

Stockland Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Turbaries Management Committee held in Stockland Victory Hall on Wednesday 16th November 2016 from 4pm until 6 pm.

- 1) **Public Participation Time** (SO 1e & f); There were no members of the public.
- 2) **Exclusion of the press and public.** There were no items to be dealt with.
- 3) **Present;** Cllrs D Allen (chair) and P Maitland, Linda Bennett (AONB), Derek Boyland (resident), and Sarah Machin (NE);. In attendance Ken Pearson (PC Clerk).
- 4) **Apologies** for absence; Cllr Damian Clay, Toby Taylor (RSPB), Geoff Pearce (DWT), and Nic Hill (resident). It was noted that Nic Hill had moved away from the parish and the position is now available for another resident to be nominated.
- 5) **Declarations of Interest:** There were no declarations of any interests.
- 6) **Turbaries Management Committee Minutes** of the meeting held on 13th July; it was noted that the council meeting on 30th August confirmed and signed the minutes of the meeting.
- 7) **Action Review Summary:** the following items were received and reviewed:
 - i) Interpretation Panels; resolved to delegate authority to Cllrs Allen, Clay and Maitland to rewrite the content for the boards, as matched funding, leaving the design to Acorn (Sue Searle); the Clerk would progress an SDF application via BHAONB with matched funding between 50-75% also from BPS; the project requiring completion by end of Mar 2017, with a maximum of £3,000 via SDF.
 - ii) Whitehayes flooding; resolved to receive a report from the Clerk on the changed specification and quote agreed at the meeting of the 23rd August with the work to be carried out by M Sparks as soon as possible.
 - iii) Higher Level and Basic Payment Schemes (HLS and BPS); resolved to; receive the progress report on 2016 claims, with Cllrs Allen and Maitland scheduled to see Charlotte Selway (Agent) the following week; agreed Charlotte Selway to also follow up directly with Natural England as HLS Claims were submitted but nothing paid yet.
 - iv) Brindley Fold, Shorebottom; resolved to receive the report on completed work carried out by Toby Taylor to an overhanging cherry tree on the Turbary, with another needing some work.
 - v) Finance; resolved to receive the Clerk's report with various invoices from the RSPB still to arrive for pony grazing, bracken and pond weed control, Horner brush-cutting; agreed to plan, with the Agent, an external mid-term review (e.g. as conducted with the AONB by George Greenshields) to look at the condition of the sites; assess desired stocking levels, scrub control and setting priorities, presenting the report to the full council to consider.
- 8) **Turbaries;** resolved to receive updates on work scheduled and agree future plans (App1).
- 8) **Communications;** resolved to; receive updates on the website and volunteering opportunities (App 1).
- 9) **Woodland Grants;** resolved to; continue to explore opportunities that exist; noting that a Woodland Management plan will be required if develop new schemes with funding via the Countryside Stewardship scheme.
- 10) Items of Future Business for the next Agenda and to decide the date of the next meeting as Wed. 15th March 2017 if there are no clashes with the schools Cross-country

Signed

Chairman

24th January 2017

Meeting closed at 6pm

APPENDIX 1

a. BUCEHAYES.

Resolved that; D Boyland to provide stock numbers and dates of grazing in the northern enclosure this season; agree the northern extremity with taller gorse cover should be swaled this winter, when conditions allow, to be scheduled by D Boyland ensuring that S Machin of NE is notified to ensure controlled burning; to note that four Exmoor ponies have grazed the southern enclosure, from 03 Aug to 12 Sept, giving a grazing pressure of 160 days; not knowing what progress has been made toward building up a stock of posts and strainers, as agreed previously with the RSPB, and that the replacement work is scheduled to be completed before summer 2017, Cllr Allen to follow-up.

b. QUANTOCK

Resolved that; as the nine Galloways on Brimpit Enclosure were eventually removed on 02 Oct, giving a grazing pressure of 999 days, which is rather light agreed to negotiate for a slightly heavier pressure in 2017 (e.g. more animals for shorter period?); Exmoor ponies returned for a second period (12 Sept-04 Oct) on Kennels Enclosure, giving a total grazing pressure over the summer of 376 days, about double the pressure exerted in 2015; the fence-lines remain in need of repair and attention by RSPB; the new pond should be fenced off, to avoid further damage; Floating Sweet-grass control appears to have been successful; Dan Brown, on contract with Natural England, came to Quantock on 21st September to spray Glyphosate on whatever Japanese Knotweed he could find (after several years of treatment) here and elsewhere on turbary ground; there is a need for clearance of scrub, of trees fallen across the fence-line and of overhanging branches on the southwest perimeter of Brimpit Enclosure; two days' work to be scheduled.

c. SHORTMOOR

Resolved that; the Exmoor ponies grazed the open area from 06 July-03 August, giving a grazing pressure of 112 days, compared to 2015 (228 days) which proved excessive; details of bracken control on the hillside were needed from RSPB; a second plant survey was conducted on 08 Aug, when Butterwort was found to be well-established but no other indicator species were recorded; no winter work is anticipated.

d. HORNER HILL

Resolved that; excellent progress toward open wood-pasture was made at the ruined cottages although removal of the remaining fallen branches is needed, some logs and rocks removed, felling of over-hanging branches and cutting of encroaching bramble, preparing for spring mowing; schedule two contract days in winter; work on the open heathland during winter to include a volunteer's day to burn, if and when conditions allow; there is a need for further brush-cutting to halt the establishment and further spread of birch saplings; potential new areas to clear fell have been identified and awaits assessment in conjunction with the appointed Agent.

e. HUNTSHAYES

No plans; noted Japanese Knotweed in small area.

f. SHORE BOTTOM

No plan although Balsam-pulling has progressed well, as witnessed on one occasion by Mervyn Newman (boss of Natural England's invasive weeds project). The final day of volunteer work on 13 August went close to the Saw-mill, effectively covering the whole area of Turbary, albeit only once at this end. A large plant of Royal Fern in a new site in the woodland was found here, at ST 234028. There may be an opportunity for volunteers' clearance of the overgrown track that links Ewecroft Lane and the metalled track at Threshill.