

Minutes of Meeting

Friends of Landport Bottom

Monday 10th November 7.30 pm. St. Mary's Church, Highdown Road, Lewes.

Apologies for absences:

Susan Murray, Alison Soudain, Janis Ham, Sarah Flynn, Jacqueline Bodel, Vicki Trenhaile.

Introduction:

There were 10 attendees at the meeting, which commenced with Roger Murray proposing that Ruth O'Keeffe act as chairperson. This was seconded by Stephen Watson. Ruth agreed, stating that the role would not conflict with her council related responsibilities.

Minutes from previous meeting 8/9/14:

The minutes of the last meeting were discussed with previous actions highlighted.

- **The rut on the path to the motor road** is still not in good order. There is an ongoing legal battle as to whether this is a right of way. Dan Fagan, Community Ranger, said the matter was not the responsibility of the Highways Dept. but that of the racecourse owner. Ruth asked that the Highways Dept. confirm this in writing. She commented that as the land is privately owned by the racecourse, no-one else can take action. Dan will write to the Highways Dept. asking them to confirm that they will not be taking any action to repair the rut. He will also advise them that the Friends believe that the location is a legal right of way and is currently in a dangerous state of repair.
- Dan confirmed that new **Interpretation Boards** will be in place by the end of December.
- **Fence posts** – 12 out of the required 200 have currently been replaced. The quotes received to carry out the work are highly expensive so at the moment this is being undertaken by only one man.
- Dan said that the **Higher Level Stewardship fund** currently has £500 available. Christine Field passed on comments from several people who were unable to attend the meeting, regarding how the money could be spent.

Firstly, Vicky Trenhaile had suggested that two more **dog waste bins** be installed and accessible on the motor road, i.e. one to be placed by the cross entrance, the other by the iron gate. Dan said he had previously made

enquiries regarding additional dog bins and been told by the District Council that their collection and disposal of contaminated dog waste was currently at full capacity. The point was made that with the addition of two further bins the same amount of waste would still be generated. Dan said that if we are prepared to pay for the cost of the bins he will approach the Lewes District again regarding the waste collection. *(Action)*

Secondly, Christine confirmed that anonymous comments had been received from several people expressing concern about the **mud path near Hawkenbury Way**, and its apparent use by horses. Rob Elvery said he visits twice daily to monitor the path; he expressed concern about its condition. It was noted that at certain times of the year some of the paths in this location were more suitable for walkers than horses.

Thirdly, Christine offered a final suggestion that a total of **three benches** be located **around Jill's Pond**, where people could gather and socialise. There is currently only one bench in place. Roger M. confirmed that when the Landport Bottom land was purchased it was for the purpose of enjoyment. Ruth suggested that these could be memorial benches and Jackie Bishop asked that memorial plaques be attached to them. Dan F agreed to confirm with the LDC regarding the installation of additional benches and also possible design options. *(Action)*

Ranger's report:

- The **sheep** are now located in the Dew Pond field and the grass is in good order. Most sheep are pregnant and will lamb in February. A sheep had escaped onto the main road the previous week following a dog chase. The incident occurred near the allotments where the wire fencing had been damaged; this has since been repaired. Dan will speak with the Southdown National Park regarding sheep escape. *(Action)*
- A **recent event** was held with children from Wallands School and pupils suggested words they thought described Landport Bottom, e.g. Free Flowing. The various words are to be incorporated into the new Interpretation Boards. (See appendix at the end of these minutes). Christine commented about the amount of rubbish that is left by people at the chalkpits, she wondered whether these words could also be used in that location as a way to encourage people to look after the land.
- There are to be two **new information boards** installed one at the Tumuli field and one at the top of the field. It was thought that another could possibly be added to the entrance at Firlé Crescent. Dan suggested the preference would be for the boards to incorporate a map, the history, and the wildlife of the area. He passed around several possible designs and options A and B were chosen by the attendees. Dan felt that the current lectern style boards do not weather well, so he suggested elevated, upright boards as an alternative. These would measure 130 cm x 120 cm. Dan will approach the District Council with the two design options and ask them to select one. *(Action)*

- The wooden '**Sheep are in/out of this field` signs** attached to gates need the current telephone numbers to be changed. As it will be difficult to amend the green oak signs without causing damage they will probably have to be replaced. The signs are very popular and this suggestion was lamented by the Friends. Dan will explore the various options. (*Action*)
- There is a problem with **horses galloping in the fields** and not using the bridledways or the Gallops. There is apparent conflict between the five different horse groups that use the bridledways. Horses should not be `galloping` and Dan requested that if this was seen, photos should be taken and passed to him. A request was made that Dan should approach the Landport Bottom Management Committee regarding a designated area or width of the field where only walkers have access. (*Action*)

A.O.B:

Jackie B. commented that Nevill Bonfire Society were superb with cleaning up after their recent event. Borough Bonfire Society had however left a lot of debris in the field following their bonfire. Dan said that every year both societies are asked to return several times in order to complete the clearance. As the grass is currently short any debris is clearly revealed; plastic being particularly harmful to grazing sheep.

Ruth asked how often everyone thought the Friends should meet; this had previously been every 2 months. Following a brief discussion it was thought that 4 meetings a year would be sufficient, i.e. May, August, November and February.

The next Landport Bottom Management Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday 13 January 2015. The next Friends of Landport Bottom Meeting will be on Monday 9th February.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm.

Appendix: additional information from Dan Fagan about the Wallands school childrens' visit.

The day was run by SO SUSSEX as part of their 'Schools Without Walls' project and this session was funded by the South Downs National Park.

The children were asked to split into groups and explore three different areas of the site using Sight, Sound and Smell. They then expressed their discoveries and thoughts as a single word on a white tile.

After exploring the groups were asked to place words onto the legs of a Biosphere Bug under the heading they felt that word best described. The leg headings were Culture, Recreation, Water, Habitats, Wildlife and Landscape. The children were then asked to debate the words under the headings a place the word that best describes Landport Bottom in terms of the Biosphere and South Downs National Park into the middle.

The chosen words were:
My Place

Unique
Sweet
Reflective
Alive
Free Flowing
Diverse
Enchanted/Magical
Numerous Landscapes
Twisty Hollow Branches
Free
Vast
Endless
Slow
Peaceful

These words will now be used in the new interpretation of Landport Bottom.