



Rottingdean Parish Council

Minutes of the Beacon Hill Nature Reserve Stewardship Group Annual General Meeting held on Friday 13 October 2023 at 10.30 am

Present. Cllr Mike Nixon (Chair), Neil Doyle, Cllr Turnbull, Louise Arnold, Peter Birchall, Bob Webzell, Dave Harris, Jo Spickett, Jay Butler.

1. Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 15th September 2022.

The minutes were agreed

2. Matters Arising

(i) Notice Boards. **Cllr Turnbull** advised the meeting that the Notice Boards on the reserve were deteriorating and the board at the top of Hogg Plat had fallen down. He said that the Parish Council had discussed the matter with the Friends of Beacon Hill (FOBH) and agreed proposals for a temporary repair to the Hogg Plat board, and that a more weather resilient design and future funding solution was needed for the remainder to prevent deterioration. A local carpenter had been commissioned to provide a cost estimate for the fallen notice board with a view to submitting a grant application to the Parish Council.

3. Report on the 22/23 Management Plan. **Neil Doyle, City Parks Ranger**, provided the following update:

- Grazing Plan. The plan was to organise the grazing in three large areas to allow continued access during grazing whilst reducing the number of sheep moves. Grazing of areas 1 and 2 to the west area of the reserve would take place during October and November and area 3 along the eastern edge during December and early January. Notices were to be posted on the notice boards
- Cutting. The scrubby areas on the eastern side of the Reserve would be cut back using a new machine cutter. A decision was to be made on whether to keep the current path width or cut more into the edge of the wood to create a smoother transition. On the grassland the scrubby island would be retained but other areas cut back hard.
- Permanent Fence along the western edge. Plans for permanent fence along the western edge of the reserve to prevent sheep grazing Euonymus hedge was on hold at the moment because of funding constraints.

The following points were made in discussion

- The grazing plan was agreed by the group.
- Some of the scrub and bramble at the edge of the path would need to be retained as this was an important wildlife habitat.
- It would be important to ensure dog walkers were aware of the plans which could be

achieved through publicity on relevant websites

- **Cllr Turnbull** said that the Beacon Hub had plans to tidy up the brush around the Hub and Car Park which he would discuss with Neil Doyle.

4. Report of our Specialists on 2022/23. The meeting recorded thanks and appreciation to the outgoing specialist, Peter Whitcom, for his significant contribution to the group over a number of years as the wildlife specialist. Dave Harris, the new specialist, then provided a synopsis of this year report on the wildlife which will be published in the 2022/23 Nature Report.
5. The 2023/24 Management and Projects Plan. Louise Arnold reported that no projects were planned, and that the Friends' focus had been scrub bashing and step repair at the entrance to recreation ground as time and material supplies allowed. No ragwort had been pulled for a few years as this had to be balanced against disturbing the Skylark nesting.
6. Friends of Beacon Hill Financial Report. **Louise Arnold** took the meeting though the following report.

<u>Date</u>		<u>Credit</u>	<u>Debit</u>	<u>Balance</u>
12/09/2022	Opening Balance			679.43
21/10/2022	One Garden voucher award <i>Sold to anonymous buyer.</i>	200.00		879.43
12/04/2023	Uncashed Cheque <i>Recipient aware</i>	21.08		900.51
22/04/2023	Rottingdean Village Fair <i>Insurance</i>		11.00	889.51
07/08/2023	Rottingdean Village Fair <i>Fund raising events.</i>	122.65		1012.16
06/09/2023	Closing Balance			1012.16

7. The 2021/22 Annual Wildlife Report. **Louise Arnold** said that the specialist reports would be needed by the end of October along with photographs to enable the report to be published in mid-November. **Bob Webzell** said the group were very grateful to Louise for coordinating the report but that it was important to bear in mind that it was an official report to BHCC from the Parish Council on their Stewardship of the Reserve.
8. Any Other Business.
 - (i) Responsible Dog Walking. **Jo Spickett** said she was looking into tap into the current advice being provided by a new group, called the Southern Counties Canine Access Management Partnership (SCCAMP) working in partnership with South Downs National Park Authority and Dorset Dogs to promote responsible dog walking on Beacon Hill. The initiative included information about how dog walkers can look after the local habitats. **Cllr Turnbull** suggested notices publishing the initiative could be posted around the Reserve.

9. Date of the Annual Clean-up. No particular date was set as this now happens continuously during the year. It was suggested that the group focus on the East facing wood where rubbish can collect
10. Date of Next Annual Meeting. The next meeting date was agreed as 20 September 2024 at 10.30 in the Whiteway Centre.

Parish Clerk

October 2023