

Minutes of Meeting

The Friends of Landport Bottom

Monday 14th November 2016, 7.30 pm St. Mary's Church, Highdown Road, Lewes

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Ruth O'Keeffe; Stephen Watson; Tim & Stephanie Pearce; Jacqueline & Brian Bodle.

Introduction:

There were 17 attendees, and the meeting was chaired by Councillor Susan Murray. As there were several new attendees, Susan invited all those present to introduce themselves.

Action points arising from the previous Minutes:

Old Racecourse bridleway: Dan was going to contact the National Park ranger regarding the bridleway – this action point was held over to later in the meeting.

Seats on Landport Bottom: The rules about the types of benches and their installation will be looked at further when the council ownership / the revised management policy for Landport Bottom, are confirmed. The National Park policy is also awaited.

Dog bins: Dan confirmed that there is an `any bin` policy for the disposal of dog waste; the matter was again raised later in the meeting.

Paved footpath by the allotments: Dan confirmed that the clearance of the path was the responsibility of the Racecourse Management Committee.

Maps of Landport Bottom: Dan confirmed that he had sent these to Stephen W. for inclusion on the Landport Bottom website.

Bright lights at a dwelling on the old racecourse: Dan confirmed that he had mentioned this to Dan Oakley, the Dark Skies Officer, for the National Park.

Issues and concerns:

Attendees were invited to share any issues or concerns relating to Landport Bottom.

- **Dog Bins:** Jackie would like Lewes District Council to challenge the dog bin policy. It was agreed by those present that she will write a letter to the Priory ward Town Councillor. She will highlight the fact that due to the increased number of dogs using the land, a further bin should be provided; the suggested location to be at Gate 14, near the allotments. Prior to sending the letter Jackie will circulate it to members of the Friends group. **(Action JB)**
- **Bonfire debris:** Jenny had been approached two days previously by a dog walker, who had expressed concern regarding the amount of firework debris in the lower

part of the Pond Field. A search of a 6 metre square area revealed a substantial amount of firework casing, and two types of string; there were sheep grazing close by. The debris appeared to be the result of Borough's firework display on 5th November. Dan confirmed that the amount of bonfire fallout this year was unusual, and due to the wind direction on the night. Mike, from the Nevill Bonfire Society agreed that this was the case for both the Nevill and Borough bonfire celebrations.

Dan said that each year the bonfire societies pay a deposit and hire the Tumuli field. In the case of Borough this was for a period of two weeks, after which time the site needs to be returned in its original condition prior to hire. However, following recent inspection of the field, Dan has found that clean-up work is still required. He confirmed that the site would not be signed off nor the deposit returned until it was deemed to be safe and clean. Christine asked why the clear up could not be done in one week? She suggested that an initiative could be to offer volunteer involvement, and invite the societies along to a Friends meeting prior to next year's bonfire celebrations. The group felt this was a good idea. Dan will mention the proposal to Borough when their deposit is returned. **(Action DF)** Jackie added that on the morning of 5th November whilst walking in the Tumuli field, she was told by Borough personnel that she could not come onto the land. She questioned whether the society understands the commitment of hire.

Sarah raised the problem of young people who had been letting off fireworks and committing vandalism after the main event. She felt that this was a growing problem. Kim said that she had collected a lot of related litter. Sarah felt that too many people were clearing up and removing the evidence, however Nina said that she had always informed Dan when she had done this. She said it was also important to educate children, and indicated that Priory School had been made aware of the problem in the past.

Paul said that the problem went beyond organised bonfire night celebrations. For example, fireworks were being discharged at Halloween, causing resulting debris. There had also been incidents of vandalism reported to the Police and there was the possibility that someone could get hurt in the future. Susan said that such incidents should also be reported to Dan, and that she will speak with the Community Safety Officer at Lewes District Council. **(Action SM)**

Ranger's Report:

- **Gate 14:** a Landport Bottom inspection report has been carried out regarding the replacement of the current stile/guillotine gate, with a Kissing Gate.
- **Pond clearance:** was carried out in the summer. A Great Crested Newt was found, also a Carp. The latter has since been re-located away from the wild-life pond site.

- **Wildflower cut:** a cut and collection had been made in the Pond Field, and cutting was also taking place in the Small and Tumuli fields. The cost of the operation is £3,950, and this year over 21 tonnes of cut has been removed; the collection will be composted. The growth will be restricted by increasing the numbers of grazing sheep through the winter, up until April. Dan is trying to find a farmer who will buy future wildflower cut for silage. A sustainable method of disposal would help generate money for other work.
- **Fencing management:** all fencing and gates will be inspected shortly, and necessary repairs carried out.
- **Council merger:** Dan confirmed that Eastbourne Borough Council will be merging with Lewes District Council in the future.
- **Announcement:** Dan informed the meeting that he will be leaving his position as the LDC Ranger. He is hopeful that someone will be replacing him, but asked that all future enquiries be addressed to Thyone Outram, Community Ranger. Susan raised a vote of thanks for everything that Dan has done; this was echoed by everyone present !

Comments on Ranger's Report:

- Imogen asked about seed collection in relation to the wildflower cut. Dan confirmed that Kew was involved with this.
- Brian asked whether the path to the chalk pit could be widened. Dan said that this area is outside of Landport Bottom; so a change could not be made unless National Park funding was available.
- Jacky said that Farmer Harmer had ploughed very close to the other side of boundary fences making walking access difficult. Susan suggested that Councillor Ruth O'Keefe could address this matter with Chloe Rowling, Right of Way Officer.

(Action SM)

Wildlife / environmental updates:

- Dan reported the siting of a Red Kite.
- Nina had seen Ravens.
- Ash die-back is working its way through the woodland. Dan confirmed that anything dangerous will be felled. Nina asked about Biochar treatment, and Dan said that there is a lot of ongoing research.
- Roger commented that the two vitally important jobs were: the action related to Ash die-back, and the clean-up of the Bonfire site.

Celebrations:

- Dan said that if the group had any ideas for a celebration or promotion, that they should bring these to future meetings.

Protection:

- **Vandalism of horse barriers:** Dan said that the two sets of barriers located along the boundary path (one east of Gate 17, the other east of Gate 15), had been removed or vandalised. Rod commented that one of the barriers had been removed but later replaced. Nina said that a motor cycle had also been using the path. Dan confirmed that one barrier was due to be replaced at the end of the week, with the other to follow. Christine asked what should be done if the barriers are broken again. Susan advised that the matter should be reported to the Police, also to Dan.

Clare asked whether there would be any signage at the barriers; Dan confirmed that there would not. Kim asked the status of the boundary path; Dan said it was a Permissive Path, as opposed to a Right of Way. Sarah said because of the muddy and churned up condition of the path, volunteers had put down a quantity of woodchip.

- **Bridleway diversion:** Jacky read out a letter from the ESCC regarding an application to divert the Old Racecourse Bridleway. The proposal had originated from the landowner. The letter had previously been forwarded to the Friends by Stephen Watson, together with a map and a subsequent list of objections from Councillor Ruth O'Keeffe; Jacky read these to the group. *(The documents are appended to these Minutes).*

Dan confirmed that no formal consultation had been received regarding the proposed change to the Right of Way. However, he said that it was quite likely permission could be granted, as the current bridleway did not follow the formerly defined legal line. He added that whilst the existing bridleway was not on the correct path, neither was the proposed alternate route.

Jacky referred to the deadline date of 3rd January 2017, set by the ESCC for comments to the proposal. Roger said there was legitimate demand for an extension to the date and that this would be requested by the Landport Bottom Management Committee / the Town Clerk. **(Action SM/RM)** Please refer to addendum at the end of the Minutes

Various questions were raised and comments made by those present regarding the proposal. [The group unanimously agreed that they would oppose the change to the Bridleway path](#), and that the Open Spaces Society; the Ramblers Association; the

Applicant, and other relevant parties, should be invited to attend a Landport Bottom Management Meeting.

Other Business:

- Brian B. very kindly brought along a series of historical ordnance maps of Lewes and Landport Bottom. These were viewed with great interest following the meeting.

The Next Friends of Landport Bottom Meeting: will be Monday 13th February, 2017.

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm.

Addendum:

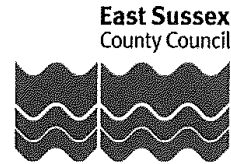
With reference to the **Bridleway Diversion** discussions at the meeting: Councillor Susan Murray has since consulted with the town clerk and they have agreed that it would be better to invite the applicant and/or his agent to a meeting of the Town Council planning committee, which would be considering the bridleway diversion at its next meeting as a statutory consultee. The invite has gone out, but no reply has so far been received. The planning committee meets on 29th November and members of the public are very welcome to come along to ask questions/make comments. Susan will ensure that the Friends are informed as soon as possible if the invitation to attend has been accepted.

Communities, Economy & Transport

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date
27th Oct 2016

please contact our ref
Ms Chloë Rowling RoW/Hamsey/C
01273 335229 or 0345 6080193 MH/CR
E-mail: row.consultations@eastsussex.gov.uk

your ref

Proposed Diversion of Public Bridleways Hamsey 17, St Anne Without 3 and Lewes 29b at Lewes Old Racecourse

The County Council has received an application to divert the above public bridleway under section 119 of the Highways Act 1980*. The diversion is sought in the interests of the landowner who has agreed to defray the Council's costs in making an Order.

The proposed diversion route would move the path alongside the railings of the Gallops (as shown by a broken black line between points A and C on the plan) and is available for inspection by the public.

The applicant would undertake the necessary clearance of the diversion route and has offered to install and maintain a suitable all weather surface throughout.

The current route is un-surfaced and has become heavily eroded in places and the applicant has witnessed increased use by walkers and cyclists since the area was designated a National Park. The proposed diversion would move path users away from the private dwelling areas at the Racecourse.

In addition, the route currently used on the ground does not accurately reflect the legal (definitive) line of the bridleway in places, and a diversion would resolve any confusion.

The applicants are happy to discuss the application and look at the route with any concerned parties. Please email: row.consultations@eastsussex.gov.uk or telephone 0345 6080193 to arrange a meeting.

I would welcome your comments on the proposal by 3rd January 2017, either by email or postal address as above.

If you require more time please let me know, otherwise if I do not hear from you by that date I will assume that no objection will be made to a properly made Order.

Rights of Way Access Officer



----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Ruth O'Keeffe** <roklewes@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Nov 11, 2016 at 12:46 PM

Subject: Re: Old Lewes Racecourse Bridleway Diversion Consultation

To: Friends Of Landport Bottom <friendsoflandportbottom@gmail.com>

Dear Stephen

I have objected to this for the following reasons; please circulate to other Friends of Landport Bottom if you feel it would be useful..

I have had a chance to look at this carefully and also to consult local people who use the routes to find out their views, and that of the Ramblers and Open Spaces society who are active in this area.

I would object to this for the following reasons:

- 1. The Route A-B is not currently open*
- 2. The proposed route would put a lot of traffic onto the route from A to B. Both bridleways at this point are very popular routes and it would be environmentally better to keep them separate.*
- 3. The route is historically a straight one which this diversion makes less so, and given people's propensity to follow desire lines the old route may still be more attractive.*
- 5. Because of the more zig zag nature of the new route there are a number of awkward junctions which will be far more counter intuitive.*
- 6. The proposed route includes a crossing of a galloping track.*
- 7. The current route puts pedestrians onto the access road at a location where traffic is likely to be moving very slowly whereas the new proposal has pedestrians on this road at a point where vehicles may be picking up speed.*
- 8. The route allows passers by to see a site of historic interest in racecourse complex and the new route would deny them this being significantly further away.*

best regards

Ruth

Ruth O'Keeffe
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