**Minutes of Bringsty Common Manorial Court**

**on Monday, 13th November 2023 from 19:30 – 21:30**

**at Whitbourne Village Hall**

**Attendees:**

Tom Fisher (Chair for meeting), Peter Bridge (Treasurer),

Elizabeth Hesketh (Clerk), Niall Waller, Martin Boote, Kirsty Udall, Ruth Lyon, Cllr Peter Stoddart (Hereford County Council), James Hawkins (speaker).

1. **Election of Chair for Meeting.**

Committee members agreed that Tom Fisher, Vice Chair, would chair this meeting.

1. **Apologies for absence**

Sally Knowles (Whitbourne Parish Council)

1. **Minutes of the meeting of 04.09.23**

Approved.

1. **Talk by James Hawkins on receiving funding through Natural England Higher Level Stewardship Scheme (as is happening on Bromyard Downs)**

Many thanks to James for this very informative and helpful presentation. Discussion points included the possibility of Bringsty Common (BC) changing its constitution to be more similar to that of Bromyard Downs - Cllr Stoddart offered support if BCMC committee members elect to pursue this- and to develop a management plan for BC. Agreement that much food for thought from presentation that will be followed up in future BCMC meetings.

**ACTIONS**

To request copy of Bromyard Downs Constitution and Bromyard Downs Management Plan as devised with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust **Chair**

1. **Questions and comments from the public**

No member of public present other than James Hawkins

1. **Election of BCMC Chair and Vice Chair**

Niall Waller accepted the role of Chair with the proviso that BC maintenance and development tasks such as grassland management and organisation of ride cutting and bracken bruising are shared amongst Committee members. Ensuing discussion identified the need to scope and delegate tasks undertaken by previous Chair. This will be discussed further, and responsibilities delegated at next BCMC meeting.

Tom Fisher was re-elected as Vice Chair

**ACTION:**

Committee members to consider tasks that they would be willing to undertake. **All**

1. **Election of Treasurer**

Peter Bridge was re-elected as Treasurer.

1. **Election of Clerk**

Elizabeth Hesketh was re-elected as Clerk

1. **Treasurer’s report**

Treasurer explained why BCMC accounting year runs from August – October, and outlined how BCMC funds maximise interest and hold sufficient instant access funds to cover day to day expenses.

1. **Official Business**

Agreement to trial the following – ordinary meetings to be held more frequently at two (rather than three) monthly intervals, on a Monday around the middle of the month and with earlier start and finish times (19:00 – 21:00 vs 19:30 – 21:30). All meetings to be held at Whitbourne Village Hall with the meeting room booked from 18:45 – 21:15 to allow for setting up and clearing up.

**To review on 11.03.24. whether committee members wish to continue with bimonthly meetings**

The following 2024 dates have been booked for BCMC ordinary meetings and AGM:

Monday 15/01/24, Small Hall, 19:00 - 21;00

Monday 11/03/24, Small Hall, 19:00 - 21;00

Monday 13/05/24, Small Hall, 19:00 - 21;00

Monday 15/07/24, Small Hall, 19:00 - 21;00

Monday 16/09/24, Small Hall, 19:00 - 21;00

Monday 18/11/2, Small Hall, 19:00 - 21;00

AGM Tuesday 15/10/24, Main Hall, 19:30 – 21:30

1. **Parish Reports**
   1. **Ward Councillor**

Cllr Stoddart discussed local objectives and budgetary challenges as outlined in his recent Ward Councillor’s report (as circulated with the BCMC November Agenda).

* 1. **Whitbourne**

The Wheatsheaf pub is now up for sale to be converted to a dwelling.

Crumpleberry is under new management and from the New Year is looking to hold 100 weddings p.a. This constitutes a significant change to their original licensing agreement.

* 1. **Brockhampton**

100% Smartwater distribution has been achieved.

A vehicle activated sign has been issued by the PCC and liaison is taking place with the transportation officer re identifying a number of suitable sites to locate.

1. **Matters Arising and Actions from 04/09/23.**
2. **Tree Planting**

Mike Davis, aided by Ruth and Andrea, has formed a tree-planting team.  To date, trees have been planted below Woodfield House, at the eastern end of the common and on the northern side of the Jubilee. A site on the northern side of BC has been proposed for the 15 remining tree whips (in the long grass between ‘the old football pitch’ and Bramble Cottage). Committee members accepted this proposal but agreed that a rationale / long-term plan should be devised (in terms of where to plant trees / areas to turn from bracken to grassland) prior to further tree planting.

1. **Herefordshire District Council (HDC) funded Biodiversity Plan**

Vice Chair outlined main objectives stipulated in Biodiversity Plan agreed with and funded by HDC (i.e. encouraging biodiversity through timing / manner of track and grassland cutting, wildflower planting and undertaking a small trial area of bracken bruising). This project was previously led by Cathy Fuller but now requires a Committee Member to take on the responsibility for liaising with contractors / organising tasks agreed with HDC. Discussion ensued but no decisions taken.

**ACTION:**

Place on Agenda for January 2024 BCMC meeting. **Clerk**

1. **Woodland Management Plan (WMP)**

Work has started in compartments 16 and 17 (between the Jubilee and the A44). Trees to be thinned have been agreed with contractor by Vice Chair and Ruth Lyon. Funding has not yet been received from Rural Payments Agency (RPA).

**ACTION:**

To chase up RPA for payment of funding **Vice Chair**

1. **Investing BCMC funds / Financial Plan**

A proportion of BCMC funds are currently in an account with a 6-month fixed rate account which matures in January 2024. To maximise interest rates, Treasurer proposed that on maturation this money should be split, with an amount to be fixed for 12 months and the remainder to be fixed for 6 months. Committee members agreed this proposal.

**ACTION:**

BCMC funds to be fixed for 12 and 6 month periods with Lloyds Bank, as agreed **Treasurer**

1. **‘The Commoner’**

No one has come forward to take on any part of producing ‘The Commoner’ or to take on writing a page for the Whitbourne parish magazine. Agreement not to pursue this any further.

1. **Review of Mission Statement for Bringsty Common**

Agreement to defer this issue in view of time required for discussion**.**

**ACTION:** Put on Agenda for January 2024 BCMC meeting **Clerk**

There was no further business, so the meeting was closed.

**The next ordinary meeting will be held at Whitbourne Village Hall**

**on Monday, 13th January 2024 from 19-00 - 21-00**