

CLEE HILL PARTNERSHIP
MEETING TUESDAY 9 AUGUST 2011
7.30PM CLEETON ST MARY VILLAGE HALL

MINUTES

Present:

Henry Chance	Bitterley Parish Council Chairman (Clee Hill Partnership Chairman)
Brian Hardy	Caynham Parish Council
George Williams	Caynham Parish Council Chairman
Chris Neal	Clee Hill Commoners Association Chairman
Greg Woodhouse	Clee Hill Commoners Association
Gary Shorthouse	Clee Hill Commoners Association
Roddy Yapp	Clee Hill Commoners Association
Phil Edwards	Clee Hill Commoners Association
Deana Welding	Clee Hill Commoners Association Secretary
Valerie Clifford	Commoner and landowner representative
Dot Shorthouse	Clee Hill Commoners Association
Andy Chapman	Commoner & landowner representative
George Cummings	Friends of Clee Hill Village Forum Chairman
Garth Ridgers	Friends of Clee Hill Village Forum
Peter Cuthbert	Hopton Wafers Parish Council
Cllr Richard Huffer	Shropshire Council, Clee Division
Vicky Turner	Shropshire Council, Community Working
Phil Holden	Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Manager
Tim Lee	Shropshire Peregrine Group
Carl Pickup	Shropshire Wildlife Trust Reserves Manager
Colin Preston	Shropshire Wildlife Trust Director
Glynn Barratt	Titterstone Clee Heritage Trust
Sue Dawes	Titterstone Clee Heritage Trust (for Chairman Alf Jenkins)

1. Welcome and apologies

Henry Chance from the Chair welcomed those present to the meeting, and reminded members of the role of the Partnership as a non decision-making forum. The following apologies had been received:

Cllr Gwilym Butler	Shropshire Council, Cleobury Mortimer Division
David Jamieson	Hanson Aggregates Clee Hill Quarry Manager
Alf Jenkins	Titterstone Clee Heritage Trust Chairman
Jenny Marriott	English Heritage
Richard Rallings	Natural England
Mark Wiggin	Landowner, Downton Hall

2. Minutes of last meeting 29 March 2011 and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as an accurate record and there were no matters arising which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

3. Update from Litter group

George Cummings reported that a Clee Hill Litter Group had been formed and had met several times. Three litter pick events had been held, attended by 15, 6 and 8 people. It was hoped that these might in future be held on the first Sunday of each month. Hansons had donated hi-vis jackets for Hill Wardens and three people had volunteered for this role. Streetscene were lending equipment but couldn't dispose of litter collected

from private land. George was gathering information on land ownership to help be clear about this. Discussions were being held with Parish Councils to find out their position re insurance for volunteers. Caynham PC are insured for volunteers to pick litter, but not under 15s. Other Parish Councils were requested to provide information on their situation – Action.

Henry suggested that the Clee Hill Partnership should write to those participating to thank them for their help and this was agreed - Action.

There was some discussion about the Hill Wardens scheme. The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) was suggested as a good contact regarding insurance and safety procedures. It was pointed out that Health & Safety issues went beyond insurance, to include Risk Assessment (especially in relation to lone working) and training for volunteers including First Aid. Advice from local bodies using volunteers in a wardening role would be useful, such as Shropshire Wildlife Trust and the National Trust.

4. Peregrines

Tim Lee gave a brief update of information already in the public domain. About 50 volunteers had come forward to help monitor last year's nest site in the old quarry, but the birds had nested elsewhere so planned activity had not been implemented. He acknowledged the good support from Hanson's Quarry and the Police. He said that a meeting was being held on 17 August to discuss the current situation and what to do for next season.

Chris Neal said that the Peregrine Group had not kept others sufficiently informed. As there were sensitivities about the topic, the Chairman said that further discussion should take place at the specific meeting on 17th rather than at this one.

5. Speeding on roads on the Common

The Chairman introduced this item, saying that this was a significant problem on a number of roads, including a reported recent case of youngsters deliberately driving at sheep. Roddy Yapp said he was still the Commoners' Association contact for the Police and felt that in most cases injury to livestock was accidental. People involved usually incurred damage to their vehicles, but he felt the potential risk to people in the cars was the biggest issue. A number of people felt that signage could help, to draw attention of drivers to the risks of hitting animals. There was discussion of makeshift temporary signage, with which there were problems with legality. Leaving sheep carcasses on the side of the road, though gruesome, appears to have an effect on speeding. A notice detailing the number of livestock deaths in the past year and a large plastic sheep were also suggested, as well as double white lines. Flashing signs were also discussed – each one apparently costs £500 to install and £60/week to run; if average speeds were over 35mph Shropshire Council will pay, if lower the Parish Council were expected to contribute more. Roddy said that incidents happened all year round, not just when lambs were out, and that there were as many animals killed now as in the past despite fewer sheep being out, as the cars now go faster, drivers perceiving the road to be safer. The A4117 Clee Hill – Doddington road was mentioned as different, being an A road with more through traffic. Higher speeds were felt to be more often safe along this road, though there were hotspots of risk of animals being on the road such as Cornbrook, where some localised fencing might help. Further signage on this road was not generally supported; there are apparently already 32 signs along the stretch of this road across the common.

Carl Pickup said he had raised this issue because it had come up as significant in discussions with the commoners, and he wondered if the Partnership could take some action on it. Contact with the Council and Police was discussed, and the issue of

enforcement of any speed restrictions. Examples from other areas were mentioned such as Dartmoor and the New Forest, where speed restrictions had been put in place. Richard Huffer said that rural speeding was a frequently raised issue with Councillors. Phil Holden said that if an awareness campaign, with or without legal measures, could highlight the risks of speeding alongside the special value of the area more generally, there could be broader benefits. George Cummings mentioned that school children were involved in designing posters about speeding, but it was clarified that this was for use only in the vicinity of the school. The way in which the Council might assess the issue was discussed, with the concern raised that if it was just based on statistics of accidents it might not help, as it was felt that many minor incidents went unreported. There was consensus support that Shropshire Council be asked to look at the issue, and it was agreed that a letter be sent on behalf of the Clee Hill Partnership – Action.

6. Possible beacon for Diamond Jubilee, June 2012

The Chairman talked through this idea, for which there was general support. It was mentioned that the hilltop was a Scheduled Ancient Monument and consent would be required through English Heritage. Possible alternatives to a simple big fire were mentioned which might reduce any potential impact on the archaeology. Henry would circulate an email to interested parties – Action.

7. Other updates from partners

- Titterstone Clee Heritage Trust

Glynn said that the Trust had successfully purchased the Novers woodland site, and had done various practical work such as improving gates and access. An opening on 25 March had been followed by a range of events and a series of courses. Further grant applications were in progress – one for skills training had recently been unsuccessful but other ideas to progress this work were being developed. The Autumn Fayre was to be held on 3 September, and work was being done on some heritage themed self-guided walks to complement the existing geological trails.

- Clee Hill Commoners Association

Chris Neal updated on a few matters from the recent AGM. A new water main was being put in at the top of the common. One cattle grid was being repaired and another replaced. There had been discussions with some property owners about fencing, clarifying that it was owners' responsibility to fence against the common, and also about unauthorised signage along the roads. Off-roading was felt to be slightly reduced, perhaps since new good signage at the top. There had been an organised event last Saturday and a few recent cases of quads and motorbikes. People had been told clearly about illegal burning following a number of cases of gorse burning earlier in the year when the Fire Brigade had not been informed. The need to inform Chris as Chair of the Commoners and the Fire Brigade of any planned burning was reiterated. Some fencing at Silverton and other sites was mentioned.

- Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

Phil mentioned that HLF funding had recently been secured for a project on the other side of the AONB around the Stiperstones and Corndon. Operating across the AONB, including in the Clee Hill area were the new Farming Project providing support to hill farmers in the Less Favoured Area, and the Woodlands Project offering advice with management of smaller and undermanaged woods.

8. Shropshire Wildlife Trust project proposal

This item had been moved down the agenda in case discussion on other items might provide useful background. Colin Preston talked through the proposal which had been circulated. He said it was built around the three headings which had emerged, and was aimed at potential funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and perhaps other funders. Clarity and consensus was needed and the Trust needed capacity to achieve that, and was looking to fund a member of staff for 6-9 months to talk to relevant people about the issues and find out what needs doing. He said that there were costings, but the ideas in the proposal document were not fixed and were open to comments and suggestions. He hoped to get some names under each of the three headings of people who would be willing to bounce ideas and help shape the bid.

Roddy Yapp said that the Commoners Association had been there for a long time doing many of these things and there should be more direct dialogue with them. The question was asked whether the proposal was about the Wildlife Trust's own land at Catherton Common or the hill more generally. It was clarified that the Trust had seen a willingness from partners to work in a more joined-up way across the whole hill, though they didn't have aspirations necessarily to own or control more land. The Commoners felt that references to improving animal husbandry in the document were insensitive and felt that a lot was being proposed very quickly. It was agreed that many of the ideas in the proposal had come out of earlier discussions with others, and previous meetings had supported the Trust developing their proposals. A number of people however were not clear really what was being proposed, and wished to know more about actual amounts of funding which might be sought and what it would be spent on. Some concerns were expressed about the way the proposal had come out and whether some of the discussion of issues was now being fulfilled by the Clee Hill Partnership, now that it was up and running. Colin said the Trust were envisaging perhaps seeking a grant of £15-20k to run a proper community consultation process.

Henry said that a lot of things were happening already, and that if an application was made, some other things led by other partners might usefully be included such as provision of information about heritage, and support funding for the Litter Group and perhaps a new peregrine group, if one is to be formed. The question was raised whether the Clee Hill Partnership itself could apply for funds. The Chairman clarified that as an unincorporated body it could not do this at present, but a decision could be made to develop the structure into a constituted group so that this could be done. Glynn suggested that in relation to tourism and visitors, it would be very useful to gather information on current visitor use and about what people want before deciding what new provisions to make.

The need for further discussion was agreed before any bid was made. Colin proposed to do this by taking forward discussions with relevant people under the three different headings of the proposal – Action.

9. Any other Business

There was no other business.

10. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was set for Tuesday 15 November 2011, at 7.30pm, venue to be confirmed.