

Stockland Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Turbaries Management Committee held on Wednesday, 2nd November, 2022, Victory Hall, from 4.30.

- 1) **Public Participation Time** (SO 1e & f); None.
- 2) **Resolve to exclude members of the press and public.** None [Public Bodies(Admission to Meetings Act) 1960].
- 3) **To record those Present/Apologies for absence;** D Allen (chair); Cllrs P Derryman, Drew; Morgan, R Switzer, A Thompkins; R Gundry(Community), Geoff Pearce (DBW&P) in attendance G Saunders(AONB), Ken Pearson (PC Clerk); apologies received from T Taylor (RSPB) and; and Tim Youngs (AONB Manager).
- 4) **Declarations of Interest:** Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (s31 & 33 of the Localism Act 2011) or Personal/Prejudicial Interests (Code of Conduct, 2012), R Gundry (pecuniary, topping on Horner); P Derryman(Hunt) and R Switzer (pecuniary, Bird Hide repairs).
- 5) **Turbaries Management Committee Minutes**-resolved to note that the draft Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 6th July were confirmed and signed by the Council on the 26th July, 2022.
- 6) **Action Review Summary:** to receive and review the following items:
 - i. **AONB Facilitation Fund;** more farm visits and events are coming up this autumn through the Facilitation network.
 - ii. **FiPL and Higher Level and Basic Payment Schemes (HLS and BPS);** to note that the proposed new Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship 2022 application for Quantock/ Shortmoor scheme has been rejected by RPA/Defra and the Clerk received a copy of a FiPL Application, completed by the Officer for the scheme at the AONB, from Stockland PC Chair visiting the Clerks house on Monday, 10th October with a request to sign a copy of the FiPL Application, including quotes for Capital items for Horner Hill together with replacement Revenue items for the failed scheme for Quantock/Shortmoor. The Clerk has to report that this transgressed the Financial Regulations because costs were over £7000 spread over 2 years and should have immediately been referred to a full Council meeting. Apart from that the Clerk had not seen nor knew about any of these issues, which is a transgression of the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, was *ultra vires* and breached the GDPR 2018 Act by using the Clerk's personal data without permission and was expected to sign off the Application without further ado. This raises some serious issues and the full Council will have to properly respond to the Clerk's complaint in due course. There were good prospects of funding, even at this late stage
 - iii. Note the Clerk's report on the finances showing an amount of **£14,495** available for all work, with income of £ 12403.42 for the past Financial Year and spending of £15041.16.
 - iv. Information Panels; received a Project update from Cllr A Thompkins and the Clerk. Quotes for installing the boards on the Victory Hall wall are needed.
- 7) **Turbaries;** resolved to; receive an update on current work completed or scheduled; agree future work plans and finance for each site, agree processes to complete, (see Appendix 1);- Bucehayes (AG00287440);; Quantock (AG00287502); Horner Hill (AG00291818); Shortmoor (AG00305847); Huntshayes (BPS) ; Shore Bottom (BPS); Woodland Management (AG986346); Footpaths Update; the circular route on Horner had been approved; similarly, the path through Huntshayes is approved, both becoming public rights of way. The unofficial path across Quantock was rejected.
- 8) **Communications;** see below.
- 9) Items of Future Business for the next Agenda. Wednesday 8th March, 2023.end 6pm

Signed
Chairperson;

29th November, 2022
Meeting closed at 6pm

APPENDIX 1.

Woodland Management (AG986346) Higher tier work included in each Turbary Woodland ManPlan work awaits decision at the separate meeting. Meanwhile David raised the suggestion that contract work is considered for Himalayan Balsam control next season. Over the past 9-10 years, we have relied solely upon volunteers from the parish, the staunchest of whom are getting old; most feel they cannot continue unaided much longer (raised by Paul Spencer & his team). A single bout of brush-cutting early in the season (mid-June-early July) could be sufficient, supplemented by hand pulling by a few volunteers.

The most arduous job reliant on volunteers is lookering with ponies. Heather has been a long-term stalwart and coordinator of a team of lookers. She is now retiring. David to draft a message for The Tree including a request for new volunteers for next season

(i) **BUCEHAYES**; (AG00287440); Four of the seven Dartmoor ponies were removed on 23rd September, earlier than usual because of limited grazing from the drought. Three ponies remain; movement between N and S enclosures as necessary. There is urgent need for control of Birch re-growth, especially at the southern end near the cottage of N enclosure. Up to £500 approved. 2 contract days to do scrub birch up to £500

(ii) **QUANTOCK**(AG00287502); The seven Exmoor ponies were moved from the main (Brimpit) block on 23rd Sept. four moving onto the Kennels enclosure. A large diseased Ash tree fell and broke the fence-line on 10th October, permitting the ponies to escape. They were eventually rounded up and enclosed in fields at Whitewell (Sharland family). After several abortive attempts, the ponies were moved safely (4th Nov.).

Repairs to the stile and bird hide roof have been done satisfactorily, by Rich and Peter.

Bracken was sprayed, as previously agreed, by Toby's team on 26th July; There is need for control of scrub re-growth within Brimpit Enclosure. £500 approved.

The fallen Ash across the fence-line in Kennels Enclosure requires cutting up and repair to the fence. Agreed to tackle these ourselves.

(iii) **HORNER**(AG00291818); wmp work here via Gemma Work on the open hillside depends on FiPL funding to flail the area, followed in due course by Ian Crowe's cattle grazing.

The wood-pasture was topped by Robin Gundry on 14th Sept, remembering this should be covered by the Woodland Management agreement.

Discussion on what other work under Woodland Manplan should be undertaken this season, it was agreed that a separate meeting with Gemma should be called. Rich will set this up. It was suggested that a forester be involved.

(iv) **SHORTMOOR**(AG00305847); Three Exmoor ponies arrived on 23rd Sept; Winter work required under Woodland Management, if any, awaits a separate meeting.

(v) **HUNTSHAYES**(BPS); No work and nothing to report.

(vi) **SHORE BOTTOM**(BPS): Bracken in 'the Triangle' was sprayed on 26th July, as previously agreed.