

## MINUTES OF THE EMBLETON QUARRY WORKING GROUP

held on Tuesday 7 June 2022 at 7.00pm in the Creighton Hall

Present: Terry Howells (TJH) – Chair, Raymond Carss (RC), Ian Brown (IB), Margaret Watchorn (MW), John Young (JY), Clive Middlebrook (CM), Andy Davis (AD), Andrew Hindle (AH), Andrew Chillingsworth (AC)

The Chair introduced Andrew Chillingsworth (vice chair of Embleton Parish Council) who replaces David Cooper as a member of the Quarry Working Group.

1. Apologies: Sarah Coxon (SC), Gary Woodburn (GW), Kevin Redgrave (KR), Denise Metcalfe (DM)

2. Declarations of Interest: None

3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May were accepted as a true record by all; proposed AH, seconded IB and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters arising:

**4.1 Dog waste/disturbance:** The Chair has arranged to discuss the matter with the dog warden and will check if GW has any information concerning dogs that are regularly off leads in the fenced area. CM pointed out that keeping dogs on leads protects wildlife and ensures that owners can see any waste produced by their dog. The meeting recognises that historically, people have exercised dogs in the quarry as it is deemed a recreational area for the community. MW will order new dog waste bags and send the invoice to the Chair. TJH MW

**4.2 Tree planting:** KR awaits the result of our application.

**4.3 Accessible footpaths:** JY explained that he is waiting for feedback from people with various needs who visit the site. He suggested it would be prudent to invite a range of groups to road test the accessibility of our paths so we can learn what works and what requires improvement. MW will investigate local groups and invite them to work with us. MW

5. Ponies in field: After problems with water in the trough being dirtied by children playing, RC has spoken to the school and MW has spoken to a child concerned. There seems to have been no reoccurrence. RC will continue to monitor the ponies, especially when KR is unavailable. KR has strengthened a corner post and suggested that a guardrail be added to the fence. This will be discussed at the next meeting. RC

6. AONB bid match funding: We await news from GW on possible match funding from previous sources (see May minutes). JY offered to speak to two groups next week and see if they will support us and TJH is waiting for Sintons to arrange a visit. IB explained that support from the Windfarm JY

Community project is only available if there is a connection with someone living or working in the parish of Eglington. IB and JY will pursue this further. IB also offered to investigate Natural England funding; MW and TJH will consider a possible grant application to the Association for Industrial Archaeology.

IB/JY  
IB  
MW/TJH

7. Quarry House: AC confirmed that he is happy to use his experience in project management to assist with Quarry House. The Chair agreed to contact GW to ascertain progress with arrangements for September's work. It was noted that because of changes to a local company, their previous offer to remove unwanted material from the site at a reduced price may be withdrawn. Contingency funding has been built into the Phase 2 budget, and the £5,000 matched funding will be needed to cover higher costs.

TJH

## 8. Events:

**8.1 Firewalking event:** TJH reported that this had been a highly successful event. JY expected that £250 - £300 has been raised for quarry funds and hoped that news would spread so that a repeat event could be held. MW thanked JY for his excellent organisation.

**8.2 Bioblitz (17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> June):** The Chair reported that MW and KR had met with a representative from AONB. MW outlined the activities that were planned and explained that AONB will finalise the schedule this week. Events will include bee, butterfly, flower, bat and bird walks, a bird ringing demonstration and pond dipping. Members of ERIC NE (Environmental Records Centre) will be on hand to record identified species. CM offered to provide a generator; IB will offer refreshments and toilet facilities, if needed, to visiting experts. Members agreed to help by setting up and dismantling equipment, and by meeting and greeting visitors during the event. The Chair agreed to distribute posters. AC will pass on information to photographic groups who may be interested and MW will contact Nextdoor Embleton to publicise the event.

CM  
IB  
AH/CM/JY/MW/IB  
TJH  
AC  
MW

## 9. Projects:

**9.1 Pond overflow:** It was reported that KR had noted raised levels after rain but that they were well under control.

**9.2 Outdoor classroom and plinths:** Rigging for the tarpaulin is now in place and the Chair thanked AH and CM in particular for their work on the project. CM requested that one large stone is moved to support rigging. JY will assist with this. Once this is done, the tarpaulin will be fully risk-assessed. CM and AH confirmed that it will not be used in strong winds.

CM/JY

**9.3 Dark Skies:** GW has written to Embleton Parish Council to outline clearly the proposed changes to lights. EPC are now happy with this. The Chair will contact NCC again to find out when work will take place.

TJH

10. Working parties: KR continues to mow paths when needed. No dates are fixed for working parties at the moment. RC requested that the chopped-down tree by the front field be attended to; CM will arrange for a chipper.

CM

11. AOB:

11.1 The Chair confirmed that we have been shortlisted for a LOVE Northumberland award and that four representatives from the group will attend a presentation at Alnwick Gardens on June 29<sup>th</sup>.

11.2 MW reported that the result of an application to ERIC NE Small Grant Scheme should be known in the next fortnight. If successful, it will enable bat detectors to be bought.

11.3 GW has reported the appearance of a common rosefinch and a cuckoo in the quarry. Members noted that orchids are blooming well and that stonechats and several broods of ducklings have hatched.

11.4 IB reported that Kielder Dark Skies are eager to develop a project linking all Dark Skies areas in Northumberland which should be to our benefit. IB will inform the Quarry Working Group of any progress.

12. Date of next meeting: Tuesday July 5<sup>th</sup> at 7.00pm in the Creighton Hall.

The meeting closed at 7.45 pm.