Ben as lead volunteers already operate a cover system if either is unavailable. **Action ongoing**

2.6 **Committee information pack** to be distributed to all committee members – Byelaws have been distributed, will also include contact list and scheme of management.

Action Lauren

2.7 **Town council update** has been added to the agenda- **Action closed**

- 2.8 Funding meeting to be arranged-** James has so far been unable to arrange a meeting but has suggested we look to propose a group of Friends of Bromyard Downs to lead the fund raising and take on charitable status to be discussed at the next meeting – **Ongoing**
- 2.9 Volunteers to prioritise clearance areas** – volunteers to pinpoint areas for clearance and Lauren to map the areas for future use – Initial action Lauren to provide large scale maps of areas of the Downs for volunteers to map and mark on areas for clearance or to leave as areas of importance. – **Action ongoing Lauren & Ben**

Minutes of the last meeting discussed and approved;

3. Finance Update

Treasurer not present so full update not as yet available.

The final payment from the Heritage Lottery fund has been received and the project now officially ended

It was noted that a Chipper has now been purchased so brush will be chipped instead of just leaving in piles. The resulting chippings can either be bagged or donated to whomever would like.

Funds are now limited to the wayleaves received, the Caravan Club rent and Entry level Scheme.

4. Parish Council Update

Next Council meeting is on the 20th September

5. Town Council Update

No one available to update

5 Bromyard Downs Management

- 5.1 Hay Cutting** – Although extensive enquiries have been made it appears no one is interested in cutting and baling the grass on the Downs. Costs to cut and bale ourselves would amount to approximately £15 per bale and as the Downs looks towards producing around 70/80 bales the cost is too prohibitive for us to consider. We would also have problems with storage.

Cutting for a digestive system was proposed, this has been looked into but the Downs hay is of insufficient quality for use, 29 tons of Downs hay only equates to approx. 12 tons of good quality hay.

Proposal to advertise in the Hereford Times as free for anyone willing to cut and take away – **Action** to look into viability.

Judy mentioned cutting and hand baling.

Nic said he would make enquiries around the NT and see if anyone else is having the same problem and how they were dealing with it.

The obvious choice to maintain the Downs would be grazing.

- 5.2 Firebreaks and brush cutting** – Ben praised the sterling work of the volunteers who have been working on cutting back the brash and keeping the tracks clear.

The intention is to maintain wildlife margins and it was suggested to maintain a wavy edge cutting into some areas of the brash.

If there are any areas which have been missed please let Ben or Jan know so it can be scheduled the clearance at the next volunteer day.

Going forward, If Lauren can produce relevant sized maps the volunteers will walk the Downs and note areas of specific interest such as special trees areas to be left as habitat or areas for clearance. These can then be used for noting areas for future work.

The Quarry area has been noted as needed clearance and will be scheduled for the next volunteer day.

It was noted that there could be a change to the rules for brush and hedge cutting to be delayed from the current date 1st September, to ensure there was no disturbance to late breeders such as black caps and nightingales. David B will monitor the situation and keep us informed if there is any change to the rules.

- 5.3 **Logs** - We do produce a quantity of logs from clearance areas, these have been left for volunteers to utilise. However, we have noted that non volunteers have also gone along and helped themselves clearing all the logs in some instances; We would rather they went to local pensioners or Downs residents.
We have looked into to using the logs as a natural resource to make some revenue for the Downs, However the cost of transporting and the need to rely on volunteers with limited time is not financially viable or an effective use of resource.
- 5.4 **Fencing** - Fixed fencing is on hold until we can establish a base of graziers willing to use the Downs. We still have the ongoing problem with the quality of the Downs grass and the contamination with Dog waste. The difficulty we have now, is that many of the residents on the Downs no longer keep sheep so do not need to use their grazing rights.
We will continue with the use of temporary fencing which James is taking forward at Malvern Road and Park Head.
- 5.5 **Ash Die back** – The disease is now present on the Downs and we need to know the best way to deal with the problem going forward – Suggested that trees affected should be marked now, as soon as the leaves fall we will no longer know which trees to monitor. Nic suggested, we should leave marked trees at least a year before felling as they may recover.
- 5.6 **Future Funding & Charitable Status** – James will be scheduling a separate meeting to take future funding forward.
- 5.7 **Events** - We have run out of time this year to hold a hobby horse style event before the spring. Ben has suggested a Hereford Harriers run on the Downs using the racetrack – Ben to make enquiries and make a proposal at the next meeting.
- 5.8 **Toposcope Site** – John Poyner has kindly agreed to lift and transport the stones up onto the Downs ready to site the toposcope by Warren Wood at no charge.

5.9 **Media & Newsletter** – We need to start compiling articles for a newsletter to send out in January. We already have the basic template which Lauren can maintain and add articles, but we need to start thinking about content and who will write. Jo has also offered to help compile – **Action Lauren** to have a word with Jo and send out invite for ideas and volunteers to write a piece for inclusion

6. Public Member Questions

6.1 Washcroft Pond and the Crassula infestation –what was our policy for clearing the pond? – Currently we can only manage the pond by manual clearance there is no effective proven method to completely clear the weed. We have taken advice from experts and been advised that although we can manually clear the pond at intervals we would have to be very vigilant on disposing of the weed to ensure no cross contamination to other ponds; currently as we do not have the resource to clear we can only leave it as it is.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 **Ditching** – Noted that the racecourse by Val Dennett’s is waterlogged. We need to ask James to take a look and see if there is anything we can do to alleviate the problem.

Ray suggested asking Tom, Lewis to identify any springs on the Downs which are not being adequately drained.

7.2 David Boddington has brought to our attention that there is a request to complete a serious survey on boundaries in the area. David’s notes ‘Neighbourhood Development Plans’ are attached for information. More information as to the background can be found on the Herefordshire.gov.uk website under Neighbourhood Planning.

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 10th May 2017 – Falcon Hotel Bromyard 7:30 – 9:30

Thank You all for Attending

Meeting Close

Lauren Smith

BDCA Secretary

01885 488223

<mailto:bromyardbdca@gmail.com>

BDCA Meeting Schedule for the coming Year	
Tuesday 5th September	All meetings currently scheduled to meet at the Falcon Hotel Bromyard From at 7:30 to 9:30
Wednesday 8th November	
Tuesday 10th January 2018	
Wednesday 7th March 2018	
Tuesday 8th May 2018	

