

**Meeting of Friends of Landport Bottom**  
**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022 – 7.30 pm. Meeting held via Zoom.**

**Present:** Stephen Watson; Vicki Trenhaile; Rob Elvery; Fiona Hardy; Jenny Lindop; Sarah Flynn; Laura Chrysostomou; Brian Courage; Jenny Keen.

**Apologies:** Councillor Ruth O’Keeffe

**Introductions:**

All of those present introduced themselves, and welcomed new attendees.

**1. Minutes from the last meeting:**

The Minutes were agreed.

**2. Action points from previous meeting:**

**i. Proposal for a bench in the Small Field:** Brian reported that at the last Town Council and Landport Bottom Management committee meeting, the matter was discussed and it was agreed that the proposed bench would go ahead. Possible designs have been discussed and these will be taken back to the next meeting. Vicki asked if there was a fixed schedule for these meetings. Brian said that when there were sufficient things to merit a meeting one is held.

**ii. Status of the 300m access track from Hawkenbury Way to Gate 18:**

Rob confirmed that the path had become a muddy mess once again! For about two and a half years he has been trying to organise for stones to be spread onto the path to improve the surface. Recently, he has been looking into the status of the track which currently is not designated as a Right of Way. He said that whilst the area is shown as access land on the O.S.Map, it is not, nor is it a Right of Way. However, as the track has had unhindered access for more than 20 years it should qualify. The land is owned by Iford Estate and the landlord could decide in theory to close the access. Rob proposed that the Town Council should apply for the path to be listed as a R.O.W. in order to protect it. Then perhaps the FOLB could carry out some maintenance i.e. spreading stones to improve the surface. Sarah Flynn said there is an application form that anyone can download and complete regarding R.O.W. status. The form is then submitted to the County Council. Stephen suggested that given Rob’s past involvement with the path he should be involved in an application. Rob said he would not be able to lead the process but would help. Jenny L. also offered to help. **Action: Rob and Jenny L. to discuss.**

**iii. Jill's Pond – renovation work:** Brain had spoken with Pete the Pond Burchill, the pond contractor. The new pond liner has been covered with clay and the pond now needs to settle before replanting can take place. In the spring volunteers are welcome to help with the work. Previously groups of volunteers have helped by, for example by cutting back the willow. During the next few days the pond fencing will be replaced. *Note: this has now happened.* Pete told Brian that he was very pleased with progress and the comments he'd received from passers-by. Brian said that the council will be looking to provide more regular maintenance to the pond so that it doesn't reach the state it has this time. Pete will return on an annual basis.

3. **Boundary Commission proposals:** Changes to the boundary were talked about a year or more ago. The boundary between Lewes constituency and East Grinstead & Uckfield constituency cuts right across Landport Bottom and runs through some of the gardens in Highdown Road. Stephen has previously sent a proposal from the Friends requesting the boundary be moved further north. Residents have also been encouraged to respond to the boundary changes; the closing date is 5<sup>th</sup> December.
4. **Bonfire celebrations and clean up:** The bad weather had caused a delay in the clean up operation, but it was thought that this has now been satisfactorily completed.
5. **Chalk Life Ranger's report:** Landport Bottom update – the conservation volunteer group is going well. It runs every third Saturday of the month 10am – 1pm. Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November: Maintenance in Tumuli Field – Bridle Way and scrub clearance. Sat 17<sup>th</sup> December – A wintering bird survey and mince pies! Plans for 2023 are as follows: Scrub clearance in Pond and Small Field; Fencing repair in March; Wildflower and butterfly surveys in the summer: A Bat and moth evening; Planting up of the Dew Pond with Pete the Pond.

A Chalk Life / Dog Life face-book page has been set up. The proposed title of Dog Ambassador has been re-titled Dog Life Volunteer. Jenny L. is looking to recruit 7 volunteers to engage in outreach work around dog attacks on sheep, behaviour around Skylarks, also the picking up of dog poo.

During the first week of January Jenny will be helping the shepherd check whether the sheep are pregnant and using this as a chance to recruit Chalk Life / Dog Life volunteers. She will update everyone when she has more details.

Rob commented that there were insufficient sheep on Landport Bottom to make grazing effective. He stated that the Pond Field covered 70 acres and to graze it

effectively it would need more than 200 sheep. He said that sheep were fickle and didn't eat the course grass but tended to graze the short grass on the paths. Brian said that Landport Bottom only has the number of sheep that Plumpton can provide. Rob said it would be good to divide the field with hedgerows (*this is something that has been discussed in previous FOLB meetings*), or put cattle onto the land. Laura C said that whilst more sheep would be desirable, the HLS management agreement must be followed. This agreement does not specify the number of sheep that should be grazing there. Plumpton College have given us as many sheep as they can. Brian has been exploring other grazing options. Jenny L said the HLS agreement specified 188 sheep.

**6. Issues and Concerns:** None raised.

**7. Wildlife updates:** None raised.

**8. Celebrations:** None raised.

**9. Protection:** None raised.

**10. Any other business:** Southdown National Park have two locally based rangers. However, both of them will be leaving. It is hoped that SDNP will recruit to fill these positions.

**11. Date of next meeting:** March 13<sup>th</sup> 2023.