

## Woolhope Parish Council

### Broadmoor Common Management Steering Group

Notes from a meeting held on 19 January 2023 at The Crown, Woolhope from 7.00-8.30 pm.

#### Present

Mr M. July (chair)  
Mr M. Slocombe  
Mr C. Boulton- Brooks  
Ms M. Windham  
Mr P. Rogers  
Ms L. Rogers  
Ms. S. Noble  
Ms. S. Webster

**1. Apologies** – Ms K. Murrie, Ms K. Wollen, Mr N. Richmond.

#### **2. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting on 22 September 2022 were accepted as a true record - to be placed on the WPC website.

#### **3. Update on action points from last meeting**

- MJ revision of car park signage text in prep; KM liaison with 'EEK Design' and 'Signs and Labels' ongoing.
- MJ met Dave Smith Tree Care to confirm winter '22/23 tasks. Dave's work either side of Christmas had gone well in units 3b and 1b, and PR was pleased to acknowledge the thorough job achieved by the hired-in stump grinding with his supervision.
- The county plant recorder had liaised with SN re ragwort. The Hoary ragwort *Senecio erucifolius* is currently abundant in unit 3a. Though not known to hybridise with the Common ragwort (the injurious weed for agriculture), it is also potentially toxic to livestock as dried herbage.
- MS had signed off a letter to residents which was hand-delivered to c 40 properties in December. Feedback awaited...
- NS to investigate the financial propriety of a standing account for management sundries.
- KM had reimbursed payment for trees to SW.
- MJ had advised PR/LR on a recommended grass seed formula for verge reseeding.

#### **4. Signage priorities and actions update**

A format for 3 'A Boards' prepared by our contractors was shown, which the group endorsed subject to the smart code linking with the site section of the WPC website. Production was in-train. MW offered to house the boards for deployment on task dates.

#### **Action:**

KM to seek members' views on emerging Interpretative Board designs.  
The locally donated fund to be 'ring-fenced' across FY budgets for this project.

## **5. Management Plan stocktake and forward look**

MJ introduced his draft paper, and a brief discussion did not address the individual objectives and broadly backed the contents. The group felt the leading matters for the future were deer control, grazing options and building community support and human/financial capacity. All comments welcomed by MJ in the next month, with the intention to also seek WPC views on choices and directions before a detailed work programme is prepared.

## **6. A proposal for deer culling on the Common**

MJ's paper gained the in-principle support of all present, with recognition that the overall fallow deer population across the Parish/wider Woolhope Dome was in the hundreds, and increasing, such that only coordinated/focused culling would bring it into balance with woodland health. Culling independently on the common would be a slow and partial approach, as the fallow herd would disperse to adjoining areas during shooting then soon return to their familiar quiet ground. The stalkers' time in relation to their return was material to results for the site's condition.

CBB considered the high seat shooting locations on the 'grassland avenues' in unit 1d were impractical and could be unsafe re proximity of dwellings. Alternatively, placing seats on the common edge, would enable shooting out over his farmland on the north/east sides.

MS suggested driving the deer off the common (with dogs?) to enable culling outside might be feasible. LR observed that driving deer onto Linkswell could displace them into neighbours' gardens and paddocks! FC's current culling practice in Haugh Wood was relevant to the situation.

Other stalkers known to KW, CBB and MS could also be helpful to us. A next step would be to try to facilitate a joint initiative for a wider area; to invite a group of stalkers and interested parties to consider a collaborative culling approach for the whole of Woolhope Parish or another logical unit.

### **Action:**

- PR to feedback group views to Rocky Smith.
- MS to explore the PC's role and capacity to organise a meeting/workshop for the above purpose in the year ahead.

## **7. Volunteer update**

Three work party days had taken place since our September meeting, supervised by SW. Power and manual scything, and raking off cuttings had well served the target sections of unit 1d and 1a. A further removal of scrub and bramble in 1a will benefit the limestone grassland.

## **8. Secretary's update and steer**

The group's budget for 23/24 was on the agenda for the next WPC meeting and the same as this year was anticipated (The fixed cost is the forestry contract). Current position is:

| <b>Income</b>                      |          |                 |
|------------------------------------|----------|-----------------|
| WPC                                | 4,500.00 |                 |
| Donations (carryover from 2020/21) | 1,900.00 |                 |
| <b>Total</b>                       |          | <b>6,400.00</b> |

| <b>Expenditure</b>            |                       |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Dave Smith Tree Services      | 1,500.00 <sup>1</sup> |                 |
| Stump Grinder Hire            | 804.00 <sup>2</sup>   |                 |
| EEK Design                    | 1,980.00 <sup>3</sup> |                 |
| Tree purchase (Sally Webster) | 38.00                 |                 |
| <b>Total</b>                  |                       | <b>4,332.00</b> |

|                |  |                 |
|----------------|--|-----------------|
| <b>Balance</b> |  | <b>2,068.00</b> |
|----------------|--|-----------------|

Notes:

1. Days completed according to the contract and due to invoice.
2. Estimated
3. Budget cost we have paid so far £325.

A community event is scheduled for Sunday 23 April when MJ will lead the spring Parish Walk around the common.

#### **9. Date of next meeting**

18 May 2023 The Crown 7-8.30pm

#### **10. AOB**

- Road closure on the common was again in place – reasons unknown. NR asked to enquire what's afoot and any impacts?
- Western Power had helpfully removed off- site the dumped garden waste under their powerline in unit 1a.