

**CLEE HILL PARTNERSHIP**  
**INAUGRAL MEETING TUESDAY 29 MARCH 2011**  
**7.30PM CLEE HILL VILLAGE HALL**

**MINUTES**

**Present:**

Mark Wiggin	Landowner, Downton Hall
Chris Woodward	Landowner, Hopton Court
Chris Neal	Clee Hill Commoners Association Chairman
Andy Chapman	Commoner & landowner representative
David Jamieson	Hanson Aggregates Clee Hill Quarry Manager
Diane Monether	Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Volunteer Co-ordination Officer
Carl Pickup	Shropshire Wildlife Trust Reserves Manager
Colin Preston	Shropshire Wildlife Trust Director
Henry Chance	Bitterley Parish Council Chairman
Brian Hardy	Caynham Parish Council
Marjorie Hammond	Coreley Parish Council
Jane Thomas	Coreley Parish Council
Peter Cuthbert	Hopton Wafers Parish Council
Brian Norgrove	Stoke St. Milborough Parish Council
Cllr Richard Huffer	Shropshire Council, Clee Division
Cllr Gwilym Butler	Shropshire Council, Cleobury Mortimer Division
Lisa Bedford	Shropshire Council, Community Working
Heidi Steele	Shropshire Council, Streetscene
Phil Holden	Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Manager
George Cummings	Friends of Clee Hill Village Forum Chairman
Garth Ridgers	Friends of Clee Hill Village Forum
Tim Lee	Shropshire Peregrine Group
Glynn Barratt	Titterstone Clee Heritage Trust
Mike Felstead	Titterstone Clee Heritage Trust (for Chairman Alf Jenkins)
Patrick Creasey	Individual

**1. Welcome and apologies**

Henry Chance from the Chair welcomed those present to the inaugural meeting, and read a supportive message from Philip Dunne, MP for Ludlow. He thanked those who had been involved in getting to this point, and outlined the role of the Partnership as a non decision-making forum. How it worked would be up to those present to agree and put into practice, but it was hoped that the Partnership would be able to lend greater weight to issues than any one individual or group can on their own. He stressed that that Partnership must be independent of party politics. The following apologies had been received:

James Wheeler	Landowner, Bitterley Court
Catherine Addison	Strutt & Parker, Agent for Downton Hall
Jack Tavernor	Strutt & Parker, Agent for Downton Hall
Cllr Madge Shingleton	Shropshire Council, Cleobury Mortimer Division
Wayne Davies	Natural England
Jenny Marriott	English Heritage
Alf Jenkins	Titterstone Clee Heritage Trust Chair
Nick Davies	Hobsons Brewery

## **2. Draft Terms of Reference**

Those present were invited to comment on the draft Terms of Reference for the Partnership, which had been drawn up by Phil Holden following the February seminar and circulated in advance. Mike Felstead pointed out that the Agenda referred to Aims, but these were not included in the Terms of Reference. Phil agreed that the word Aims should not have been used. Gwilym Butler said he had consulted Shropshire Council's Head of Legal Services and been advised that as the Partnership was not a legally structured body there was no need for the Council to make formal appointments to it. He felt it was important however that all the relevant Division Councillors were able to participate. It was agreed to amend the Terms of Reference on this point. Subject to this amendment, the Terms of Reference were approved unanimously.

## **3. Vision and aspirations for the hill**

Phil Holden introduced this item, saying that it was hoped at this point to get beyond the fairly general statements in the Terms of Reference, so Vision was perhaps the wrong word. The intention was to get people talking and listening to each other, and in order to allow more opportunity for everyone to contribute, the group was split into three to discuss two questions. The key points from each group were then fed back to the whole meeting, and are summarised below:

### What do you value about the hill?

Landscape - wildness, views, space & footpaths for walking, accessibility

Working landscape, grazing, contribution to economy

Wildlife – botanically rich, dragonflies, birds, etc

Cultural heritage, history – prehistoric to mining industry, time depth, much evidence is intact

Communities and their relationship to the landscape

### What are the issues for the future?

Benefiting all, community support, communication, developing pride

Visitor/ Information Centre? Toilets. Information booklet?

Tourism – make the most of the area but not spoiling it, based on qualities of the area, appropriateness

Litter, fly tipping and enforcement

Economic future – jobs, housing, communities, trade for shops & services

Protection of what we have, but sustainability not preservation

Need for continued grazing - commoners, landowners – communication

Off-road vehicles, unadopted roads, traffic

Potential for more education and learning

## **4. Specific issues not being adequately addressed through existing mechanisms**

Henry reminded members that a principle of the Partnership was not to spend time on matters which another existing group was better placed to address.

### Public toilets

He proposed that the Partnership should lend its collective voice behind efforts to keep the public toilets at Clee Hill village open. This was supported unanimously. It was clarified that some progress has been made between The Friends of Clee Hill Village Forum and the new business group chaired by David Jamieson, and while there was wide support, finding money was difficult. A proposal has been made to meet with

Shropshire Council to discuss a possible alternative arrangement for maintaining the toilets.

### Common rights

A suggestion was made that an educational session be organised on the complex area of common rights. There was some lack of clarity around maps and records relating to Clee Hill Common, but this was felt to be an issue for the Commoners' Association. The value of the report presented by Edgar Powell of the Open Spaces Society at the February seminar was mentioned, and this would be made available to members.

### Information for visitors

The idea of an information booklet for visitors was discussed briefly, and it was confirmed that this might be something which the AONB Partnership and others might be able to support. George Cummings had a copy of the earlier Council booklet which went out of print some time ago. Though a variety of people may help, this proposal would need an organisation or individual to take the lead. The Shropshire Wildlife Trust's recent leaflet on Catherton Common was circulated to those present for information.

### Litter and fly tipping

George Cummings raised the issue of litter, saying that a successful volunteer litter picking event was held last year, working with Heidi Steele of Shropshire Council's Streetscene department. He said that some young people had been involved, and with a youth club of about 35 in the village, he was keen to see some kind of hill warden scheme for volunteers. All the landowners were supportive of trying to do more with litter picking. There were however some doubts about the legal position. Heidi Steele said that in general, collection of litter was the landowner's responsibility, and advice received was that litter collected should normally be removed by a private contractor. The situation here was made more complicated because of common rights, but she hoped to arrange another similar event. Brian Hardy had been told by the Council that volunteers should not pick litter along roadsides; it was thought this was because of public liability issues. Glynn Barratt asked who can prosecute in cases of serious fly tipping? Heidi replied that either the landowner or the Council can prosecute. Carl Pickup said that the Wildlife Trust would be willing to do this. Gwilym Butler said that the Council had to look hard at the costs of legal action against other alternatives. Tim Lee said that there should be flexibility in the system to allow things to happen where people were willing to help. Gwilym said that the Council was being given more freedom in how to do things and that systems were changing. Phil Holden said that using volunteers needed to be done in a structured way to overcome liability and safety issues, especially in relation to any 'wardening' role, but this has been successfully done in other places, and there might be lessons to learn. There was support for more action on this topic, and any partners with a role were encouraged to try to take it forward, although not under the banner of the Partnership.

### Fires

Lisa Bedford said that she had been asked through Community Safety to raise concerns about the seven fires which there had been in the last month on Catherton Common. It was thought that this was gorse burning by commoners, but that they were uncontrolled fires – the Fire Brigade had not been informed, and when they arrived there was no-one present managing the fires. It was clarified that while gorse burning is legitimate and commoners did not have to get permission, they did need to notify the authorities and follow a code. It was said that there had been a reluctance among some commoners to enter into discussions about this. Chris Neal was asked to bring the matter up at the next Commoners' Association meeting.

## **5. Next steps**

Colin Preston said that while it was valuable to make progress on certain matters of detail, there was also a need to stand back and look at the bigger picture. He said the Wildlife Trust would like to look at the resources they had, or could seek, to do additional things in what he saw as the three main areas – land management/ husbandry, visitors/ tourism, and social/ community. Other members felt that these broad categories were helpful, and would be interested to hear about and discuss the Trust's ideas. Henry asked if the Trust would present the results to the next meeting. Gwilym Butler reiterated the value of keeping relevant Shropshire Council members informed.

Phil Holden said that to make future meetings different, an external speaker could be invited on a particular topic. Mark Wiggin suggested that a meeting could be held outside, looking at issues on the ground. It was confirmed that members were happy for email contacts to be shared among the group, and that the minutes, Terms of Reference, etc would be published on the AONB website as the simplest and cheapest option. Diane Monether asked that tea and coffee be provided at future meetings.

## **6. Ongoing Chairing and support roles**

The meeting agreed that Henry Chance should continue as Chairman, and the term for re-election was confirmed as one year or as necessary, according to the Terms of Reference. Phil Holden was nominated and agreed as Vice Chairman.

## **7. Any other Business**

There was no other business.

## **8. Date of next meeting**

It was agreed that a proposed date or dates for a meeting in approximately four months would be circulated. It was expected that the meetings would rotate around different village halls and venues in the area.