

# THE BEACON HILL SOCIETY

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## Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held 7.30pm on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at the Waggon & Horses, Doultling Beacon

### Present:-

Richard Raynsford (Chairman), Peter Banks (Treasurer), Bo Walsh (Secretary & Mendip DC), Mary Newman (Mem Sec & Doultling P.C.), Fran Britten, Victoria Higgins, Jennie O'Kane, Alan Connock, Lucy Chard, Graham Price (The Mendip Society)

### Welcome & Apologies:-

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting at 7.35pm. Apologies had been received from; Jacob Britten, Kaye Watts, Caroline Gentinetta, Rick Gledhill, Joe Middleton (WT site manager), Farhad (Cranmore Tower) Jessica Rothwell, Richard Whittle, Derek / Angela Thyer, Rod Hill, Brenda Rogers, Paul Newman; Stuart Jenkins

### Minutes of Previous Meeting:-

The minutes of the last meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015 were accepted.

### Matters arising:- (not on the agenda).

Litter Picking arranged for Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> February – meet at the wood 10am – please bring your own (black) bag; Web-Master – Julian Back stepping down, thank you for all your hard work, potential to ask Kim Wood to up-date the web-site, FB to make contact; IMPORTANT – polite reminder that subs for 2016/17 will be due at the next meeting, please (£5.00)

### Officers Reports:-

Chairman (RR):- welcomed new secretary (BW) and expressed thanks to outgoing acting secretary (PB) for all his hard work;

Secretary (BW):- has spoken to Joe Middleton (WT) about liaising with Alan Connock (RoadUpGang) re: car park / path repair improvements - ongoing; contacted Kaye Watts re: Forest schools – KW not back until 27.1.16; contacted Joe Middleton about woodland / tumuli field boundary and unauthorised access from the wood into the field – contact details for the Perkins family kindly provided by Victoria and Jake – BW to progress; made contact with the Somerset Wildlife Trust to ensure communication about events with local relevance is available to the BHS – Lila Morris and Michele Bowe have said they are happy to advise us when events we may be interested in are programmed – possibly eco-network walks in May and hedgerow management course in August – BW to advise.

Treasurer:- (PB) - announced we are in credit to the amount of £756.93 after taking into account subscription fees / donations and outgoing expenses.

Membership Sec (MN): - 20 subscriptions had been received so far this year, about 4 new members (?) as a result of the BHS presence at the Mid-Somerset show.

Webmaster:- not present – see Matters arising

# THE BEACON HILL SOCIETY

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## **Beacon Hill Wood new management update:-**

BW reported that further to PB's previous meeting in the wood with Joe Middleton that it is possible that the Woodland Trust could make Beacon Hill Wood one of its "welcoming woods". Joe passed on the news that BHW has been 'nominated' – and, if selected, could release funding to improve the parking, fences, display / interpretation boards and publicity about the wood and its location, etc. BW reported that the Management Plan for the wood expired December 2015 and this allows an opportunity to look at the wood, its features and how its biodiversity could be improved – FB suggested introducing Small Leaved Lime (an ancient woodland tree and present elsewhere in the Mendips) – a mechanism for this could be by way of 'donation' planting rather than bench installation – to be discussed further.

## **Society structure and organisation of future activities:-**

It was generally acknowledged that the 'structure' of the society should remain as is and that this item (6) should focus on future events and activities as follows:-

- (i) **Archaeology** – Jennie advised that, due to personal reasons Andy Pickering would be unavailable until further notice, to lead a walk around the wood and talk about its archaeology,
- (ii) **Maintenance of the path and parking** – Alan Connock (RoadUpGang) advised that the potholes at the entrance could be filled, and that the path in the wood could be topped up using road-shavings. It was felt that a discussion with Joe Middleton should be had to work out if a collaboration to do some of the improvement / repair works could benefit visitors to the wood or whether the Woodland Trust could sort out the parking area and RoadUp crew help with the path – BW to Liaise with Alan and Joe.
- (iii) **Forest School** – Kaye Watts unavailable until 27<sup>th</sup> January – BW / RR to contact (?)

## **Series of events to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beacon Hill Society:-**

PB politely corrected the meeting by pointing out that 2016 is the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the Woodland Trust working with the Beacon Hill Society, rather than the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the BHS, which had started life as the Beacon Society several years earlier. The BHS / WT partnership came into effect early 1996 making 2016 a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of this. The meeting widely agreed that a series of events should mark the occasion. A concise history of the society and its involvement with the wood should of course be collated for distribution to interested parties (web-site ?) – just thinking aloud (BW). A lively conversation followed on what events could be held in the wood or elsewhere:- among them – a picnic in the summer, with music – suggestions of folk seemed popular (ALL to think about suggestions how, who, etc), also that a commemorative tree (Small leaved lime ?) should be planted to mark the occasion with a ceremony and to invite special guests including Joe Middleton, Gloria Cawood, other notaries, early members of the

## THE BEACON HILL SOCIETY

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society, etc. The group felt that this occasion should be at a weekend before the middle of July (16<sup>th</sup> / 17<sup>th</sup>?) *date to be confirmed*. A wider conversation then spontaneously broke out about the wood and topics that members might be interested in.

### **Any other Business:-**

The BHS Display Board was updated / rearranged by PB and BW because an opportunity to display it in the Sorting Officer window in Shepton Mallet had become available. However, the offer became unviable due to restrictions from the person making the offer that would have resulted in all the material from BHS boards being taken off and transferred to the boards for use in the sorting office window. It was felt that the boards should be kept available as they are for the time being, until we have an event to 'advertise' and a space becomes available to display – suggestions for potential spaces were the empty shops windows, Shepton high street or possibly at the Tesco atrium or Dobbies garden centre, Shepton Mallet (members to explore feasibility).

Graham Price (The Mendip Society) kindly spoke to us as a community group and was positively encouraging. He explained some of the project work that the Mendip Society are involved in – including 'way-marking' the **Mendip Way** (currently divided into East and West) although there are discussions with Ordnance Survey to show it as a long distance foot-path (technically this needs to be at least 50 miles long – currently at 49). Graham said that MS would be happy to put in a news article about the BHS in its commemorative year.

Members discussed what events the society would like to see, be involved in or those that should be repeated:- suggestions included a moth event, a bat walk, the fungal foray walk (by all accounts THE major success of last year), Blue-Bell trail – **NB**. this item was omitted from the agenda and discussions have been had regarding whether to put one up this year or whether it should be bi-ennial (?) – thoughts please; Forest School, annual school visit as per commemorative donations.

**Litter Picking – booked for Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2016– meet 10am at the wood, bring your own (bin) bag;**

**The Next Meeting which will also be the AGM – Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016 – 7.00pm** at the Earth Science Centre, Moons Hill Quarry – which will start with a talk from Roy Vbranch on the geology of the area, followed by the AGM itself – **NB**. polite reminder that subs are due !!!

Please excuse any errors and omissions, which will be mine (BW)