

## **Meeting of Friends of Landport Bottom**

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2023 – 7.30 pm. Meeting held via Zoom.**

**Present:** Stephen Watson; Jenny Lindop; Councillor Matthew Bird; Vicki Trenhaile; Rob Elvery; Lesley Healy; Nicky Blackwell; Jenny Keen

**Apologies:** Ruth O’Keeffe; Sarah Flynn; Suzy Nelson; David Salter

**1. Minutes from the last meeting:** The Minutes were agreed.

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

**i. Hawkenbury Way access track:**

**Rob confirmed that there had been no further progress and that the path was becoming more overgrown. He continues to maintain the wiggly side path which he previously created to give pedestrians a better alternative route. However, the condition of the access track has improved lately due to the dry weather and fewer horse riders using it.**

**Stephen said he had taken up the suggestion from the previous meeting to see if anyone was interested in pursuing the proposal that the track become a right of way. The only response he had received was from Chris Smith of the Open Spaces Society. However, in order for Chris to help we would need to join the society at a cost of £45. As the FOB has no funds this will not be happening. Chris Smith said that in his experience applying for the right of way could take 25 years, and he suggested that we approach the Iford Estate to ask if they might voluntarily dedicate the track as a public footpath. Matthew confirmed that he’d had some previous contact with Ben Taylor, the farm manager of the Iford Estate and that he could ask him about allowing the path to become a right of way. Action: Matt Bird**

**ii. Jill’s Pond renovation work:**

**Following its recent re-lining the pond is still holding the water. Rob again reported his concern regarding a quantity of old fence posts which had previously been thrown into the newly lined pond. These could cause damage to the liner and therefore need to be removed. Jenny L. confirmed that 'Pete the Pond', who had carried out all the renovation work would be returning imminently to replant the pond. Stephen asked that Pete should be asked to remove all the old fence posts from the site. Action: Jenny L**

**iii. Benches:**

**David Salter had previously proposed the placing of a new bench in the Small Field. Whilst this had been approved by the Landport Bottom Management Committee at the time, the style of the bench awaited further discussion. Councillor Matt Bird said that committee no longer exists and Landport Bottom now comes under the Buildings and Amenities Committee which had its first meeting last week, and which he chairs. It is possible that a Landport Bottom subgroup may be formed under this committee as there are a number of Landport Bottom issues to tackle. Although much has changed with the formation of the new committee, the bench would not be forgotten. He noted that whilst a turf gabion-style bench had originally been proposed it was likely that the new bench would be a wooden structure.**

### **Chalk Life Ranger's report:**

**Jenny L. said that during a recent wildflower survey 41 species had been recorded across the three fields of Landport Bottom. She noted that there was a lot more diversity in the Pond and Small fields. Jenny will write up a report of the findings and send to everyone.**

**On Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> July a pollinator survey is planned using the FIT count. (*Update, due to a yellow weather warning Jenny had to cancel the survey*).**

**On Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> July there will be an insect and butterfly walk around the old racecourse.**

**On August 19<sup>th</sup> a flora and fauna survey will be carried out using `iRecord`. This is an app which records what people have seen/identified so they can compare their findings.**

**Jenny has been in touch with the Amphibian & Reptile Society and they will be coming on September 16<sup>th</sup> to make an assessment. They will help with a reptile survey by putting down refugia (mats).**

**From October onwards, patches of scrub will be removed, not simply cut back.**

**In December there will be wintering bird survey and mince pies**

### **New boundary:**

**Stephen confirmed that the constituency boundary review had now been published. The Boundary Commission have ignored the representations made to them by various people and as a result, a large part of Landport Bottom is now included in the East Grinstead and Uckfield constituency along with parts of some of the Highdown Road gardens. This could be a problem in the future as our local Lewes MP will not wish to get involved with Landport Bottom because it is no longer in their area., while the other MP will not deal with us as we aren't their constituents.**

### **Wildlife updates:**

**Stephen said there had been a lot of pyramidal orchids in the Pond Field, also some on Mount Harry green. Rob Elvery reported round-headed rampion in the Pond field, where it has appeared over the last two or three years. Jenny L. confirmed that she was waiting to hear from Lydia Dowell, District Council Ecologist regarding a proposal to sow yellow rattle on Landport Bottom. Different schemes for each of the fields need to be confirmed.**

### **Celebrations:**

**Jenny L. said that Thyone Outram (former Council Ranger), is involved in a festival at Gales Farm, near Friston Forest on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July from 10-5pm. The site is ex-arable chalk grassland.**

### **Protection:**

**No issues reported.**

### **Any other business:**

**Vicki asked about the plans for the sheep over the next few weeks. Jenny L. confirmed that they were monitoring the sheep and the grass in the Tumuli Field, and hoped to be moving the sheep to the Pond Field in December. The Pond Field will be cut before then.**

**Date of next meeting:**

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023.**