

## Stockland Parish Council

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Turbaries Management Committee held in Stockland Victory Hall on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017 from 4pm until 6 pm.

- 1) **Public Participation Time** (SO 1e & f); There were no members of the public
- 2) **Resolve to exclude members of the press and public.** There were no confidential items [Public Bodies(Admission to Meetings Act) 1960].
- 3) **To record those Present/Apologies for absence** and consider whether to approve the reasons given (Cllrs only). Cllrs D Allen (chair), D Clay and P Maitland; Derek Boyland and Alasdair Bruce (residents); Tim Youngs (AONB Manager), Geoff Pearce (DBW&P); in attendance Cllr Griffiths, Ken Pearson (PC Clerk). **Apologies:** Sarah Machin (NE), has moved position and we are waiting to hear of her replacement; Toby Taylor (RSPB).
- 4) **Declarations of Interest:** There were no declarations of any interests (s31 & 33 of the Localism Act 2011) (Code of Conduct, 2012).
- 5) **Turbaries Management Committee Minutes**-resolved to note that the draft Minutes of the meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> July were confirmed and signed by the Council on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2017.
- 6) **Action Review Summary:** to receive and review the following items:
  - i) **Interpretation Panels;** resolved Cllr Allen to collect material from Acorn Ecology in Exeter to go to another designer agreed under the Financial Regulations.
  - ii) **Higher Level and Basic Payment Schemes (HLS and BPS);** resolved to;
    - receive the progress report on 2016/7 and 2017/8 claims; with 160 acres of Turbaries, consisting of four HLS into their eighth year of ten; penalties were deducted from 2007/8 overclaim which were paid back in full yet more has been deducted from the 16/17 period and trying to get it back via the Managing Agent (Sheamus Machin) who advises to wait a few weeks more before involving others higher up the chain; RPA have changed BPS internal land parcels that don't fit physical boundaries and adds another degree of complexity.
    - receive the update report on payment for entitlements purchased which have been transferred but not yet invoiced from the owner of approx. £300.
    - accept the Land Agent Agreement with an extra five hours for this year bringing it to the next Council meeting for approval.
    - The AONB hopes to win a £120k Facilitation Fund grant from Defra's Countryside Stewardship scheme; the application to be submitted by 13th November 2017 to enable an association of local farmers, foresters and other land owners to better manage rough land and woodland in valley sides and bottoms, much of which has been untouched since medieval times. The Facilitation fund runs over three years to bring landowners together to have peer learning and pay for a facilitator (Gavin Saunders) to work with 54 people, spread over the AONB currently interested; the scheme intends to improve prospects of support beyond HLS schemes and as the council has been put forward to be included this needs approval by the full council in line with Standing Orders and the Turbaries Terms of Reference.
  - iii) **Publishing maps of the Stockland Turbaries online;** resolved to delay activity until; the council website issue was agreed and access to the Public Sector Mapping Agreement was set up.
  - iv) **Finance;** resolved to receive the Clerk's report on the finances available and note that invoices for labour are still to come in from RSPB for the past year.
- 7) **Turbaries;** resolve to; receive an update on current work completed or scheduled; agree future work plans and finance to action it at each site, details shown in Appendix 1;-
  - a) Bucehayes; **Allow for a total of 4 days contract work,**
  - b) Quantock; **3 contract days estimated (one in Brimplit Enclosure, two in Kennels Enclosure)**
  - c) Shortmoor; No winter work is planned.
  - d) Horner Hill; **Estimate 5 days contract work (2 near cottages, 3 in open area).**
  - e) Huntshayes no work is planned.
  - f) Shore Bottom; No winter work is planned.

Total of **12 days contract work** and may need to go to full council if over £5000.

- 8) **Communications, Website and Volunteering**; resolved that; Cllr Allen to set up the following volunteering opportunities, and dates, via Sam Fraser (Volunteer Co-ordinator, Blackdowns AONB), Wed 21 March Pondweed control, Quantock;  
Wed 16 May Pond clearance, Horner Hill;  
Sat 23 June/ Sat 21 July /Sat 11 Aug Balsam pulling, Shore Bottom;  
Agree to take the issue of the new website and the Turbary Page to the next Council meeting.
- 9) **Woodland Grants**; resolved that; a woodland management plan needs to be in place to access HLS Schemes in 2019 and is required much earlier than thought, so needs to be scheduled now.
- 10) Items of Future Business for the next Agenda; Natural England contact; Interpretation Panels designer quotes; RPA Penalties; Land Agent Agreement, winter work plans, Turbary page on the Website and the Facilitation Fund to next Council; to note the date of the next meetings as;  
14<sup>th</sup> Mar; 11 July; 7<sup>th</sup> Nov 2018

Signed .....28<sup>th</sup> November 2017; Chairman; Meeting closed at 6pm

## APPENDIX 1

### A) BUCEHAYES

Peter and David met up with Derek on Bucehayes Common on 16th October to assess the state of the ground in the absence of summer grazing, as had been agreed with Sarah.

Clearly there is a need for brush cutting of brambles, and some of the taller gorse near the northern perimeter. Some re-growth of willow and birch needs removing. Derek intends to swale the Common, when conditions allow.

Four Exmoor ponies have grazed the southern enclosure (from 15th June to 27th July, giving 168 grazing days) in a period that necessitated substantial supply of supplementary water, thanks to Philip Harker and others. Brambles need brush cutting. **Allow for a total of 4 days contract work.**

David has given permission on behalf of the PC to Philip Harker to lop a couple of oak branches that overhang the public footpath at the front of his cottage.

### B) QUANTOCK

Twelve cattle (8 Highland, 4 Belted Galloways) grazed the Brimpit Enclosure from 1st June to 4th October, giving 1,500 grazing days. The area is looking good, so this pressure seems about right. There are a few clumps of willow scrub in the NW corner of the main block, near the larches, that should be removed. A Jack Snipe was flushed here, near the Hide.

The Exmoor ponies entered the Kennels Enclosure on 4th Sept and will remain there for another week or so. They have not browsed on the brambles significantly so these need brush cutting this winter. **Three contract days estimated (one in Brimpit Enclosure, two in Kennels Enclosure).**

The new pond continues to leak. Some remedial work by Geoff and David may have helped a little but there is more to be done by other volunteers, who could also be given weed control work.

Chemical control of bracken, now that Toby has obtained a permit for Asulox, will be scheduled for the summer.

David proposed that we develop a permissive path across Quantock Turbary, from the public footpath near Brimpit Farm to link with the footpath near Featherlake. Doing so would help to address the commitment made some years ago to develop circular routes. Some work by volunteers would be needed to improve the wettest sections and to remove a few leaning branches. Way-markers have been obtained. Richard suggested it was important

to erect suitable signs at each end of the permissive path, and Tim said that David Northcote-Wright could advise on signs and a leaflet describing such paths.

### **C) SHORTMOOR**

The four ponies have grazed the open Molinia-dominated enclosure, from 24th July until 4th September, giving 168 grazing days. No further work nor plans are envisaged for Winter.

### **D) HORNER HILL**

Peter and David went to Horner on 24th October to discuss needs for winter work. Agreed that contract work is required to do the following near the ruined cottages:-

- Remove brambles from the wall and cut out hazel and elder re-growth near the most northerly cottage; consolidate cut logs/rocks to ease tractor-mounted flailing; cut up fallen branch of the large fir tree; and reduce extent of bramble patches at both N and S ends of the wood-pasture.
- Seek volunteer work to clear around and start excavating a pond at the N end (where there are Yellow Flag Irises).

Contract work on the open heath is needed over winter to clear some of the tall gorse along the top of the slope where there is also a patch of dense scrub (just S of the bench). Another area of scrub in need of removal is just N of the newly opened triangle. **Estimate 5 days contract work (2 near cottages, 3 in open area).**

A burn of the open hillside may be attempted with locals, if conditions permit. There is need to put up the bat boxes, after the felling of a leaning cherry tree.

### **E) HUNTSHAYES**

No work planned.

### **F) SHORE BOTTOM**

Work on a fallen tree had been cleared by David Surridge. No other winter work is planned.

Balsam pulling will continue in summer, to be advertised well beforehand.