

## Minutes of Meeting

### The Friends of Landport Bottom

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2015 at 7.30 pm - St. Mary's Church, Highdown Road, Lewes.**

#### Apologies for absence:

Councillor Ruth O'Keeffe; Jacqueline & Brian Bodle; Rob Elvery; Christine Park.

#### Introduction:

There were 12 attendees, and the meeting was chaired by Councillor Susan Murray.

#### Action points arising from the previous Minutes – (both for Dan Fagan)

**Item b) - Repairs to fences / gates:** Gate 4 had been hung the wrong way round giving the potential for sheep to escape. Gate 15 did not close properly. Dan carried out an inspection and the problem with Gate 15 has now been rectified by the addition of stock fencing. Gate 4, will also have stock fencing added but not until the winter.

**Item c) - Skylark notices:** Dan had previously considered drafting a notice to walkers, requesting that they keep to the paths and avoid the long grass, so as to protect nesting skylarks. He has now decided not to proceed as there doesn't appear to be a problem. Also, the public can be sensitive to an abundance of notices in the countryside.

#### Ranger's Report:

- Some of the sheep signs have been re-painted by volunteers.
- Dog fouling can only be regarded as `anti-social` and therefore only a polite notice can be installed on gates. As current notices have been removed or damaged, a more permanent sign has been designed. Dan will bring this along to the next meeting.
- Dog waste bin contents is being collected twice weekly; previously Dan had received photos showing overflowing bins. However, now that the sheep have moved into the main field, dog walkers may move from the pond field and therefore deposit less waste in the Firlle Crescent bin. Dan commented that although the use of Landport Bottom has increased since the installation of

the two dog waste bins, he still felt that this was sufficient provision, provided they were emptied sufficiently. Asked whether dog waste could be deposited in ordinary waste bins, Dan confirmed that the bins needed to be of a closed design. He added that there was a future plan for all types of waste bins to follow this design, thereby allowing the possibility for dog waste usage.

- Woodland path maintenance will be added to Dan's winter task list.
- Sheep worrying by a whippet-type dog has been witnessed. Anyone seeing such an incident should take a photo if possible and record the details. (*As stated in the last meeting Minutes, the Police can be contacted via the 101 or 999 numbers*).
- It was suggested that the lack of scrub cover for the sheep during extreme weather conditions, was causing them distress. Dan confirmed that he had spoken to Plumpton College and been assured that there was no welfare issue in this regard. There are other sites where sheep graze without cover, for example Mount Caburn.
- Dan passed a selection of vivid and interesting wildlife photos to those present, he and Stephen had taken these at different areas of the LB land.
- Reptile surveys are continuing across two areas of LB, Dan circulated a graph which incorporated the findings to date. Slow worms, grass snakes and lizards have been recorded but as yet no adders. The population of slow worms was regarded as particularly healthy.
- An evening flora survey was conducted on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, with Dan, Stephanie, Tim and a number of volunteers present. For High Level Stewardship funding, 8 particular species are listed for identification; the HLS needs 2-3 species to be present. The survey scored well across all the LB fields.
- Dan is trying to find a suitable contractor to cut the small field and clear it of Ragwort. Scything was suggested but as each flower needs to be picked up, this would not be practical. The butterfly season is nearing its end and there are other areas where the wildlife can move to. The Ragwort needs to be disposed of but cannot be taken to the council tip. There is a possibility that it could be incinerated.
- The new Interpretation Boards have been delivered but cannot be erected until the ground becomes penetrable.

- Ash tree die-back has been seen north of the small LB field. It can be identified in the late Autumn and early Spring. Trees decay from the inside; symptoms are not visible from the outside. If ash die-back is not currently present here, it is still likely to occur. However, the ash trees should be alright for the next 15 years. New legislation and recommendations are pending but if an area of trees needs to be cleared in the future, money would be allocated, as in the case of Dutch Elm disease.
- Dan gave notice of the following dates / events:

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September** – the Landport Bottom Management committee meeting takes place at Lewes Town Hall, commencing at 11 am. Prior to this Dan will conduct a guided walk of Landport Bottom; meet at the entrance to the Tumuli field - end of the motor road, at 0930 am.

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September** – 11 am, scrub clearance at Hawkenbury Way.

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October** – the Downland Run.

**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October** – A day of pond and vegetation clearance at Jill's Pond. Meet at the bottom of the Tumuli field at 10 am.

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November** –10 am, more fruit tree planting in Hawkenbury Way.

**Any other business:**

The date for the next Friends of Landport Bottom Meeting, is Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm.