

**Hurstpierpoint Parkland Advisory Board
MINUTES of Meeting 7.30pm Tuesday 11 July 2017 at the Village Centre,
Hurstpierpoint BN6 9UY**

Present:

Stephen Hand – Chairman	Michael Nailard	Adrien Bischoff-Dyson
Amanda Geel	David Brown	John Wilkinson
David Evans	Tony Whitbread	Steve Whitehead
Malcolm Llewellyn	Claire Majsai	Stephen Hoyles (Clerk)
Patrick Haworth	Helen Brangwyn	

Chairman Stephen Hand welcomed new Boards Members Malcolm Llewellyn and Steve Whitehead to the meeting. The Chairman also reported that anecdotal experience from the Parish Council stall at the St Lawrence Fair on 1 July 2017, had shown very strong public support for the parkland project, and he looked forward to the continuing success of the Board in implementing and managing the scheme.

PAB17/01. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest: The following apologies for absence had been received prior to the meeting and were accepted: Donna Willis. There were no declarations of interest.

PAB17/02. Minutes of the meeting of the Parkland Advisory Board 14 March 2017: The Board received and approved the minutes.

PAB17/03. Presentations by Hurstpierpoint Woodland Flora and Fauna group, and the Sussex Wildlife Trust: The Board receive presentations in turn.

(1) Sussex Wildlife Trust: Chief Executive and Advisory Board Member Tony Whitbread presented, saying that he wished to establish some key ecological principles, to enable the Board to plan for the parkland future:

- a) Know what you have got: a suggestion of a volunteer group to measure and monitor the ecology of the area.
- b) Where are the best bits? For example, the woodland is valuable, there is good shrub habit, and the recently introduced meadow grass in the Highfield Drive fields is good.
- c) Expand: develop some existing areas, such as the buffer strips alongside the woodland and the hedgerows. It was suggested that the LEMP was asking for too much management of the hedgerows, which should be allowed to grow, perhaps with varying height and width.
- d) Network of habitats: encourage transition between habitats, and a diversity of ecological regimes. For example the meadows should comprise areas of short grass, hay meadow, and tussocky grass, with less emphasis on the tussocky than is proposed by the LEMP. Opportunities should be found to interconnect ditches, streams and ponds.
- e) New special interests: the parkland was a robust site, with no fragile species that required special treatment. This offered the opportunity to create new indigenous habitats such as wildflower meadows.

(2) Hurstpierpoint Woodland Flora and Fauna Group: Group Chairman and Advisory Board Member Michael Nailard presented:

- a) Some background to the HF+FG was given, explaining that it was founded in 2004 in response to the District Council's (MSDC) request for a bio-diversity study. This resulted in 6 years work, and a good relationship with local landowners and a detailed knowledge of many habitats.
- b) It was suggested that the use of the parkland should be an emphasis on protection of wildlife and that any public use should be limited to quiet pursuits, and some areas should be restricted from public access.
- c) The existing woodland either side of Latchetts Lane, between the fields of the parkland, should be expanded to improve bat roosting sites.
- d) The density of hedgerows should be increased, to encourage wildlife, including dormice which were a species now restricted to SE England.
- e) Indigenous flora species should be encouraged in the meadow areas (particularly field OG4), and public access restricted. The areas around Highfield Drive were more appropriate for access.
- f) It was suggested that a new large pond be created, perhaps towards the boundary with Big Edgerly, to offer more habitats.
- g) Experience with the Green Crescent around Burgess Hill had demonstrated that high public use was damaging to conservation. Problems had been experienced with Tilleys Copse woodland, where children had created play areas to the detriment of the ecology.

The followed some discussion by the Board about the balance between public amenity and ecological conservation. It was accepted that some conflicts might occur from time to time, but that strong efforts would be made to identify and protect some areas (such as the ancient woodland and some meadow and hedgerow areas) but allow open access to others. It was agreed that some sketch maps would be prepared, showing the suggested protection zones and the desired public access areas, to enable the Board to agree a development plan. It was also acknowledged, that for the time being less intervention was desirable, to allow the parkland to settle before agreeing a development plan.

PAB17/04. Highfield Drive Parkland: The Board was asked to note the following:

- (a) The land transfer is due for completion, together with the receipt of the full commuted payment, around 17 July 2017. The need for clarifications regarding a septic tank overflow pipe from 'Little Dragons' had been resolved and the Transfer Deeds had been signed. The commuted sum was previously calculated at £97,500 but the indexing clause had increased this sum to £113,000. This would be held by the Parish Council and ring-fenced for us on the parkland.
- (b) Contract 1 (fences, gates and paths) had been let to Barcombe Landscapes (together with Contract 2 – Little Park) for £15,120 + VAT, with the intention of work starting around end of July 2017.

PAB17/05. Little Park Parkland: The Board was asked to note the following:

- (a) The land transfer was still awaited, but Transfer Deeds have been signed and completion is due to take place very shortly. A complication had been the Parish Council's need for clarification regarding the precise access width from Iden Hurst into the woodland, but this matter was being resolved.
- (b) Contract 2 (fences, gates and paths) (together with Contract 1 – Highfield Drive) had been let to Barcombe Landscapes for £25,140 + VAT with the intention of work starting in August 2017.

In discussion the matter of the condition of the two Little Park fields was raised, which had been allowed to grow uncontrolled through the summer, resulting in extensive thistle and dock growth. It was reported that an offer had been made by the landowner to cut the growth and it was agreed that this opportunity would be investigated.

PAB17/06. Naming the parkland: To date there had been no formal name applied to the parkland and the Board was asked to offer suggestions. Names attached to the parkland had been: "Hurst Meadows" and "Country Open Space". A number of suggestions were made, including: "Pierpoint parkland (or meadows)", "St Lawrence parkland/meadows", "Trinity Meadows", "Little Park Nature Reserve", "Hurst Parkland". After discussion it was agreed that "Hurst Meadows" or "Hurst Meadows Nature Park" would be offered. These suggestions would be put to the Parish Council for consideration.

PAB17/07. Publicity launch: The Board considered what publicity might accompany the launch of the parkland to enable the Parish Office to prepare a programme. The objective would be to engage the local community, and to set out the intentions for the future use and care of the area. In discussion the following was agreed:

- a) an exhibition in the Village Centre
- b) the production of literature, celebrating the ownership by the public, and including a 'country code'
- c) history of the fields, including photos
- d) guided walks

It was expected that the preparatory works (footpaths and fences) would be completed by October 2017 and that a 'soft' launch should take place in Spring 2018.

PAB17/08. Bridleways: The Board considered representations from Mid Sussex Area Bridleways Group asking for a review of the current policy of prohibiting horse-riding on the parkland. The Board previously considered the matter and decided that the intended use of casual recreation, conservation and preservation was not compatible with use by horse-riding. The matter was reconsidered in detail but the Board agreed that horseriding and cycling was not compatible with the intended uses of the parkland, and the MSBG would be advised. (*Ref: MSBG ltr 21 June 2017*)

PAB17/09. Questions and any other business: The matter was raised of progress on the introduction of the fruit orchard. It was noted that the Parish Council had approved the proposal but that no contract had yet been placed for the work. The Parish Office was encouraged to progress the matter.

PAB17/10. Date of next meeting: 14 November 2017, to include a presentation on the educational opportunities of the parkland, presented by Helen Brangwyn and Claire Majasi.

There being no other business the meeting closed 9.04 pm.

Chairman

Dist:

Parish Council representatives	Special groups representatives	Members of the public
Stephen Hand David Evans Amanda Geel Stephen Hoyles (Clerk) Steve Whitehead Malcolm Llewellyn	Patrick Howarth (Hurstpierpoint Society) Michael Nailard (Woodland Flora + Fauna Group) David Brown (St Georges Millennium Garden) Tony Whitbread (Sussex Wildlife Trust) John Wilkinson (Mid Sussex District Council	Claire Majasi Donna Willis Helen Brangwyn Adrien Bischoff-Dyson Rachel Felton

cc: Parish Council Members
