

Minutes of Meeting

The Friends of Landport Bottom

Monday 12th February 2018 at 7.30 pm St. Mary's Church, Highdown Road, Lewes.

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Susan Murray; Jackie Bishop; Brian & Jacqueline Bodle; Christine Cohen Parks; Imogen Makepeace.

Attendees:

There were 9 attendees: Councillors: Ruth O'Keeffe & Roger Murray; Stephen Watson; Suzy Newson; Sarah Flynn; David Marsh; Thyone Outram; Vicki Trenhaile; Jenny Keen.

The meeting was chaired by Stephen Watson, who invited all those present to introduce themselves.

Action points arising from the previous Minutes:

- 1. Fireworks/vandalism at Halloween:** following the problem of fireworks being discharged at Halloween and also incidents of vandalism, Nina Murden was going to contact the School Liaison PC, WPC Ross. Nina was not present at the meeting therefore the action is still outstanding? (**Action: NM**) *Note: this action has been carried over from the two previous meetings.*
- 2. Planting hazel bushes:** A mixture of native species including hazel bushes have been planted left of the path at the top of the Tumuli field, from the main gate towards the chalk pit by Brighton Conservation Volunteers, and the Friends of Landport Bottom.
- 3. An additional dog waste bin:** Kim Dawson was going to look at the location of the two dog waste bins on Nevill Green and decide which of these would be best re-located onto Landport Bottom. Kim was not present at the meeting but Ranger Thyone Outram confirmed that the relocation should be fine from the LDC end in terms of getting it emptied, but agreement is being sought from the Nevill Residents Association. (**Action: RO**) Roger Murray suggested the bin could be moved to the entrance at the top of Firle Crescent. However, it was pointed out that a bin already exists in this location. Vickie Trenhaile felt that the bin should be located by the gate at the top of the Tumuli Field. It was noted that plastic bags containing dog waste have been left hanging on trees and bushes; hopefully the additional bin will encourage responsible disposal.
- 4. Responsible user agreement:** at the last Friends meeting Imogen Makepeace expressed the idea of having a responsible user agreement for Landport Bottom. She was going to raise the matter at a future Nevill Residents' meeting and report back to the Friends. Whilst Imogen was not present at the meeting, it appears that there is an intention to form a `sub-committee` for the purpose of easing tensions between the various groups of people using Landport Bottom. However, the matter is unclear and needs clarification. **Action: IM.**

5. **Footpath repair/access issues:** David Marsh said that he had met with Ruth O’Keeffe, who is still trying to obtain funding for re-surfacing the footpath from the junction with Nevill Road to the allotments. There is a particular focus on disabled users. Regarding the problem of maintaining excess growth of vegetation along the path, DM confirmed that the issue had been referred back to the Racecourse Management Committee.

Rangers Report:

- **Grazing:** there are plans to revert back to maintaining the chalk grassland through grazing. Over the last few years there has not been enough grazing of the Landport Bottom land. Last year the Plumpton College sheep grazed the land and tractor cutting also took place. This year Plumpton will continue to graze the land through the summer. Southdown ewes and lambs will initially be introduced into the Small field in April. While the lambs are young, dogs will need to be kept on a lead. There will also need to be very clear signage. If this is successful the lambs will be moved into one of the two larger fields when the demand for grazing dictates. This will mean increased signage, especially for dog walkers, and notices will have to be in place all the time. Help from the Friends with erecting and replacing temporary signs would be very much appreciated. The notices will be provided by Thyone Outram, with a supply given to Jenny Keen to distribute to other Friends as required. Vickie Trenhaile suggested that a note be put in the Nevill Residents Association Newsletter. She will email the NRA about this. David Marsh expressed a concern that the lambs would be vulnerable to foxes.
- **Bridleway through the Small and Tumuli fields:** Some cutting back of the bridleway has taken place in the Tumuli and Small fields with the help of South Downs Volunteer Ranger service. There is still more to be done. David Marsh asked whether this was the responsibility of the ESCC; Thyone confirmed that it was. Horses, walkers or bicycles can use any part of the fields but the bridleway is a historic way which should be maintained. Regarding access to the bridleway, Ruth O’Keeffe is looking into the use of finger posts to indicate the route. Initially she has written to the ESCC, however if not successful she will speak to the LTC.
(Action RO)
- **Bridleway through the Small and Tumuli fields:** Some cutting back of the bridleway has taken place in the Tumuli and Small fields with the help of South Downs Volunteer Ranger service. There is still more to be done. David Marsh asked whether this was the responsibility of the ESCC; Thyone confirmed that technically it was, but historically LDC have maintained it. Horses, walkers or bicycles can use any part of the fields but the bridleway is a historic way which should be maintained. Regarding access to the bridleway, Ruth O’Keeffe is looking into the use of finger posts to indicate the route. Initially she has written to the ESCC, however if not successful she will speak to the LTC. **(Action RO)**

- **Hedge alongside woodland path:** A mixed native species hedge/ small tree belt has been planted with whips grown from seed sourced from local plants, and grown by the Special Branch tree nursery at Falmer. These include: hazel, field maple, dogwood, dog rose, wayfaring tree, holly and spindle. The hedge was planted on January 9th with the help Brighton Conservation Volunteers, and the Friends of Landport Bottom. The money used to purchase the whips was provided by the Lewes Little Gardens group. The main risk in the first few years to this type of planting is a lack of water. Weeding the hedge through the summer will decrease the amount of competition for water from grass and other plants.

The South Downs Volunteer Rangers are booked on Thursday 26th April from 10 am. Weeding may take place on that date depending on the level of growth. Any Friends are welcome to join the group that day, or form other independent work parties. Thyone will send an email to confirm that the event is taking place.

(Action TO)

- **Amphibians and Bats:** Another amphibian survey will take place at the pond this year, on the evening of Tuesday 24th April. There is less vegetation in the pond after the autumn clearance so it should be easier to see into the water. There will also be a walk for the Friends around the site beforehand especially alongside the woodland, in order to check for bats. Those interested should meet at 8.30pm by the Information Board at the entrance to the Tumili field. **Only Friends and their guests can attend this event, because of the sensitivity of the activity.**
- **Restructuring and new posts:** Thyone Outram, Kim Dawson and Simon Hunt have all retained permanent positions with Lewes District Council.

Issues arising from Landport Bottom Management Committee meeting:

Not applicable.

Issues and concerns:

None,

Wildlife updates, volunteer surveys:

Jenny Keen asked whether a survey of reptiles would take place this year. Thyone confirmed that it would not.

Celebrations, events or promotions:

Amphibian and Bat surveys on Tuesday 24th April. Also, weeding work with the South Downs Volunteer Rangers on Thursday 26th April.

Protection:

No issues.

Any other business:

None.

The next Friends of Landport Bottom meeting: will be held on Monday 14th May 2018.

The next Landport Bottom Management Committee Meeting: will be held on Tuesday 6th March 2018, 11 am at Lewes Town Hall.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm.