

Notes on Environment Working Group

– Video meeting 11 June 2020 at 19.30

Present: Cllr Newbert, Ward Cllr Watson, Cllr Vine, Cllr Evans, Cllr Dolman, Cllr Cole, Cllr Smith, Cllr Jordan. Members of the public D Berry

1. No Apologies

2. Cllr Smith declared an interest in Item 9.

3. Public participation – none

4. Howle Hill War Memorial – Cllr Vine reported on her progress to date. The Memorial was listed in 2019, the other 2 Memorials were already listed. The Assets Register needs to be checked to see if it needs updating.

Cllr Vine will contact a representative of Balfour Beatty to find a way forward with respect to the change of use as the land is Highways land.

She reported that she has a new contact to follow up.

5. Cycle footpath – Cllr Watson heard from Herefordshire Council that there is central government funding for cycle paths. However, Herefordshire would not qualify for much due to the population density and small urban areas. However, as part of the Herefordshire Transport Strategy, Cllr Watson was asking for “safe passage” from Ross to Walford and other paths could be considered. It is a long term project. With land ownership being a significant obstacle, it is not worth pursuing at the moment.

6. Biodiversity – Cllr Watson had contacted the NDP for consideration of verge protection in discussion with Balfour Beatty. How to identify areas? Cllr Cole would feed back to NDP.

“Verging on Wild” is already talking to BB. Does BB have the criteria for protected verges? e.g.

Ward Cllr Watson asked if WPC could identify areas in the parish which it owns which could be brought into this scheme and enquired about some land at Forest green. Cllr Evans responded to Ward Cllr's Watson's mention of Forest Green as a possible site for biodiversity, by explaining that the area was identified for adoption in 2012. Maintenance over a 12 year period is needed to adopt the land.

Cllr Cole pointed out that safety needed to be considered. Cllr Newbert pointed out that vegetation did not need to be tall.

7. Hedgerow destruction – an area of hedgerow on Leys Hill was discussed but as it hadn't been dug out it was not against the regulations. Ward Cllr Watson pointed out that there was a 2 year period of grace at the end of which new planting should take place. One to monitor. Ward Cllr Watson will ask about the process for carrying out reptile surveys where building projects are carried out over a long period of time. Ward Cllr Watson to make enquiries.

8. Tipping, illegal waste and animal welfare – there had been a police incident at over the bank holiday weekend involving these issues. It was stated that the parish council has no authority over issues on private land, but it is a facilitator in finding resolutions when incidents occur contacting the relevant authorities. Cllr Newbert asked if WPC could have a few more contact telephone numbers of various organisations on it's web site to assist residents in reporting problems to the correct authority. Cllr Vine said she would find out about 24 hour emergency numbers. The more incidence of residents reporting problems helps with data and makes a better case for action at the time of an incident & if future incidents occur. Burning of residential waste is not covered by commercial regulations. Ward Cllr Watson suggested that residents should be encouraged to take photos of incidents where it was safe to do so which would give time and date as evidence. A possible article in the Parish Newsletter might be helpful to residents.

Cllr Smith left the meeting 20.21

Canoe Launch

9.1 The abutment - Cllr Vine reported that she had found a possible source of funding for the abutment repair. Funding is possible from the Herefordshire Community Foundation and the Wye AONB. Leigh Russell who was doing ecology work for the NDP had offered to carry out a bat survey which would be required before any repair work could commence. Repairs will need to be carried out using lime mortar.

Cllr Cole will pass on a contact in the Bridges Maintenance Department at BB to Cllr Vine.

Cllr Vine is looking into a possible AONB Industrial Site information board (AONB "interpretation board). Cllr Vine will inform the group of the date of the bat survey so they can attend should they wish to do so.

9.2 Cllr Newbert questioned the repeated laying of gravel at the site as being the best solution to the safe surface problem going forward as it has a negative effect on the river when washed into the river at time of flood. A long term Management Plan incorporating commercial issues, amenity and SSSI issues would be a positive way forward. Cllr Newbert reported her discussions with the EA. Cllr Cole was concerned about public safety issues which are a priority. Under a Management Plan, applications for the whole site could be looked at as a whole to include safety, access and the environment.

The site would be protected and long-term solutions found for surface cover. Cllr Dolman suggested

that the issue should be put before the full council at their next meeting for their approval to commence work on a management plan.

Cllr Cole confirmed that permissions had separately been applied for repairs to the launch steps, removal of rotten steps to the abutment and more recently for repairs to the unstable bank.

9.3 Information board – Cllr Cole to update on HALC recommended supplier. Cllr Cole said that the site manager Charlie Baker was only responsible for the site when he was present. Notices regarding members of the public taking home their rubbish were discussed. Most SSSI sites have information as to why a site has been designated. Cllr Watson thought it would be a good idea to ask parishioners in the newsletter for old photos of the site.

9.4 Cllr Newbert asked Cllr Cole to send copies of permissions (when obtained) to the Clerk.

9.5 Managing Site under Covid-19 - Cllr Watson wanted to know if figures were available for the number of canoeists launching from the KBCL site. Commercial companies had been banned from launching under lockdown. Cllr Watson to see if she can find further information regarding numbers of canoeist allowed in drought conditions it was agreed, however, that it would be very difficult to get accurate figures and also to police.

Charlie Baker joined the meeting 21.05

Rubbish at the site was discussed

Charlie Baker agreed to put up a sign requesting visitors take their rubbish home to see if it had any effect. Currently he is personally collecting the rubbish and taking it away.

He has also come to an arrangement with Herefordshire Council for the future rubbish collection when the refreshment facility is operational. Charlie also reported positive discussions with Bishopswood Village Hall regarding the toilets.

9.6 Managing the site into the future – Charlie said that the EA would inform him when numbers needed restricting due to drought conditions.

9.7 Charlie confirmed that there were no plans to extend the site, apart from offering light refreshments from his van which was self-contained and will be removed daily from the site along with the tanks containing grey water and all rubbish. Cllr Newbert said it should be possible to align a) commercial interests b) public amenity site & c) c)SSSI

Charlie was asked how he saw his role and responsibilities.

Charlie's response:

1. To run the site to the best of his ability.
2. General maintenance of grass, trees etc., but would look to WPC for serious problems. To offer light refreshments
3. Intends to respect SSSI, but sometimes difficult with more than 500 people at height of season.
4. Use of 100% biodegradable packaging for beverages and sandwiches.
5. Removal of van daily when business closed, except for occasionally when some canoes launched at 18.00 hrs at weekends. Van would only be operational in working hours and in daylight hours.
6. He has a co-operative arrangement with the Inn on the Wye for the supply of food. Ward Cllr Watson offered whatever help was necessary for the smooth running of the site.

Charlie invited Cllrs and members of the public to drop in at the site to look around and have a discussion.

10. Public participation – D Berry was cut off when session ended abruptly at 21.35 hrs.