

**St Catherine's Hill & Town Common Management Plan Steering Group
Minutes of Meeting, 22 November 2012 – 11.00am
St Catherine's Hill Community Hall**

Present: Paul Atwell (UHP) – PA
Chris Gordon (WCRA) – CG
Robin Harley (CBC) – RH
Becky Johnson (CBC)
Gary Powell (ARC) – GP
Nick Squirrell (NE) – NS
Amanda Collins (SBW) – AC
Yvette Greatrex (HPC) – YG
Peter Holloway (CBC) – PH
Jenni Jones (FSCH) – JJ
Dick Preston (FC) – DP

1. Welcome and Introduction

- 1.1 RH, stand-in chairman, welcomed the group to the first meeting of the new steering group. PH thanked the previous steering group, the facilitators and the public for their efforts in getting this far.
- 1.2 RH confirmed the facilitators completed their involvement when the plan was adopted. RH will confirm in due course what funds remain in the budget [*£552 remaining*].

2. Apologies

- 2.1 Apologies have been received from Cllr Sue Spittle (CBC), Cllr Margaret Phipps (CBC) and Clive Sinden (CBC).

3. Minutes of meeting on 4 October 2012

- 3.1 The minutes were accepted as a true record.

4. Matters Arising

- 4.1 None.

5. Management Plan Update

- 5.1 RH confirmed the management plan was adopted unanimously by CBC Community Services Committee on 31 October 2012. The plan is available online. GP has written to the estate for confirmation with no response. The group agreed to change the management plan cover to read 'adopted plan'.

6. Terms of Reference

- 6.1 PH distributed the revised draft Terms of Reference and Steering Group membership form. DP suggested two amendments: adding "support" to 'the group will meet to discuss the actions in the plan'; and changing 'the' for "their" in objective two. NS suggested two amendments: adding "as adopted" to the background information about the management plan; and changing 'the' for "each" landowner at the end.
- 6.2 The Group agreed the ToR and Steering Group membership form. PH asked each partner to sign and return the membership form to the next meeting.

7. Dip Wells

- 7.1 RH met on-site with contractor Dorset Drilling Ltd and confirmed the quote to install 10 dip wells at £3,260. This is for 8 dip wells at 2m depth on the fringes and

2 dip wells at 5m depth on the plateau as discussed with hydrologist Ron Allen. The contractors need 2 weeks notice.

- 7.2 The dip wells will be plastic pipes with perforated ends in a geotextile sock, sealed with bentonite. They will have lockable steel covers with the option to install padlocks. GP confirmed ARC will contribute 20% of the costs. The group discussed the dip well height projection from the ground and agreed as low as possible. The group agreed that RH should proceed and confirm installation with the contractor.
- 7.3 Once installed the dip wells can be monitored and PA suggested UHP could help. The group agreed funds in the remaining budget could be spent on monitoring (e.g. purchasing a dip meter and locks).

8. Map Based Discussion of Work Programme

- 8.1 Hydrologist Ron Allen has agreed the location of the dip wells, monitoring and valleys to monitor surface water flow. Ecological monitoring still needs to be planned. CG noted the following discussion referred to pages 45 and 47 of the management plan. The project register was distributed.
- 8.2 GP explained the basic proposals put forward by ARC using the maps distributed: heavy thinning in block 10, linking the east heathland to the west; wooded heath retention in block 11; thinning of woodland in 2 phases in block 19; phased thinning of pine but retention of birch woodland in block 29. These proposals can be discussed and amended. NS suggested adding the area of each block into the table, in both acres and hectares.
- 8.3 The percentages of thinning put forward are approximations and can only be determined realistically on the ground, depending on practicability. DP explained the difference between thinning (up to 30-40%) and selective felling before suggesting a long term focus approach. Some mature character trees should be retained along with succession trees, which could see the retention of some pine areas. A managed woodland style may help maintain a noise buffer, allowing the understory to develop once it is opened up.
- 8.4 CG noted potential concern from nearby residents about the reduction of a buffer around the gun club. The sound from the gun club, the A338 and airport is considerably worse than 5 years ago, possibly due to felling. DP explained noise buffering requires a density of understory and thinning is unlikely to change it. Sharp sounds from the gun club travel up to the cloud base and bounce back. Monitoring has been undertaken at Lulworth and DP will offer this information to the group if possible. GP explained block 29 would be a phased approach, offering the opportunity to re-assess.
- 8.5 RH suggested the increase in gun club membership numbers may be a factor in the increase of noise. JJ suggested information be gathered from the gun club on membership and frequency of firing as this could be one of the more sensitive blocks needing careful management. NS noted the option to hold meetings at the gun club is available. CG noted the gun club have been invited to Residents Association meetings in the past but have failed to attend.

- 8.6 Using the circulated maps, RH explained the CBC approach would be to take selected areas to wooded heath over 2 years. Block B would be completed in house with volunteers. Blocks A, B, C and D are hydrologically safe as water drains away from the houses. Blocks G and H are close to properties and will be phased from woodland to wooded heath to open heath. Blocks E and F have been split into 10 subsections, one for each year of the management plan. The subsections lead from woodland to open heath, leaving character trees. Heather should re-establish from the edges more quickly.
- 8.7 RH suggested Sandy Lane may be the best option for an extraction route. GP agreed as the track leading to Sandy Lane is under ARC control and the gradient and drainage can be looked at for easier extraction. CG suggested the residents and emergency services need to be informed and damage limitation needs to be considered. Blocks A and B will provide difficult extraction and it may be necessary to create an alternative route.
- 8.8 The options for extracted material include chipping, burning on site and burning in a container. Each has their own cost and disturbance implications. GP suggested burning will need a condition that allows material to be left on site until the weather conditions become suitable.
- 8.9 AC gave an update on the SBW security problems that have arisen around the reservoirs prompting felling to take place in due course for operational reasons. Opportunities for external funding for this are unlikely to be available unless for woodland management under the HLS agreement.

9. Any Other Business

- 9.1 DP thanked and congratulated the group for their efforts, achievements and progression with the management plan.
- 9.2 NS suggested adding an addendum to the management plan to include the felling licence and any maps or plans subsequently produced to keep it a live document.
- 9.3 RH explained that the proposals could be confirmed after the site visit to the hill if the group were in agreement. GP suggested using external contractors for the felling licence.
- 9.4 RH set the date for the next meeting as Tuesday 29 January 2013.