

## Stockland Parish Council

### Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Turbaries Management Committee on Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2020 from 4 until 6pm.

- 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.  
**To record those Present/Apologies for absence** and consider whether to approve the reasons given (Cllrs only); D Allen (chair); Cllrs Drew, Griffiths and A Thompkins, Geoff Pearce(DBW&P) Toby Taylor(RSPB), Paul Spencer(resident); in attendance Ken Pearson (PC Clerk); apologies from Tim Youngs(AONB Manager), and Alasdair Bruce(resident); to note the resignation of Cllr Learmouth from the Council and this Committee, to be replaced by a co-opted Council member in due course; to note that Charlotte Selway of Sheamus Machin, our Managing Agent, has left their employment and is replaced with Gemma Sparks; noted the death of Derrick Boyland on 28<sup>th</sup> October after a long illness who had been on the turbaries committee as a grazier for many years, agreed that the Chair sends the committee's sympathies to his widow, Pamela; agreed an approach could be made for a replacement with Richard Switzer, an ornithologist, being suggested.
- 3) **Declarations of Interest**: declare any interests they have in agenda items that accord with any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (s31 & 33 of the Localism Act 2011) or Personal/Prejudicial Interests (Code of Conduct, 2012).
- 4) **Turbaries Management Committee Minutes**-resolved to note that the draft Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July were confirmed and signed by the Council on the 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2020.
- 5) **Action Review Summary**: to receive and review the following items:
  - i) **AONB Facilitation Fund**; resolved to receive an update from the scheme and included the following, visit to the Knepp Estate, a rewilding project on a vast scale that is a model for future initiatives; 16<sup>th</sup> Oct. Ponies in conservation grazing on the Cotley Estate, using New Forest ponies; 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct. River Culm science; 10<sup>th</sup> Nov. Visit to Neroche Forest where longhorn cattle have been used in conservation grazing was cancelled due to lockdown.
  - ii) **Higher Level and Basic Payment Schemes (HLS and BPS)**; resolve to receive updates;
    - received the Clerk's report on the finances showing an amount of £17641.40 available.
    - **Horner Hill**; the Council meeting of the 29<sup>th</sup> September considered the issue from the Turbaries Committee of the construction of a pond just North of the first cottage, with possible help of volunteers from Cotley Hunt and it was AGREED; to request the possible costs involved, a Covid-19 secure Risk Assessment; a work specification by a professional contractor to oversee the volunteers, with tasks identified and the number of hours/days needed to complete the task and to be continuously monitored/logged; work to be compliant with the Council's Financial Regulations especially section 4 'Authority to Spend', s11 'Contracts' and s12 'Payments'; the Clerk to implement this process and further agreed the next steps be left until the Spring.
    - **Trespassing Report**; the Council meeting of the 27<sup>th</sup> October agreed to limit transgression by powered vehicles and bikes onto the Turbaries after more incursions took place since the last meeting, damaging the areas, as well as warning signs being removed and were reported to the Police; agreed for the erection of 3 gates lower down, including a step over at Penny Hill, with the gates available free from DCC ROW and to seek further information on the installation costs involved from the Contractor.
    - **Hunting Policy**; the Council meeting of the 28<sup>th</sup> August agreed to amendments discussed at the May 2019 Council meeting, and those agreed in the 19<sup>th</sup> August Report to Council and that the Chair and Clerk move forward the next step, which is to issue the final copy as agreed, to the Cotley Hunt.
    - **Defra Consultation on Environmental Land Management (ELM)** scheme to replace BPS system; agreed the draft proposed by the Clerk as completed by the closing date of 31<sup>st</sup> July.

- **Woodland Management Plan**; agreed to the Higher Tier Work Prescriptions as a result of the meeting between Cllr Griffiths and D Allen with the Forestry Commission and FWAG; with a requirement for removing invasive species eg Balsam; the need for an ongoing process of clearing/felling across all the Turbaries; leaving wood behind for the ecology and for taking by parish residents; agreed to investigate any local contractors with correct insurances getting involved; agreed also the Forestry Commission and FWAG suggestions on improving the outcomes from a further six parcels across the Turbaries. Agree the Clerk to contact RPA to see if there are any further developments.
  - **Information Panels**; confirmed that the Council has engaged both a designer and contractor to set up and build the Panels with an approved Grant of £2000 from the BHAONB Sustainable Development Fund, the PC to pay £1630 as matched funding and work was scheduled to begin in September, agreed the next steps to be designing and layout of the board information and it had been agreed to work on the easiest board first, suggested to be “where are the turbaries”, using Ordnance Survey mapping and the Clerk to make contact with them.
- 6) **Turbaries**; resolved to; receive an update on current work completed or scheduled; agree future work plans and finance for each site, see **App1 below** for more detail;-  
 Bucehayes (AG00287440); ponies leaving mid Nov; fence posts to be replaced 2 days RSPB work agreed;  
 Quantock (AG00287502); leave ponies for a while longer; agreed move Exmoor’s to Shortmoor by RSPB; bracken removed by ponies; buy carp for the pond 200 small for £110, after frost kills pondweed, was agreed subject to the Clerk managing the transaction to keep to the Financial Regulations; Brimpit block scattered scrub regrowth 2 day’s work by RSPB agreed;  
 Horner Hill (AG00291818); more brushcutting 3 days Topping in April again; Pond dug out by Andy Podbery, to be done in early April and quote to be received and agreed by the Clerk beforehand;  
 Shortmoor (AG00305847); 4 ponies to move here for 2 weeks & then back to Quantock to be moved back home;  
 Huntshayes (BPS); no work  
 Shore Bottom (BPS). Balsam pulling & official letter from the Council to the owner to seek official access into and across her land from the Clerk.
- 7) **Communications**; resolved to; receive updates on the Parish Council Website and the replacement Stockland Website, which had now been agreed and a quote is going forward; Stockland Tree “Autumn Watch” article to be submitted this week; agreed the suggestion to buy two camera traps at a cost of about £70 each, subject to the Clerk receiving all the details and managing the transaction according to the Financial Regulations.
- 8) Items of Future Business for the next Agenda and dates of future meetings; 10<sup>th</sup> March, 7<sup>th</sup> July, 3<sup>rd</sup> November.

Signed .....  
 Chairman;

24<sup>th</sup> November, 2020  
 Meeting closed at 5.30pm

**APP1 TURBARIES:**

- i. Bucehayes (AG00287440); received 7 Exmoor ponies despite Covid restriction imposed on RSPB staffing. They have moved between N and S enclosures on Bucehayes throughout the season (15-18 June-mid Nov.). Heather Burnett has provided 'lookering' for which we are extremely grateful.

There remains scattered scrub re-growth, especially in the S enclosure where a few fence posts need replacement. Two day's contract work is envisaged (Minutes 8.7.20); these are now **approved**.

- (ii) Quantock (AG00287502);

Eight Dartmoor ponies have been grazing the main (Brimpit) enclosure since mid-June. They have done a good job, and have been looked after by Heather. Four Exmoor's were put on to the smaller ('Kennels') enclosure later in the season (21.8.20), after some glyphosate was applied to control bracken and brambles (£500 had been approved for this on 8.7.20). We are now scattering hay onto remaining brambles to entice the ponies to browse and trample these areas (and so extend the season). Toby remarked that this is a sustainable method used elsewhere.

Geoff reported that the electrified fence put up as a grazing exclusion plot had allowed Purple Moor grass to set seed, in the hope that this will attract Reed Buntings and, in summer, perhaps Grasshopper Warblers.

We still intend stocking the Quantock pond with Carp. After several false starts over free sources, Geoff is in contact with a supplier in Kentisbeare at a cost of £55 per 100 small fish. For the moment, there is too thick a covering of Duckweed which limits oxygen levels for fish, but frosts will soon alter this. Geoff wants to buy 200 fish at a cost of £110. This was **approved subject to the Clerk receiving all the details prior to purchase and paying for it with the Council's card as per the Financial Regulations**.

There is a need for some winter work to control scrub regrowth in the main block of Quantock where there is also some fence repair needed. Can we approve two days? **Approved**.

- (iii) Shortmoor (AG00305847);

No work done. We plan to put 3-4 ponies onto the small enclosed land late-season for a short time only.

- (iv) Horner Hill (AG00291818);

There is an urgent need for brush-cutting of more fire-breaks on the open hillside. Two days were approved before (Minutes 8.7.90). Can we go for more? Three days were **approved**.

Topping of the wood-pasture sometime in Spring (April/May) by Robin Gundry will be scheduled in due course (at £200), as approved long ago.

The new pond? David said this is an opportunity! Let's get a quote from Andy Podbery (who has dug two others on the turbaries). **Agreed**. Submit a quote to the Clerk in Winter.

- (v) HUNTSHAYES

No work and no plans.

- (VI) SHOREBOTTOM

The only work remains the annual burst of Balsam pulling. After the last meeting, we worked again on 25<sup>th</sup> July and 08 Aug. Paul hopes that next year we will be able again to attract extra volunteers. He requests an official letter from the Council to the owner to seek official access into and across her land for this purpose (4-5 times from June-Aug).