

Stockland Parish Council

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Turbaries Management Committee on Wednesday, 8th July, 2020 from 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**; there were no confidential items.
- 3) **To record those Present/Apologies for absence** and consider whether to approve the reasons given; D Allen (chair); Cllrs Drew, Griffiths, Learmouth, and A Thompkins, Tim Youngs(AONB Manager), Toby Taylor(RSPB), Paul Spencer(resident); in attendance Ken Pearson (PC Clerk) apologies from Geoff Pearce(DBW&P) and Alasdair Bruce(resident).
- 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 11th March were confirmed and signed by the Council on the 23rd March, 2020.
- 6) **Action Review Summary**: to receive and review the following items;
 - i) **AONB Facilitation Fund**; resolved to receive an update from the scheme and the Clerk's attendance at the Zoom meeting by the BHAONB about the Government's Agricultural Bill and Environmental Land Management system consultation ([ELM Policy discussion document](#), closes 31 July).
 - ii) **Higher Level and Basic Payment Schemes (HLS and BPS)**; resolved to receive updates;
 - On the Clerk's report of the finances showing an amount of £ **17737.47** available; with the following work still to be completed, Horner Topping, which was agreed.
 - on the BPS, HLS and extension claims; all the BPS/HLS claim forms have been sent and logged as received by the RPA on 3rd June; they have also advised that the Shortmoor Appeal is still in process, but not yet confirmed by RPA.
 - Interpretation Boards; it was confirmed that the PC is ready to engage a local designer and contractor to set up and build the Panels with a probable Grant of £2000 from the AONB's Sustainability Development Fund Application and from the Parish Council paying £1630 as matched funding with completion by March 2021.
 - Woodland Management Plan (WMP); resolved to note that the Invoice 2021022 for £930 for the Application to the Forestry Commission is now paid and the WMP has been approved; The chair expressed grave concerns that certain clauses, 'Rules and practice of good forestry' and 'felled trees...to be removed quickly', appear to risk going against the practice of good ecology that the Turbary management has followed for 25 years, and it was agreed that Cllr Griffiths and D Allen to meet with the Forestry Commission when they visit to explain this different and essential approach.
 - Trespassing; resolved that transgression by powered vehicles and bikes onto the Turbaries after more incursions damaging the areas, are to go the next full Council Meeting on 28th July.
- 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).
- 8) **Communications**; resolved to; note that the Village website is no longer operating and to raise at next meeting of the Council; that Stockland Tree is being run by Cllr A Thompkins and another volunteer; the Chair and G Pearce to draft a 'Summer Watch' for the Tree and PC website.
- 9) **Items of Future Business** for the next Agenda; 4th Nov

Signed
Chairman;

28th July, 2020
Meeting closed at 5.30pm

APP1**TURBARIES:**

- (i) **BUCEHAYES.** Confirmed that seven Exmoor ponies have been received (2 on 15/6 and 5 on 18/6) and released on to the southern enclosure, after the fence-line was checked and a fallen willow removed. Two Volunteers have taken on the lookering to good effect. A pony nut purchasing system from Mole Avon has been set up.
There remains scattered birch and willow regrowth (& some garden escape skunk cabbage) in the S enclosure, and some birch scrub in northern enclosure; suggest scheduling 2 days contract work in winter and agreed that this can be decided upon at the November meeting.
- (ii) **QUANTOCK.** Eight Dartmoor ponies were released on to the main block from 15-18 June and in a number of places small trees have fallen across, but not yet broken, the fence-line, one was cleared, but others need professional attention; an electrified tape has been erected toward the N extremity as an exclusion area in which to attract Reed Buntings to Molinia seed; a Cullompton stockist for Carp has been found which hopefully may be available from September.
Six young kestrels have just fledged from a nest box on a pine near the pond, and sparrowhawks have young in a nest high in a birch. Mallard ducklings have been seen on the pond. This year there have been 87 flowering spikes of Early Marsh Orchid in the mire.
There's a need to control the dominance of bracken in the 'kennels' enclosure, preferably by spraying Asulox as soon as possible. A ceiling figure of £500 was agreed, but it was noted that the RSPB is very short-staffed during the lock-down.
- (iii) **SHORTMOOR.** In principle, it was agreed that the small enclosure be pony grazed, depending on RSPB's resources amid coronavirus restrictions.
- (iv) **HORNER HILL** reported that Robin Gundry had been asked to top the wood-pasture around the cottage (this was done on 14th July); there is a fallen tree, from the hedgebank across but not blocking the bridlepath.
RSPB spent a day brush-cutting fire-breaks on the open hillside on 19th March, leaving one day approved in-hand; a two further day's work, perhaps in September was approved.
There seems an opportunity to construct a pond just N of the first cottage, hopefully with the help of volunteers from Cotley Hunt. David to contact Mary Perry in the autumn. Ken will check the position concerning insurance.
- (v) **HUNTSHAYES.** None. Japanese Knotweed is reported from Castlewell.
- (vi) **SHORE BOTTOM;** Balsam pulling continues, with volunteers. Next session on 11th July.