

## **NOTES OF THE HAZELEY HEATH CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING**

**29/5/2018 – PARISH MEETING ROOM, VICTORIA AND APPLETON HALLS, HARTLEY WINTNEY**

**PRESENT – Mike Coates (RSPB), Henry Campbell-Rickets (Hart District Council), John Collman (naturalist), Steve Airton (Hartley Wintney Parish Council), Therese Abbot (easement holders), Lindsay Mackay (small landowners)**

### **Apologies and introductions**

Julian Bishop (commoners) sent apologies

### **Minutes of previous meeting**

Agreed. See AOB, below.

### **Matters Arising**

MC updated the group with his understanding of the situation regarding Hart volunteers and management plan. It was hoped that volunteer tasks would resume once the staffing situation at Hart was stabilised.

HC-R agreed to ask about the Hart position regarding the management plan written by his predecessor, and report back.

At the previous meeting, there was discussion around various rights of way that were not on the definitive route, and possible approaches to dealing with this potential issue. MC reported that for now, the RSPB was adopting a policy of letting “sleeping dogs lie”, rather than potentially stirring up problems.

TA reported back on her discussions with local residents (Robinsons) about the proposed bridleway route. However, the group recognised that there had been a miscommunication about the potential bridleway under discussion at the previous meeting.

### **Result of application to Planning Inspectorate and next steps**

Permission under the Commons Act 2006 has now been granted for the roadside stock fencing and other works. The group was pleased to be informed of this development.

MC outlined that the next steps were for the RSPB to seek external funding for it's share of the works and for tender documentation to be drawn up to get quotes.

### **Planned summer work**

HC-R informed the group that routine maintenance would be carried out on the Hart side. MC Told the group that the focus on the RSPB side would be cutting back vegetation to maintain paths, and bracken spraying by contractors in selected areas.

### **Countryside Stewardship Scheme**

MC outlined the requirements, and pitfalls, of any future application for Countryside Stewardship funding, to replace the Higher Level Stewardship schemes for both Hart and RSPB owned land. The Hart HLS has come to an end, and the RSPB scheme will end in Feb 2019. Hart land on its own was unlikely to be accepted into the CS scheme, therefore any future application needs to be linked in some way to a wider scheme, including RSPB land. However, since Hazeley Heath is made up of two separate commons, the scheme rules required separate applications.

Hart and RSPB were required by NE to ask all other landowners and commoners if they wanted to be part of their respective schemes. If there was any interest, those other parties must be included. There would then be a requirement for legal agreements to be drawn up between all parties, setting out responsibilities and allocation of any payments. In the event of four or more other landowners or commoners wishing to take part, the scheme requires the creation of a formal Commons Association for that common land unit, to be responsible for running the scheme and receiving and allocating payments.

There was some discussion about the future role of the Consultative group in the event of such an association being required. The group recognised that Countryside Stewardship funding was likely to be very important in future, but expressed some concern at the possible complications of the rules for schemes on commons, which, it was felt, were probably not drawn up with sites such as Hazeley Heath in mind.

### **A.O.B.**

LM wished to point out that he had in fact sent apologies for the previous meeting.

### **Next meeting**

25/9/18, 10.00 am, Parish meeting room.