

Minutes of the Bromyard Downs Common Association

General Meeting

Tuesday 8th May 2018

7:30 - 9:30 Falcon Hotel Bromyard

Committee Attendees

James Hawkins (Chair)
David Boddington
Ray Pullen

Ben Hiley (Vice Chair)
Nic Hinchcliffe
Jo Stoddart

Lauren Smith (Secretary)
Graham Cooper
Nicki Howard

Public Attendees

Judy Mallet

Joseph Alsop

Anne Sayce

Welcome & Apologies for absence;

George Thompson
David Grant

Gill Churchill
Jan Densham

Clive Brazier (Treasurer)
Karen Rock

2. Action points

2.1 School poetry and art competition – Gill unable to attend – ongoing - Action **Gill**

2.2 Memorial Benches – There are too many benches on the Downs, many which are not maintained. Need to consider further ideas for memorials, such as commemorative plaques on stones, sculptures etc. - **Action** – Ongoing
There is also the problem of maintenance, (The metal bench by the Linton track currently needs repair) and the fact that family plant unsuitable flowers, or trees without permission (A new tree has been planted without permission by the benches along the top Downs Road) **Action** - to note in the next Newsletter

2.3 Closure of Dog bag dispensers – All the Bins have now been removed from the Downs – Action Closed - **Action**. Lauren to note Facebook and on the website.

2.4 Funding – Round the Downs Race- An initial discussion has taken place with Nigel Davies, but we need to find out more and whether the venture would be profitable before we take a collective decision. Nigel will run this year's 2018 race as it's the 10th anniversary and if we are in agreement we could potentially take over the running of the 2019 race. **Action** Jo to arrange a further talk with Nigel and the committee

2.5 Mark BDCA Equipment with Smart water – All equipment has been marked and a complete inventory of the equipment has been passed to the police. – Action Closed
Further action points raised regarding equipment

- First Aid Kit needs updating as some supplies have been used.

2.6 Projected Running Costs for Downs – Estimated at £1,317

Made up as follows;

- Tractor Insurance £150
- Lock Up Insurance £187
- Tractor Fuel £300
- Room Hire £100

- Stationery £80
- Machinery Repairs £500

We will be looking at fund raising around £1,500 per year

- 2.7 Guides Memorial Tree;** everyone is in agreement to allow the guides to plant a tree to celebrate 100 years of guiding, David B is awaiting contact from Pam Guiver to discuss - **Action** ongoing

Minutes of the last meeting discussed and approved;

3. Finance Update

- Accounts up to the 24 April 2018 show a balance of £10,452.77, part of which includes the additional contingency fund payment from HLF which was not taken into account over the last two years. We will need to hold this in account in case HLF requires repayment.
- There is currently no outstanding running costs.
- It was noted that we need a quicker way of obtaining money from the BDCA funds. The volunteers at times need to buy fuel, oil or pay for repairs and then have to wait weeks before they are repaid. Would it be possible to have a card account we could use to pay suppliers or alternatively set up an account with our main supplier – **Action** James

4. Brockhampton Group Parish Council Update

- Karen not in attendance to update.
e-mailed the following
 - A steering group is being set up for establishing a neighbourhood development plan, new builds will only apply to Linton parish.
 - The Council are seeking to replace the ballast and plastic barriers in the layby with posts (Nigel will pursue this)
- The Parish Council do have funds available for local improvement.
 - The Downs official carpark needs funding to complete its refurbishment. **Action** - Draft letter to Parish Council to apply for funds approx. £500 would complete the work.
 - Karen has asked whether we would run a stall at the Kempson Players event on 1st September between 10 and 2, to raise Downs's awareness. Discuss details at next meeting.

5. Town Council Update

- Nigel not in attendance to update.
- Noted that the Town or Parish council do not contribute towards the running of the Downs although always use the Downs in their local advertising for the area we should consider applying for additional funding from the councils two ideas put forward as follows;.

- Discussed the possibility of turning the area around the Butts Ponds into an area of tranquillity, the site is maturing well and would be an ideal area to allow a large stone to be sited to allow relatives to affix memorial plaques. The front area would also need to be improved to allow people safe access.

Action – James and Ben to run through the costs. We may be eligible for project funding from Hereford Council.

- Flower survey; we think David Boddington has surveyed and has a list of all the plants available to view on the Downs. Suggestion to collate a list of flora and fauna for the different seasons and display a seasonal poster on the notice boards, or advertise on Facebook and social media to raise interest.
- Judy has a friend who may also be able to run a further flower survey to see what can be seen. **Action** - Judy to see if she would be available.
- Idea put forward to draft a set of posters covering the 4 seasons to show what plant and wildlife can be seen on the Downs, to be rotated on the Downs notice boards for each season. 4 to 8 good quality posters for the two main notice boards. Look for funding from the Parish or Town Council.

6. Downs Management

Grant Funding

- Countryside Stewardship Higher Level Scheme (HLS) Grant Progress – James has handed in an initial summary which covers a few points which would be achievable under our current Management regime, these cover;
 - Low Density Stocking Rates
 - Bracken Control
 - Ditch Maintenance
- Annual Payments could be in the region of £5,000
- If the Committee is interested James will put together a plan for the committee to consider. We would not be planning anything over and above what we are already trying to achieve. The additional funding would mean we could hire contractors to do some of the work instead of relying on volunteers.
- There is over 26 hectares of woodland on the Downs, which could be included under a separate HLS woodland plan
- The committee all agreed that James should proceed. The next step will be to meet with Natural England to discuss the plan. Once this has taken place James will e-mail Down's Residents to let all interested parties know of our intentions and ensure everyone is in agreement.
- James met with George Thompson on the common, the following was discussed;

- There is evidence that vehicles have been driving on the common and causing damage to the tracks, this is in contravention of the byelaws but unless we have evidence for the police there is little we can do.
 - BT- IT Cable is due to be run across the common from Morton Jeffries as part of the 'Fastershire' project. No one has yet approached for permission to proceed.
 - The Water board have been working alongside Brockhampton School but have left a mess.
 - Keep an eye on residents parking on the common 6 cars have been parked along one of the tracks one of which is on sorn.
 - Slipstone cottage - encroachment on the boundary of the common.
 - Turnpike cottage – bund around the cottage to be removed
 - Culvert along the Downs road is really deep warning signs have been left
 - Herefordshire Council are still interested in selling the common, but we need to be fully aware of the implications of ownership before we could take any decision. **Action** - James to discuss with Helen
- Grazing will commence on the Malvern road site. The Hebridean flock have all lambed. They particularly like low trees and saplings so will be ideal for scrub clearance and conservation grazing.
A second grazing site will be towards the Linton area below Brockhampton School, half way down the common. The terrain will lend itself well to setting up the electric fence.
*Note to ensure the fencing does not cross any established footpaths to inconvenience users to the common.

James will apply for permission for the temporary fencing (under section 38) notices will also be posted to advice people prior to fences being erected.

- The old willow tree by Trap House has split and needs loping, It is an expense we really do not want as we will need to instruct a contractor to deal with due to the size – Committee all agreed we need to action on safety grounds - **Action** James to instruct Huw Davies

Volunteering Update

- Wood-chipper training has been completed and is now legal to use with 6 volunteers fully trained to use the equipment. So far, it's turning out to be a useful item which is performing as expected.
- There is a core of 6 to 9 volunteers who turn out for the different work parties. Saturdays are usually run by Jo, they can be difficult to arrange work and encourage people to attend, need to consider wider publicity consider large litter pick, or advertise a Saturday as a family work day, this may encourage families and younger people to cultivate an interest in the Downs.

- Discuss a long-term plan with Brockhampton Parent Teacher association to coordinate plans for the children using the Downs. There are grant payments available for educational access.
- Volunteers are getting to know the Downs but need to ensure work is prioritised and co-ordinated within the management plan. Meeting to be organised. Noted reminder for volunteers to log hours worked, this is a useful information if we apply for further grants.
- The full management plan and maps are available from the Drop box and on the website – **Action** Lauren to email links to all volunteers.
- Due to nesting birds, clearance work is currently on hold.

Events & Funding

- A bingo session has been booked at the Public Hall in Bromyard at a cost of £40 for the evening. We will be canvassing for donations for prizes and possibly a raffle. Nicki and Jan have offered to run the kitchen supplying coffee tea and cakes.
- Run a Christmas Raffle at the Downs Christmas social, canvass residents for prizes, e.g. hampers with a £100 first prize. We will need to apply for a licence from Hereford Council to run the raffle as a small society lottery. This is required to legally sell tickets before the event. Jo suggested a table in the Co-op and at the country market - **Action** – Jo to take forward
- Around the Downs Race – we need to discuss further and decide if it would be worth taking over, possibly next year.
- Saturday July 7th Organise a Family work Party Day.
- Organise a race night next spring.

Survey

- This will be the last year Louise will run the annual Bat survey on the Downs in June and July. Lauren has been asked to continue and will take over in 2019 with the help of our fellow bat surveyors.

6. Public Member Questions

- Walkers are Welcome Group - Request for a small bridge to be considered crossing the ditch from the road, this had been discussed previously and there were reservations as to the responsibility once the bridge was in place and the Health and Safety aspect with views on to the road – **Action** James to discuss with George Thompson
- Reminder that if anyone wanted to comment on the application for the 3 eco pods in Rookery wood at the Norton/Park head Downs edge the deadline date was fast approaching. Planning application P180864/F.

- Question asked, where are the transcribed recordings of the oral History project being filed? **Action** Lauren and James to check

7. Any Other Business

- Our Annual General meeting is due in June, we need ideas for a guest speaker. Louise Scott who currently runs the bat surveys was suggested. Action Lauren to contact Louise
- **Reminder** to all that this is James's last term as our Chair; he is perfectly willing to continue as our main adviser and worker on the agricultural side of the Downs but needs to stand aside after 4 years as chair. Please consider who could stand as our chair for the 2018/19 year
- It has been noted that Morris Coaches tend to park their coaches on the Downs pull in along the Downs road during school hours, although they are not technically on the common they are taking up parking areas for visitors and aesthetically is not a good advert for the Downs. Ben also noted he had seen 4 youths in a blue Polo car, break into one of the coaches and only left when he intervened. He had informed David Morris of the incident.
Action – James to have a word with David Morris re parking

Date of next meeting

13th June Annual General Meeting – Falcon Hotel Bromyard 7:30 – 9:30

Refreshments will be available

Thank You all for Attending
Meeting Close.

Lauren Smith
BDCA Secretary
01885 488223 – Mobile 07808 949 880
<mailto:bromyardbdca@gmail.com>

BDCA Meeting Schedule for the coming Year - subject to change	
Annual General Meeting Wednesday 13 th June 2018	All meetings currently scheduled to meet at the; Falcon Hotel Bromyard From 7:30 to 9:30
General Meeting Dates	
Tuesday 17 th July 2018	
Wednesday 19 th September	
Tuesday 20 th November	
Wednesday 23 rd January 2019	
Tuesday 19 th March	
Wednesday 22 May	
2019 AGM - Wednesday 26 th June 2019	

Finances Attached