

STANGE FORUM STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the meeting of 1 October 2015 held at Thorpe Farm

Present

Members: John Dalton, Stella McGuire, Jane Marsden, Jean Hodgkinson, Julian Dunk, Henry Folkard, John Horscroft

Attendees: Rebekah Newman, Bill Gordon

Apologies: Jacque Bevan, Neil Porter, Terry Howard, Jean Monks, John Elliot

1. Introduction

Thanks were expressed to:

- Jean Hodgkinson who, since the last meeting, had represented the Forum at a meeting with Heritage Lottery Fund, and at Planning Committee regarding proposals for restoring the farm building at North Lees;
- Neil Porter and Henry Folkard for representation at ARP Committee on 15 September.

An e-mail supporting a SITA bid for funding for access improvements had been sent.

The local branch of the British Pterodological Society had conducted a survey of ferns in part North Lees.

2. Appointing a Chair for the meeting

Jane Marsden agreed to Chair the meeting.

3. Minutes of the last meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

Matters arising were covered in the Agenda

4. Arrangements for the Full Forum on 31 October

- Sarah Fowler and Andrew McCloy had both indicated they intended to attend the Forum. Andrew, as Chair of ARP, should be invited to speak to endorse the Committee's commitment, the business plan and the management plan. (Henry to ask him on behalf of the Forum.)
- John Horscroft, on behalf of the Forum, should make an initial contribution on the positive things that had been achieved.
- After a welcome by Jacque, Henry might explain the format for the Forum. This should include a number of short presentations by invited speakers, interspersed with opportunity for the public to say what they wanted, ask questions, and comment on a series of questions displayed around the Hall

- An initial item would of necessity be the formal business of the AGM. Matters relating to membership of the Steering Group are discussed below.
- Camp Site staff should be invited to attend (Rebekah to invite), to emphasise they were an integral part of Stanage North Lees.
- Badges should be provided for Steering Group Members (Rebekah to arrange). It was suggested they should spread themselves between the different tables.
- Short Presentations to include:
 1. Bill's videos on the Standedge Pole and the pods;
 2. New arrangements for Burbage and Eastern Moors update (Danny? John Mead ? Henry to invite)
 3. A 'people slot': multiple usage of site and services provided (possibly delivered by Dave Cramp, the volunteer manager)
 4. The Ours to Care for Sticker. Feedback on how 'Ours to Care For' money had been spent
 5. Cultural Heritage
 6. Wildlife
 7. Business Plan and Management Plan
- Posters around the room with opportunities for comment to include:
 1. Access improvements
 2. Design of the Stanage for Everyone map
 3. Proposals for North Lees Hall
 4. Suggestions for improved parking and access around Dennis Knoll
 5. Stanage sticker – ideas for spending and available to 'buy'
 6. Campsite plans
 7. Landscape scale management across the Sheffield Moors
- Publicity would be arranged in conjunction with PDNPA, and disseminated through membership organisations and locally. This would include the production of a poster.
- Members of the Eastern Moors Stakeholder Group and of the Blackamoor Group, would be included in the invitations as fellow members of the Sheffield Moors Partnership (Henry to invite) .
- The Hall would be available from 1.00pm. Jean and Jane would assist with refreshments, along with camp site staff, and anyone else who was available would help with setting up. The screen would be left in situ. Henry to buy refreshments and provide receipt to Rebekah.
- A small group comprising Stella, Rebekah, John Horscroft and Henry would meet to flesh out the details.

5. Steering Group Membership

The Constitution allows for up to 15 Members, plus an ability to co-opt members and create technical working groups. There is currently one vacancy.

All circulated documents were publicly available on the web site. It was agreed that links should be provided to this from the new Hathersage PC website (John Dalton). Individuals who wanted to be kept personally informed could, within manageable reason, be added to circulations, effectively as paper members. There was a request that the Clerk of Hathersage Parish Council be so included.

Overall the balance in membership seemed about right, with 5 members from the local community, 5 from the recreation community, and five covering a variety of other interests. That said, it was felt that farming / neighbouring landowners were underrepresented in the membership, though a representative of the Eastern Moors Partnership, which had assumed responsibility for Burbage, had been invited to attend as a technical advisor.

It was resolved to invite Caroline Hanson from Moscar Estate to fill the current vacancy.

Following a discussion on representation from young people it was agreed that Julian Dunk would raise this at Hope Valley college in his role as a governor. This would back up the request that has been put to them from the Learning & Discovery team at the PDNPA. He was also encouraged to discuss the options for engaging the school more generally in Stanage-North Lees.

Similarly Terry would encourage interest from some younger Rambler groups in Sheffield to strengthen representation from that age group, and from within Sheffield.

It was noted that most Members regularly attended meetings and / or played an active role behind the scenes. Where a member had not attended any meeting for the last year it was proposed that membership should be deemed to have lapsed. This was agreed unanimously.

6. Update from PDNPA

ARP Committee

On 18 September ARP Committee had agreed the Business Plan and the approach and consultation proposals for the Management Plan with one abstention. Members were encouraged by the progress that had been made in the last twelve months.

The Chair stressed the need for enhanced partnership working across the Sheffield Moors Partnership area.

In discussion of arrangements for camper vans within the camp site it was stressed that the ambience and social purpose of the facility should not be sacrificed to purely commercial interests.

There was no stipulation regarding the timing of future reports.

On the Business Plan, break even targets were regarded as challenging but achievable. The validity of the figure of £38k for on costs incurred by Aldern House was queried by Steering Group Members

Additional Access Proposals

On the Management Plan 'new' proposals included continued pitching on the Cowper Stone path, works on the main path from Hooks Carr to the Edge, a new flagged path from Hooks Carr across Cattisside and works to enhance access at the bottom of Long Causeway. If anyone has any thoughts about these please contact Rebekah.

Signage and Car Parking

Temporary signs have been placed on the verge outside Hollin bank car park, and are perceived to be having some effect. There is a need to develop similar signs but different wording for Dennis Knoll and Hook's Car, all designed to encourage parking in the car park: the main message is 'Love the Landscape'. DCC have visited both Hooks car and Dennis Knoll at request of Rebekah but have no resources to put into traffic/parking control at these locations.

The smaller of the two failing areas at Hooks car layby will be investigated by the original contractor. Other remedial works will be implemented if appropriate following on from this investigation. Planning permission for works to the opposite side of the road will be pursued but this will require significant external funding (yet to be sourced).

PDNPA reorganisation

Stella, as Authority representative, reported that at senior level it had been decided after much consideration to move from two Directors and three Assistant Directors to a three Director model. This would take effect from April 2016 at the latest. Once in post the new Directors would determine the structure beneath them.

Steering Group members felt brigading conservation with planning in one Directorate was wrong since conservation was key to National Park purposes and relevant to all its work. Serious concern was also expressed that in the job description for the third (to Corporate Services and Planning / conservation) Director post enjoyment of the National Park would be dwarfed by an overriding emphasis on commercialism.

Stanage for Everyone, Map and words

The latest draft text was circulated, and further comment invited. The resultant text would be on display at the full Forum. The plan is to produce this as boards at Hollin bank (loos and car park) and the campsite, as a leaflet and on the website.

Woodland Work

The Woodland Management Plan had been agreed in 2013. Works planned for this autumn / winter includes thinning in Tain Wood, the Car Park Wood at Hollin Bank, and at Hood Brook Bank. Grant is available for this from the Forestry Commission but dependant on the budget not all the works will be carried out. Implementation will be in-house and using local contractors and volunteers.

The works would favour development of semi-natural oak / birch woodland, improve the health of mature trees and encourage a more diverse understory.

7. Post Full Forum Agenda

It was agreed a meeting in early December would be appropriate, at a date to be arranged. Jane kindly offered to host this at Thorpe Farm. It was agreed that consideration of cash raising avenues should be an agenda item.

8. Any other business

Julian Dunk as Treasurer agreed to find out how the Forum could access the £2000 plus that was in the account. Matthew Croney remains one of the signatories to the account and needs to be removed.