

MINUTES OF THE EMBLETON QUARRY WORKING GROUP

held on Tuesday 1st February 2022 at 7.00pm in the Creighton Hall

Present: Terry Howells (TJH) – Chair, Kevin Redgrave (KR), Raymond Carss (RC), Ian Brown (IB), Margaret Watchorn (MW), Andrew Hindle (AH), John Young (JY), Clive Middlebrook (CM), David Cooper (DC)

1. Apologies: Gary Woodburn (GW), Andy Davis (DC), Sarah Coxon (SC), Denise Metcalfe (DM)

2. Declarations of Interest: None

3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 4th January were accepted as a true record by all; proposed AH, seconded IB and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters arising:

4.1 Dog waste problem: The Chair reported that the dog warden was unable to attend an evening Parish Council meeting; he will attempt to arrange a visit during working hours. Three QWG members had submitted written concerns.

4.2 Insurance: The checklist produced by KR is now being used with contractors; signed copies are kept on file. JY asked if the PC has employers liability insurance and queried who is liable for damage to hired machinery kept by contractors on site; the Chair agreed to check this.

TJH

KR thought that volunteers working on site were covered by AONB/Coast Care if they had signed up. MW agreed to check details with Coast Care/AONB.

MW

Weil's cards have not yet been sourced: DC agreed to pursue this.

DC

4.3 TV programme: The Chair reported that the episode featuring the quarry had been widely viewed; the entire programme and an excerpt are available on YouTube. JY commented that visitor numbers had been higher after transmission and MW had received 8 email requests for details of how to find the reserve. The location has now been adjusted on Google Maps. MW suggested a poster/map displayed in the PC noticeboard would be helpful. JY suggested What 3 words for the main gate (shandy-fattening-baths). IB suggested approaching NCC for advice on brown signs. [*Post meeting note: Assessment fee for this is £420, plus an average of £700 per sign*]

A method of supplementing funds was mooted (QR code/electronic donation or honesty box); it was agreed to discuss this at a future meeting.

5. AONB bid: GW had circulated a proposed table of work (appended to minutes) to be submitted to AONB. Removing spoil heaps may not come within the bid but KR reported it is desirable to do this, at a rough cost of £3,000-£5,000 to cover digger work. DC reported that he is still awaiting the result of Suez's environmental support grants which may be a source of some funding.

6. Quarry House: This is now the property of the PC. The Chair commented on the fantastic work carried out in clearing the site; photos showing the interior and cobbles of the stables were remarkable. KR reported that the contractors would

leave the site the next day and that stabilisation work (including dealing with the porch) would be carried out in the autumn. DC recommended and members agreed that Heras fencing should be re-erected 3m away from the building. It was agreed to place 'Danger – keep out' signs all round the building, in addition to those already attached to the house. KR asked that these should be robust. The Chair agreed to source these. KR reported that a general tidy up is needed before the fence is re-erected; members agreed to assist.

TJH

7. Fires on site: DC reminded members that the original general site assessment states that there shall be no open fires or barbecues; he drew attention to an updated risk assessment for volunteer labour to cover safe burning for maintenance. DC confirmed that he still recommends no fires for recreational purposes and emphasised the importance of safe burning, adhering to the risk assessment, for management. Any organised events proposed by the QWG should fit the criteria of the risk assessment.

The proposed Platinum Jubilee event was discussed, including a fire-walking event on June 4th. JY circulated details of professional fire-walking events which he has run; he is qualified, insured (PLI £5m cover plus £1m for his trailer) and experienced. The fire would be placed on a turf/fireproof board base. Risk assessments would be carried out on site beforehand and on the day. Participants would pay a suggested fee of £20 and be asked to raise sponsorship for the quarry; they would sign a disclaimer, and there would be no comeback on the PC or the QWG were anything untoward to occur. JY suggested lighting the fire at 5pm or 6pm; the event would be complete within 3 hours. DC suggested that the designated burning area for maintenance should be the fire-walking site. It was agreed that there should be no alcohol on site but a coffee wagon might provide refreshment.

The Chair informed members that the PC was to set up a working group to plan events during the Jubilee weekend. It was agreed that there will be no fireworks in the quarry. IB suggested a street party, perhaps on an unadopted road. It was proposed that group members could plan a plant and bug search in the quarry. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

8. Garden waste: GW had discussed with a member of the public the importance of not dumping garden rubbish. It is hoped the problem will not re-occur.

9. Information storage: The Chair identified a need to store the vast collection of photographs and documents relating to the quarry and work being carried out. Cloud storage of 1TB is available through the PC. MW agreed to contact the relevant person about how to access this and to check its security. Otherwise, funding for a hard drive has been offered. KR asked if JPEGs degrade each time they are used. MW offered to try and find out.

MW

MW

10. Quarry funds: A local resident has offered to give a fundraising talk, for which members were grateful. The Chair agreed to follow this up.

TJH

11. Projects:

11.1 Pond overflow: KR continues to maintain a regular watch, especially when water levels rise because of plant material moving during windy periods.

11.2 Paths and outdoor classroom KR reported on tasks carried out by working parties, including dealing with the poles and tarpaulin for the outdoor classroom. CM described the mechanism designed for erecting the tarpaulin. Expenditure of roughly £100 was agreed for a ratchet/pulley system to be used by volunteers when the tarpaulin is required.

11.3 Species update and database: MW reported that an application has been made to ERIC NE for the purchase of five bat detectors to use initially in surveying the quarry, but later to be available for use elsewhere in the parish; we expect to hear by early April if the application is successful.

11.4 Dark Skies: The Chair reported that luminous paint has arrived for the sign/posts for the area. The design is being worked on. KR reported that the site is now level and needs to be firmed to ensure a safe path and the absence of trip hazards. Positioning of large stones by JY has created a seating area.

12. Working parties: KR reported that there is lots to do; Quarry House clearing up; bramble cutting; grass cutting and raking; paths work. He recommended meeting every Wednesday. The possibility of Sunday 'pop-up' working groups was also mooted for those who cannot attend during the week. The school will be planting 40 trees on Friday 4th February. The Chair reported that 60 trees ordered from NCC have not appeared; he will pursue this.

TJH

13. Future events: see item 7 above.

14. AOB: KR asked if the water supply to the front field had been sorted as it must be completed by the end of March. RC has suitable water piping; he and the Chair will follow up the matter and ensure it is completed in time.

RC/TJH

15. Date of next meeting: Tuesday March 1st at 7.00pm in the Creighton Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.