

MINUTES OF THE EMBLETON QUARRY WORKING GROUP

held on Tuesday 1st March 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), Andy Davis (DC), Sarah Coxon (SC)

1. Apologies: Gary Woodburn (GW), Denise Metcalfe (DM) David Cooper (DC)

2. Declarations of Interest: None

3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 1st February were accepted as a true record by all; proposed KR, seconded IB and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters arising:

4.1 Insurance: Coast Care has confirmed that volunteers are not automatically covered for insurance. The Chair has contacted EPC's insurers and outlined tasks undertaken by volunteers; JY asked if EPC's Employer's Liability cover can be extended to cover volunteers. KR suggested the other option is for all volunteers to sign up to Coast Care. The Chair will contact EPC's insurers again for more details. TJH

Regarding equipment used by contractors, DC advised through the Chair that when CPA members contract with EPC or QWG, the hirer is responsible. JY queried who is responsible if a vehicle hired by a contractor and left on site was damaged overnight. Members present discussed two main options: 1) agree contractors excess insurance costs to be covered in the event of damage; 2) a cost of additional insurance to be built in to any future contracts. In the case of JY's work, it was agreed that MW and the Chair would check JY's excess insurance costs and draw up a document, stating that this amount would be covered if necessary. *[Post-meeting note: excess in this case is £250]* MW/TJH
DC is unable to source Weil's cards: MW will follow this up. CM explained that although there is no obligation to issue and carry them, it is in the interest of educating people to do so. MW

4.2 Quarry location: MW has updated Google maps to show the correct location. She will draw up a draft poster for display in EPC's noticeboards explaining where to find the quarry and will ask GW to produce a final version. The Chair informed the meeting that the legal firm who had dealt with the Quarry House were interested in producing a publicity article and will run this past the Chair before using it. MW/GW

4.3 Fund raising talk: The Chair will contact the person concerned and report to the next meeting. TJH

4.4 Water supply: KR explained that two estimates had been received for improving the front field water supply to the ponies drinking trough, one without actual connection costs. A local contractor aims to complete the work in a day, digging out the current route, installing a meter and a connector with stopcock. Work is due to begin on Thursday March 3rd. KR confirmed that water can be turned off at the pavilion junction to isolate the pipe promptly

and will ensure that the contractors insurance and risk assessments are seen and completed. The ponies will be leaving the quarry soon for maintenance of hooves and teeth. CM asked if the field is ready; KR explained that trees need attention, the bonfire site must be cleared and the water installed before the end of March.

4.5 Information storage: MW is arranging for Cloud storage to be installed on her PC and that all QWG material is now stored on the relevant Google account and on a USB stick. The Chair suggested that a spare EPC laptop is available. He and MW will discuss whether this is useful.

TJH/MW

4.6 Fires on site: KT clarified that designated burning sites are best situated where work is taking place, rather than at one fixed location. Much of what was previously burned is now used as compost or habitat piles. Members agreed to KR's proposal for locating burning sites at relevant and safe areas, in accordance with RAs.(see appended notes)

5. AONB bid: The Chair confirmed that everything covered in the first tranche is now complete and claims are being processed. AONB is not as confident of funding for the second grant as had previously been thought; we may have to raise funds. KR expressed disappointment that the whole project may not be funded, as it had already been described to AONB as a two-part project.

6. Quarry House: KR confirmed that Heras fencing is now complete and that most bird and bat boxes have been installed. He intends to erect wooden panels over some joist/beam holes as an experiment to see if these are used by bats and birds.

7. Events: The Chair reported that EPC had held lengthy discussions about events during the Platinum Jubilee weekend, and a suggestion had been made that something should be held in the quarry. This could involve picnics with visitors bringing their own alcohol, and perhaps a pop-up coffee shop. Fireworks and barbecues would not be allowed, and an email from DC was read giving his advice on health and safety and RAs for the weekend. A grant of £500 was available which could be used to hire toilets. Whilst recognising the status of the quarry as a public recreational site and a community asset, group members felt after much discussion that they did not wish to organise a picnic event, but would instead continue their original plans for a separate Open Day on Saturday June 4th with a nature hunt and a well-managed firewalking event in the early evening. JY suggested a time slot of 5.00pm – 8.30pm for the latter would be sufficient; he will provide examples of publicity posters and sponsorship forms.

JY

MW informed members of an email from AONB asking if a Bioblitz event could be run in mid-June. Members were in favour; MW will pursue this.

MW

8. Projects:

8.1 Pond overflow: KR and CM have monitored flow and cleaned the grids. There are now three volunteers who are aware of what has to be done and another who can assist. The water level has been raised by drifting weed loosened by coots. KR explained that a visual check once a week from the jetty

is necessary, plus a proper fortnightly check of the grids.

8.2 Paths and outdoor classroom: KR reported on the use of the outdoor classroom during the tree planting. This had been highly successful and well organised; each child in the school planted a tree and all trees have been 'What3word'-ed. CM explained that winds had been too high recently to experiment with the classroom cover. MW commented on the ideal height of the perch/seat; JY added that recent photos showed the wide age range (over 90 years!) of people enjoying the quarry.

8.3 Dark Skies: JY has put GW in touch with a wood carver who will complete carving on site once the three sleepers are in place for the Dark Skies area. The paint has been received. JY can provide a long drill to link the sleepers.

8.4 Management Plan: Nothing to report at present on updates; this will be addressed at future meetings.

9. Working parties: KR confirmed that tomorrow's working party will complete work on bat/bird boxes. Future work will include grass cutting, bracken management and path repairs.

10. AOB:

a) The Chair confirmed that EPC has adopted new tendering and complaint procedures; a copy of each will be forwarded to MW.

b) MW has received a report of moths trapped in July 2021. 60 new species have been added to the database.

c) JY confirmed that he has three large posts and surplus creosote from the fencing/jetty project. Creosote will be stored safely and correctly in line with H&S guidelines.

d) Thanks were given to JY for co-ordinating the use of surplus tarmac to improve disabled access at the Quaker's Row entrance. JY also confirmed that the stone mason hopes to start work soon on the plinths.

15. Date of next meeting: Tuesday April 5th at 7.00pm in the Creighton Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

NOTES

Item 4.6 Burning sites – notes from KR

Several burning areas were indicated in the original management plan; they were located based on the requirements at the time. One (North) is still used occasionally but we have had numerous fires since, based on convenience (close to source material) and suitability (least impact and fire safety). Much of our scrub clearance now is left as habitat piles alleviating the requirement for burning. Where fires have been used, it is often best to locate them central to the cleared area on bare ground and near the waste material, which is also the safest way.

Summary: Fires will be located where it is most suitable to achieve aims. whilst having minimal impact and following fire safety guidelines.