

## Stockland Parish Council

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Turbaries Management Committee held in Stockland Victory Hall on Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2020, 4pm.

- 1) **Public Participation Time** (SO 1e & f); There were no members of the public present.
- 2) **Resolved to exclude members of the press and public**; agreed an item to be dealt with after the public and press have been excluded as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted [Public Bodies(Admission to Meetings Act) 1960]; **Item 6ii) Woodland Management Plan, contract quote.**
- 3) **To record those Present/Apologies for absence** and consider whether to approve the reasons given; D Allen (chair); Cllrs Drew, Griffiths, and A Thompkins; Geoff Pearce (DBW&P), Paul Spencer (resident) and Toby Taylor (RSPB); in attendance Ken Pearson (PC Clerk); apologies from Cllr Learthmouth, Alasdair Bruce (resident) and Tim Youngs (AONB Manager).
- 4) **Declarations of Interest:** There were no declarations of any interests.
- 5) **Turbaries Management Committee Minutes-** resolved to note that the draft Minutes of the meeting held on the Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November and 20<sup>th</sup> December were confirmed and signed by the Council on the 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2020.
- 6) **Action Review Summary:** to receive and review the following items
  - i) **AONB Facilitation Fund**; resolved to receive an update from the scheme This is a Countryside Stewardship funded by Defra that brings together land managers to improve the local natural environment at a landscape scale. The turbaries are a member of the Blackdowns Farming & Woodland Group that is linked to the Rough Grazing Association of which the Council are a founding member. The group runs a series of events and the programme is circulated by the Clerk.
  - ii) **Higher Level and Basic Payment Schemes (HLS and BPS)**; resolved to receive updates;
    - received the Clerk's report on the finances showing an amount of £19002 available; with the following winter work still to be completed, Bucehayes scrub removal 2 day's; a further 2 days brushcutting work on Horner. To note that Justin Gillet may now be replaced by Catherine Mowat ([Catherine.Mowat@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Catherine.Mowat@naturalengland.org.uk))
    - Received an update on the BPS, HLS and extension claims for this year with Bucehayes extension signed and returned; the Extension for Shortmoor to be sent out in March; amended eastern parcel on Shortmoor was changed by RPA; the Clerk reported that communication with the RPA has been established but doing so is very time-consuming and a suggestion is that a Councillor takes on the task of sharing this load.
    - **Interpretation Boards**; to receive any update report on financing, designing, and placing of the Boards onto the Victory Hall; a local designer has quoted £1600; 4x A1 boards to be placed on the outside far store side wall; agreed the Clerk request a Specification and written quote and the Chair to approach the Blackdowns AONB to determine whether there is money in the Sustainable Development Fund for which the PC might apply.
    - **Woodland Management Plan and Woodland Improvement Grant (WIGrant)**; this was dealt with as a **confidential item** and noted that the deadline for submission of initial application for CS Higher Tier is 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020 (with start date of 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2021) agreed the Clerk discuss it further with the applicant, bringing to the next Council meeting; resolved to note that the Interim Invoice 1920030 for £900 for the Application to the Forestry Commission is now paid. The Grant for this is claimable back once the Application is approved by the Forestry Commission (FC).  
The WIGrant needs approval from the FC for this year and the PC can then claim grant at £100/h and also triggers a felling licence approval for any works identified. A Quote was received for CS Higher Tier Woodland Stage 1: Initial Application (submitted by 3 May 2020) and to include;

- a) Site meeting with the PC to agree options and items to be included in the application; walkover woodland survey where needed; preparation of application form, application map, annotated map and Annex 2 spreadsheet; liaison with the PC and other stakeholders as necessary to finalise draft.
- b) Submission to RPA/FC on the PC's behalf noting that the success of the application cannot be guaranteed (applications are competitive and will be subject to scoring by Forestry Commission); a site visit from the Forestry Commission's local Woodland Officer to view and confirm the details to be included in the agreement; meeting on-site with FC, drawing up specifications, obtaining quotes and consents, negotiating with FC; cost for this is similar to stage 1, and a written estimate will be provided in due course.
- c) to proceed as a first step requires a marked up sketch map showing the location and extent of the management or works to be undertaken and agreed for the Turbaries Management Committee's next meeting to decide what to agree; No grant for this other than £100/h return pa.
- iii) **Registration of the Turbaries as Common Land**; resolved not to agree to register eligible land as commons and the Clerk to write back to confirm.
- iv) **Motorised trespassing on Turbaries**; resolved that motorised access along the bridle path should be handled by the police and Cllr Griffiths to contact DCC PROW to confirm its legality.
- 7) **Turbaries**; resolved to; receive an update on current work completed or scheduled; agree future work plans and finance for each site, see **App1 below**; Bucehayes (AG00287440); Quantock (AG00287502); Horner Hill (AG00291818); Shortmoor (AG00305847); Huntshayes (BPS); and Shore Bottom (BPS). Agreed Cllr Griffiths and D Allen to assess possible future work.
- 8) **Communications**; resolved to; place information for the interpretation boards on the Village website, and future submission of spring (summer, autumn)-Watch to be sent to both the village and Council sites.
- 9) **Volunteering**. Agreed that the offer from Cotley Hunt to provide occasional voluntary work could include; winter work: tagging on to RSPB contractors (at RSPB's discretion); or excavation of a pond at the N extremity near cottages on Horner; summer work could be to help with Balsam-pulling, the Chair to give alternative dates to the Hunt.
- 10) **Items of Future Business** for the next Agenda. Information Panels.
- 11) Next meeting Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Signed .....

Chairman;

23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2020  
Meeting closed at 6pm

**APP1****TURBARIES:****(i) BUCEHAYES.**

One day's contract work with a large gang was done on 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb; and the NE corner of the northern enclosure (near gate to Bucehayes Farm) is now clear. There remains scattered scrub re-growth in the S enclosure but that seems low priority. Agreed, a day's approved work. A request for moorland ponies (7 or 8?) for summer grazing was approved.

**(ii) QUANTOCK**

No winter work was done; swaling was out of the question, because of continuous wet weather. Summer grazing of both blocks is needed; agreed ponies again but a lookerer is required (at 2 x a week for 4 months).

Reported that as the Membury supplier of grass carp was still not making a firm commitment, alternative supplier could be approached, RG will contact him.

Agreed an area of Quantock turbary (W of the new pond) be protected from grazing by electrified wire, to provide seeding Molinia as habitat for Reed Buntings, RSPB agreed to advise on supply of an energiser and wire.

**(iii) SHORTMOOR**

No winter work. Summer grazing with ponies is needed.

**(iv) HORNER HILL**

Two days of winter work has been approved to brush-cut fire-breaks across the open area. The RSPB are scheduled for Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March, and agreed to increase to two days.

Topping of the wood-pasture around the ruined cottages is due again in April, and does not yet need another cut and to assess in 4-6 weeks' time, and contact the contractor accordingly.

**(v) HUNTSHAYES**

No work done and no plans.

**(vi) SHORE BOTTOM**

Balsam pulling to be continued and suggested for 2020 is Saturday: 20 June, 11 and 25 July, 08 August. Paul Spencer to advertise and coordinate the event.