



**MINUTES OF THE BERE REGIS PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON**  
**THURSDAY 11<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2020 COMMENCING 8PM**  
**This meeting was carried out by video conferencing**

**Present:** Cllrs L Fairhurst, M Mathers, B House, P Wharf, R Pitcher, P Morgan, S Munnings,  
C Packham  
B Benjafield, T Bates

**Chair:** Cllr I Ventham

**Clerk:** Mrs A Crocker

**Also present:** Amy Yeats and 2 members of the public, Amy Gallagher of the Urban Heaths Partnership

The Chairman reminded all present that the meeting is being recorded.

**Public Participation**

The Chair invited Amy Gallagher to address the meeting and give the background for what is happening at Black Hill. Amy informed members that she is the Purbeck West and North Dorset representative for the Urban Heaths Partnership. This is a group made up of 10 organisations working together to help look after Dorset heathlands – they consist of Dorset Police, Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service, Dorset Council, Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council, RSPB, Natural England, Forestry England, Dorset Wildlife Trust, the Amphibian & Reptile Conservation Trust and the National Trust. Amy is funded by development taking place within 5km of special protection sites. The aim is to look after the heathlands and alleviate the pressure from extra residential development. Since 2016 the role has included wardening Black Hill. She attends the site once a week in the summer and once a fortnight in the winter to chat to anyone using the site but rarely sees anyone.

The issue with the bike jumps has extended quite a lot in the last year, especially during the lockdown period. Her role is to make sure the site remains valuable for wildlife and valuable for the people using it. To this end, a meeting was held in February including the Parish Clerk, Amy, the landowner and representatives from Natural England and Dorset Council. They discussed how they could look after the site and stop the damage from getting any worse. The main actions were to undertake on site work and produce a programme of community engagement. Whatever is done, it will not be a quick fix. The on-site improvements include better signage of the bridleways showing people where they can use their bikes and having some interpretation boards put up on the site to showcase what is there. The signage for the bridleway is the responsibility of the landowner and they are looking at filling in some of the jumps. This will be carried out over the winter period with the consent of Natural England. The on-site signage will consist of interpretation panels – the design of which will be circulated to the Parish Council for their comments. The community engagement programme began with two sessions run with the primary school which was very well received. It is hoped that this will continue for the next two years. Amy had hoped to hold a community walk and talk but this has had to be put on hold for the time being. It was also hoped that some manned on-site information stands could be held in order to reach people who may not otherwise realise how special the area is. The long-term goal is to change people’s perception of the site and encourage the community to develop a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for the site.

Amy has put up some temporary signage on the site with the agreement of Dorset Police. She has also joined the village Facebook so is aware of the discussions regarding the jumps and is thinking of holding an on-line talk about the area. A press release has also been issued. A Dorset Heaths Facebook page, Twitter account and Instagram account have also been created which will help spread the message to a wider audience. Members are asked to follow this, and Amy is happy to put messages out on behalf of the Parish Council that are related to the heathland. Ideally, she would like to get the local community on board with helping to protect the area. A lot of the village are not aware of how special the area is as there has not been any signage explaining this. If the Parish Council are willing to help, perhaps a workshop could be run to get together some ideas of how the message could be progressed.

Signed: .....

Cllr Bates felt that the problem is the people causing the damage are not necessarily very local. What Amy has suggested is a wonderful opportunity for villagers to learn about it, but the non-locals would miss out. The important thing is to meet people on site but whose responsibility this is would need to be discussed. Amy suggested that residents could pass the message to people they do see on the site and be the eyes and ears of the Partners.

Cllr Pitcher pointed out that the Parish Council has been trying, for a long period, to provide a facility for the young people to use. A lot is tied in with the SANG. Could the Urban Heath Partnership apply some weight with Natural England for us to be able to provide some sort of facility in the new SANG for young people to be able to ride their bikes. Amy responded saying this was something they could do, and they have had experience of this in other areas, so would be able to provide support for such a project. Part of her work involves looking for alternative areas that could be used for bike riding, etc.

Cllr Ventham summed up saying that we all want to protect the Black Hill area. However, there is a constituency in the village that has been, for at least 40 years, allowed to go up to the site and no-one, until very recently, has ever said to them that there is anything wrong in what they are doing. It has expanded and the damage has increased but, for 40 or 50 years, long before it was an SSSI, and right through the period it has been an SSSI, the Partnership and landowners have done nothing to prevent access or sign to offer any alternative facility. So, it is rough on the younger section of the community. It is sad that we are now looking at one aspect which is the protection and preservation of the site, which is good, but, on the other hand, we are not actively looking to provide alternative facilities, nor has anything been done positively over the last two or three years, preventatively, to try to educate and move them on. Suddenly, it came to a crunch which led to signage on Black Hill. Cllr Ventham urged Cllr Pitcher's point, which is perfectly valid, that we really look to the Urban Heath Partnership and others to help find an alternative for young people to use. There is another group of people who are possibly coming in from outside who have no idea of the value of the site. We have to be careful in that, when we see people on mountain bikes on the bridleway, they are perfectly legitimately allowed to ride there. Bikes on the right of way are legal. We would very much like to work with UHP on the signage and think we could have a lot to offer when producing information boards for Black Hill similar to those we have had made for Souls Moor. Cllr Ventham suggested a working party is set up to work with Amy to take this forward.

Rowlands Wait - Lynda Rowland had raised a number of points in respect of the on-going works at Rowlands Wait. This had been circulated to all members prior to the start of the meeting. Cllr Ventham highlighted the requirement for a 'Park Licence'. The Licence does not have to be applied for until the point where occupation is about to start. All the points made in the email are perfectly valid but will not be scrutinised until someone is about to take up a tenancy. Our hands are tied as the Parish Council has no powers over this at all. Nothing will be done, except possibly with regard to the trees, before the application is made to Dorset Council for the Licence. As far as the original 1979 site plan is concerned, there have been so many different applications passed since then that have altered the terms under which the site is used that the original map probably carries little no weight. It all depends on what the last permissions were. We have been in conversation with the Tree Officer and had put in a request over the Easter weekend, when work first started on the site. The Clerk reported that a blanket TPO had originally been requested for the site. The Tree Officer subsequently attended a tripartite meeting with the Planning Officer and Dorset Council, and it was agreed that making a provisional TPO was a reasonable precaution. The Tree Officer felt that the immediate threat of further clearance seems to have receded for the moment so the site will take its place on the list of other TPOs that are due to be made. Should circumstances change they can expedite it. The Clerk subsequently went back to the Tree Officer saying that the threat has not receded but in fact it is probably more urgent now as some of the homes have been located alongside trees that would need to be moved in order for doors or windows to be opened. A request has been made for the blanker TPO to be put on as quickly as possible. Cllr Wharf reported that he had also spoken to the Tree Officer and made it clear that this is something that is urgent, and they should not wait. Both the Parish Council and Dorset Council are concerned about this and the maximum pressure has been applied.

Lynda said she was surprised that the Parish Council could no insist that the site is shielded from the village view as this was part of the original application. Cllr Ventham reminded her that, in the end, it

is down to the planner's interpretation of all the successive applications that have been approved over the years.

Cllr Wharf confirmed that nothing happening on the site at the moment is illegal. The owners do not have to seek permission until occupation starts and the only way we can enforce anything different is to change primary legislation, which is in the province of Westminster. The new owners have been contacted by Dorset Council and Highways and have failed to engage with anybody at all. This is most unusual and really unhelpful as Dorset Council can usually have a conversation with a developer and arrive at some compromises. In this instance, they do not know what they are doing or when they are likely to do it and the Council is absolutely powerless.

Simon Goddard asked if it was possible for individuals to write to Michael Tomlinson MP to express their concerns about the Rowlands Wait issue. Cllr Wharf responding saying that it was and that he had passed advice on to Mr Tomlinson regarding the legal status of the site and asked him to look into this as a matter of urgency. It would be perfectly reasonable for individuals to write to him and it may encourage him to realise the level of local feeling.

The Chair closed the public participation period and called the Parish Council meeting to order.

**1. To receive apologies for absence**

20.037 No apologies had been received.

**2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

20.038 A copy of the minutes had been issued to all members prior to the start of the meeting.

Cllr Wharf proposed them to be a true and accurate representation of the meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Fairhurst and agreed unanimously.

The Chairman will sign the minutes in due course.

**3. Matters arising from those minutes, not covered by this agenda**

20.039 Rowlands Wait – A copy of Mike Gee's email had been forwarded to Mike Garrity, Head of Planning, but to date, no response has been received. The Clerk will chase.

**ACTION: CLERK**

Overgrown bridleway Snow Hill to the Shell Garage – The Clerk had contacted the Drax Estate but received no response. The work was subsequently undertaken by the Lengthsman.

Black Hill – the section of the minutes stating that the landowner was not objecting to the children using the area was correct at the time of the meeting, but this has subsequently changed. The landowner has now banned anyone from using the area other than on the bridleway. The Parish Council does not support this course of action.

Certificates of Appreciation – a number of nominations have been received. The request will go into the Parish Magazine for July as this will reach those who are not on social media. This item will be included in the August agenda.

**4. To receive declarations of interest and review dispensations received**

20.040 No interests were declared and no requests for dispensations had been received.

**5. To receive the Dorset Councillor's reports**

20.041 Cllr Wharf reported that the Full Council had met on the 10<sup>th</sup> June. The main order of business was to approve the ability for people not to attend the offices for six months without being disbarred. This will go on to September before having the Annual Council meeting. The

legislation takes the Council through to May 2021. This has come about because many of the members are self-isolating and it is a requirement of the Council that members should attend the office at least once in every 6 months. Cllr Wharf has sent a series of updates to the Clerk throughout the lockdown period and these have been regularly forwarded on to members. A press release has been issued regarding the redeployment of staff to critical Covid roles.

## **6. Key Topics**

### **20.042 Implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan**

Partly as a result of last month's discussion about the need for facilities for young people, a letter was sent to the Trustees – Peter Dove and Elizabeth Brierley – with a copy to Richard Drax MP asking what the current situation is and are they likely to start building anything yet and, even if they are not going to start building, would it be possible to use some the land on the SANG site and at the bottom of the North Street to start creating some facilities – even on a temporary basis. To date no reply has been received, other than from Richard Drax's office saying he was very busy with the Covid crisis. *Post meeting note: An email has subsequently been received from Chris Jowett asking for a meeting and it is hoped this will take place towards the end of June.*

### **20.043 Rowlands Wait - update**

This has already been fully discussed under public participation. Cllr Ventham added that he would very much like the Parish Council to be engaging with the Partnership in putting up interesting and informative notices around Black Hill. Most of those who use the area probably do come from the village. Cllr Bates asked if he could work with Amy Gallagher to create an information board to go between Mays Wood and the entrance to the SSSI. A working party will be set up to include Cllr Tony Bates, Amy Yeats, Cllr Brian Benjafield and Amy Gallagher to move this forward.

## **7. Finance**

### **20.044 To approve monthly expenditure**

The following payments had been requested:

Play Inspection co	Annual inspection of play area	BACS014	81.00
Bere Heath Broadband	Donation towards installation of rural broadband	BACS015	900.00
A King	Lengthsman – May 2020	BACS016	2423.75
DC Pension Fund	June 2020 pension contributions	BACS017	242.00
HMRC	June PAYE & NIC	BACS018	197.18
Darkin Miller	Internal Audit year ended 31.03.20	BACS019	483.55
A Crocker	June 2020 wages + expenses	BACS020	699.66

Total to be paid from the Precept is **£5,027.14**

Lunch Club & NeighbourCar (Both these schemes are self-funding with no costs coming from the Precept)

No payments had been requested

Cllr Fairhurst proposed the payments are made. This was seconded by Cllr Munnings and agreed unanimously.

<b>ACTION: CLERK</b>
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### **20.045 To confirm the reconciliation of accounts**

This will be moved to the July meeting.

20.046 To review the position against budget

This will be moved to the July meeting.

20.047 To confirm the Annual Governance Statement for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020

A copy of the Statement had been issued to all members prior to the start of the meeting. Each statement was reviewed and individually acknowledged. The Clerk highlighted the fact that, in line with the Internal Auditor's response to Item L being 'not covered', we are obliged to respond 'No' to question 4. A similar comment to that of the Auditor will be included when the Statement is sent to the External Auditors. Cllr Fairhurst then proposed that the Annual Governance Statement is accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Wharf and agreed unanimously. The Statement will be signed by the Chairman and Clerk as soon as possible.

20.048 To confirm the Accounting Statement for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020

A copy of the full set of accounts had been issued to all members prior to the start of the meeting, together with the Annual Accounting Statement. Cllr Wharf proposed the accounts are accepted. This was seconded by Cllr House and agreed unanimously. The Accounting Statement will be signed by the Chairman and RFO.

20.049 To accept the Internal Auditor's Report

A copy of the report had been issued to all members prior to the start of the meeting. All the points raised by the auditor were noted and, where applicable, appropriate action had been taken.

20.050 BereConnect Emergency Fund Statement

Cllr Ventham reported that, in the interests of transparency, a statement for the Emergency Fund had been issued to all members prior to the start of the meeting. A disbursement of a further £100 had been made today. The account now rests at £3,933.91. This will be used to fund the food bank or will be given as grants to residents. The decision to award a grant or a loan is made by Rachel Brown, Head Teacher of Bere Regis School, and Rev'd Sandra Williams.

As at the 16<sup>th</sup> June the situation regarding the fund was as follows:

Total number of donors	71
Average donation	£77

Of those showing an amount, the distribution of gifts was:

£	
0-50	36 donors
51-100	28 donors
101-200	2 donors
201-500	3 donors

Total raised by JustGiving	£5,475.00
Less JustGiving handling fee	(174.54)
Transferred to account	£5,298.46
Plus bank interest	1.82
Total available for distribution	£5,300.28
Less disbursed to foodbank purchases	(866.37)
Less distributed to loans/grants	(500.00)
Balance remaining	<b>£3,933.91</b>

It should be noted that these monies are not governed by the Parish Council, nor does the Parish Council hold or administer any of this fund. The accounts are reproduced here in the interests of transparency only.

## **8. Planning & Housing**

### 20.051 To consider planning applications

6/2020/0209 Skirmish Paintball, Woodbury Hill - Erect zip wire activity course

PWP proposed that a response of 'No Objection' is submitted. This was seconded by Cllr Munnings and agreed 8 in favour. Cllr Wharf abstained from the vote.

**ACTION: CLERK**

### 20.052 To consider tree work applications

There were no tree work applications at this time.

## **9. Parish Amenities & Rights of Way**

### 20.053 Update on the Play Park works

Cllr Pitcher reported that there is currently no update on the chippings. He had a meeting with the Lengthsman and Eddie Butterfield who has produced some designs for the sockets for the legs of the play equipment. 20 brackets would be needed to protect all the wooden equipment and the cost of each would be £150 – this would include the making, painting and treating of each bracket. This would give a total cost of £3,000. If we do not spend this money, we will end up having to replace all of the equipment in the very near future and some would have to be put out of action very soon. The Clerk highlighted the requirement, under the Standing Orders, for the need to obtain 3 quotes for any expenditure of this magnitude. However, this equipment is highly bespoke so obtaining like for like quotes would be difficult. Cllr Ventham proposed that the Standing Orders are suspended in this instance. Each piece of metal is unique for each leg of the equipment and, in the light of the Covid19 crisis, to try to obtain 2 further similar quotes within a reasonable amount of time would not be possible. The need is now urgent as the play park needs to be opened as soon as possible. He further proposed that we go ahead and spend the £3,000 in order to make the existing play equipment safe and to extend the life of that equipment for a further 10 to 15 years. The was seconded by Cllr Munnings and agreed unanimously.

Cllr Pitcher will speak to Eddie Butterfield and request a formal quotation is sent to the Clerk. It was also noted that Mr Butterfield is aware of the urgency of this work.

**ACTION: CLLR PITCHER**

### 20.054 General update on Parish Facilities

Cllr Pitcher went on to raise the issue of the long grass at the entrance to White Lovington. The Clerk reported that Ian Styling had been contacted and he reported that the work is on the list of action required and they will get it done but, with the current crisis and with staff self-isolating, things are taking a little longer than normal. *Post meeting note: This and other verges around the village were cut in the week commencing 15<sup>th</sup> June.*

20.055 Defects – No defects were raised.

## **10. Environment and Conservation**

### 20.056 To consider planting wildflower verges around the village

This will be moved to the July meeting.

## **12. Police, Traffic and Roads**

20.057 Cllr Morgan raised the issue of the flies. The main concern being the physical and mental effect this could cause to the community. It is impossible to sit in the garden at the moment without being plagued by flies. Many residents have been emailing the Environmental Agency team logging their complaints. There appears to have been raw sewage sprayed on fields around the village. Cllr Wharf reported that the Environment team have visited all of the sites in the area and they are all operating within their guidelines. If there is evidence of raw sewage being sprayed, then it needs to be reported. Cllr Morgan reported that a resident has emailed photographs giving proof that this has occurred. He will pass the photographs to Cllr Wharf who will follow this up.

**ACTION: CLLR MORGAN**

Cllr Benjafield suggested that there is very little we as a council can do but could we not provide fly papers for those who are unable to get them as a gesture to help the situation. The Clerk will source a supply up to the value of £50 and Cllr House will help to distribute the vis her volunteer network.

**ACTION: CLLR HOUSE/CLERK**

Cllr Wharf noted that the EH analysis reported that the flies tended to come in waves and that they are spread over an area of about 50sq miles.

## **13. Community Liaison**

20.058 To consider the Certificates of Appreciation – how and to whom are they going to be issued

This has already been discussed and will be moved to the August meeting.

20.059 The Clerk reported that Cllr Ventham had written a letter to Dr Brian May wishing him well and offering our thanks for having Mays Wood available to use as a recreational facility during the period of lockdown.

## **14. Children & Youth**

20.060 Cllr Packham reported that the school has now opened up for year 1 and year 6 children. Mrs Brown and her team have worked tirelessly to get the children that wanted to go back to school back. Cllr Packham has also spoken to a number of parents whose children use Black Hill and has set them straight on where the Parish Council stands and what we are able to do.

## **15. Correspondence received since the agenda was set**

20.061 A donation of £3,100.36 has been received from Distgen for the last quarter's share of the profit from the wind turbine. A letter of thanks has been sent to them.

Cllr Benjafield raised the request made by the Football Club for a letter of support from the Parish Council. They are applying to Dorset Council for a small sports grant and this is one of the requirements. Cllr Benjafield proposed the letter is issued. This was seconded by Cllr Pitcher and agreed unanimously. The Clerk will raise the letter.

**ACTION: CLERK**

## **16. Public Relations**

20.062

- Black Hill
- Rowlands Wait
- Cllr Bates will provide some wording regarding Souls Moor
- Play park work

Cllr Packham highlighted some concerns raised by a younger resident regarding the ponies: there may be poisonous plants in the field, including buttercups which can cause buttercup

burn. There is a possible risk of UV burn as the ponies do not have a field shelter and a risk of laminitis due to the amount they are grazing. Cllr Bates will put these concerns to the owner.

Cllr Packham informed the meeting that there have been two instances of fly tipping at Brick Lane. They have been reported on the Dorset for You website and Cllr Benjafield will remind residents in his notes for the magazine of the link to the website for reporting such instances.

**17. Items for the July meeting**

20.063 Members are reminded to pass any items for inclusion on the agenda to the Clerk by the 30<sup>th</sup> June.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:31pm.