

## Westleton Common Advisory Group

### **Minutes of “Meeting” Wednesday 11th January 2021.**

This meeting was due to be held in Westleton Village Hall. The Covid-19 restrictions in place meant that this meeting had to be cancelled. Members of the Advisory Group were invited to submit their opinions and comments on the items on the agenda. These notes are a summary of the comments received.

#### *1 – Apologies.*

No apologies needed as all were able to contribute by email!

#### *2 - Minutes of meeting held on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.*

The minutes were agreed as a fair account of the meeting (in so far as anyone could remember!).

#### *3 - Matters Arising;*

*3a – Item 8. Circulation of RSPB Guide to the Management of Lowland Heathlands,* No-one has reported having this book. JB has emailed Roy Swindell to see if he has it.

#### *3b – Post meeting note. Update on HLS funding.*

Nothing to add.

#### *4 – Membership of the Advisory Group;*

Members are now Amanda Freeman, Andrew Turner, Arlette Smith, Chris Freeman, David Rous, Julian Alexander, Nick Shearme, Roy Jones, John Bebbington.

#### *4a – Thanks to past chair; Roy Jones,*

Nick has written to Roy thanking him for his contributions to the group and looking forward to continuing to work with him.

#### *4b – Resignation of Roy Swindell,*

Roy Swindell has resigned from the group and Nick has written to Roy thanking him for his contributions.

#### *4c – Welcome to new members,*

We all welcome Amanda, Chris and Andrew and look forward to working with them. We also look forward to, and need, some new ideas.

#### *4d – Other potential members.*

We should aim to replace Roy Swindell as a member from the wider community rather than the Parish Council to maintain a balance between councilors and “civilians” (we are a bit WPC heavy at the moment).

Membership of the group is a matter for Westleton Parish Council, we can advise.

One member of the group suggested that we should have a list of parishioners who have expressed an interest in joining the group. As we have time on our hands, we could also make an announcement (via these minutes or on the notice board) to invite parishioners to submit their interest in case the vacancy is not widely known.

*Comment JB – this makes sense. Unless any of you disagree, I will put this notice on the WPC notice board and on the website.*

*You may want to check the way I have described the role of the group.*

## Westleton Common Advisory Group.

There is a vacancy on the Westleton Common Advisory Group.

Westleton Parish Council is responsible for the management of the Common. The role of the advisory group is to develop and implement the management plan and to ensure that the interests and wishes of the community are considered fairly.

Any Westleton resident who wishes to join the group should contact John Bebbington ([johnannbebbington@outlook.com](mailto:johnannbebbington@outlook.com)). The group will advise Westleton Parish Council on the appointment.

The Advisory Group cannot appoint a new member but it will let Westleton Parish Council know who is interested in joining and offer its advice, ideally after discussion at a full face to face meeting, if such a meeting can be held reasonably soon.

*5 – Emergency access onto Common.*

We should delay discussing this till we are able to meet properly.

*5a – Report of meeting with Suffolk Fire and Rescue*

To be discussed next time we can hold a proper meeting as part of the discussion of emergency access onto the common.

*6 – Update circular - email sent 22/10/2020*

Nothing to add.

*7 – Outstanding work to be done (report of tour of inspection during working party held on Saturday 19/09/2020).*

David, Nick and Julian could tell us what conclusions they arrived at. However, they will now be out of date as we are now 4 months further down the road.

It is very unlikely that we will be able to hold any work parties during January of February 2021 because of the Covid-19 restrictions. If we can hold a working party in March that will be restricted to a general tidying up only. We then get into the nesting and breeding season so nothing could be done before September 2021.

So, we are not going to be able to do any work until September 2021. However, we should decide on priorities for the 2021/22 work programme during the summer.

Items for consideration include clearance of gorse, general maintenance on common. Use of contractors. We may also need to contact Defra about any changes we need for works that might affect grant payments.

Nick has been in touch with a hedge cutting contractor who is quoting approximately £38.50 \* VAT per hour. He is waiting to meet with him.

Nick has also had discussion with Antony Clough about the location of an owl box he has built.

*8 – Management of common without the help of the Community Pay-Back scheme...the future.*

As we have not had help from the Community payback scheme during 2020 and cannot expect any in 2021 we are behind on the cutting and will have to do a complete survey in spring/early summer 2021 to see which areas require work and the work that need to be done. We need to consider using contractors to do big areas of cutting. We should aim to get this done in late August/early September 2021.

We are likely to be making more use of contractors than in the past. So, we need to ensure that that due diligence is followed in awarding contracts. As one member of the Group has agreed to do the Westleton Parish Council audit for 2020/21 and is likely to do it in 2021/22. We need to avoid any potential embarrassment.

*9 – Annual Report 2020*

JB reported that this is nearly complete apart from a couple of outstanding reports. He will circulate the report among advisory group members and other contributors before final release and distribution.

*10 – Publication of minutes on Westleton website.*

Generally agreed to be a good idea as transparency is essential. JB will start putting the minutes on the website beginning with these notes, after you have all agreed they are reasonable.

*11 – AOB.*

Roy Jones and John Bebbington have completed the photo display for the hall and given a lot of common images to Annie Groves, who has put them on the TV in the hall, these can roll as background.

There are two 2 piles of waste material from the first work parties of 2020 that need to be moved onto the concrete as they are starting to rot and lose leaves. This will stop them enriching the soil. The longer this is left (with the amount of rain we have had) the harder it is going to be to remove all.

*12 - Date of next meeting.*

As soon as possible!