

KEMSING PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk's Office, St. Edith Hall, Kemsing, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 6NA, Tel : 01732 762841

E-mail: kemsingpc@tiscali.co.uk

DOWNLAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Downland Management Committee held online via

Zoom on 4 November 2020 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Mr. D. Bennett (in the Chair)
Mr. B. Buttifant, Mrs. G. Lloyd, Mrs. R. Wedderburn-Day

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs. Y. Tredoux (Clerk)

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. J. Chisholm and Dr. P. Walker.

2. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2020, Reference no DM/03/2020 were approved and duly signed.

3. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

(a) Darenth Valley Living Landscape Partnership Scheme

Mr. Bennett and the Clerk had attended a site meeting with the Project Manager, contractor and Kent Wildlife representative to finalise the details of the project. The work is scheduled to commence towards the end of November 2020 and expected to be completed in two weeks.

The Kent Wildlife Trust representative had confirmed that the adjacent landowner had no objection to the installation of a wire gate at The Dell.

(b) Ash Die Back Plan

The plan is still awaited.

A number of Ash trees with signs of Ash Die Back disease had been identified; some quite close to the power lines on the Reserve. The Clerk had made a report to UK Power Networks who had visited the site on 4 November. They are assessing the scope of works to be undertaken as there are some 15 trees that would either require complete felling or branch reduction. It is uncertain at this point whether or not the Parish Council would be charged for this work.

(c) Kemsing Downs Nature Reserve Tree Safety Work

The 3 monthly and 6 monthly recommended works had been completed and the quotation for the 12 monthly and 24 monthly work had been accepted. It is hoped that this work would be carried out before end of February 2021.

A tree had collapsed by the reservoir gate and by the time the Parish Council had arranged for the tree to be dealt with, the water company's tree contractors had already managed to clear the access to the track.

One of the trees identified in the 12 month recommended work had been blown down, away from the path. The Arboricultural contractor advised that it was not necessary for any further work such as cutting and stacking the tree as it might be best left amongst other naturally fallen trees and branches to create a wildlife habitat.

RESOLVED: The Committee agreed with this recommendation.

4. **HLS/ELS AGREEMENT EXTENSION**

A response from Natural England and the Rural Payments Agency regarding the application submitted on 15 April 2020 was still awaited.

RESOLVED: The Clerk would make enquiries as to the current position of the submission.

5. **COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP WOODLAND ONLY SCHEME**

The Parish Council's application for this scheme had been unsuccessful. Mr. Bennett and the Clerk explained that although the application met the scheme criteria, it fell short of the very complex point scoring system compared with other larger schemes which attained more points. A substantial amount of work by Mr. Bennett, the Clerk and the Parish Council's Woodland Advisor had been invested in this application. Mr. Bennett also reminded Members that the grant monies which would have been received from this scheme, had it been successful, would not have covered the proposed tree works in full.

6. **MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Plan would be circulated to all Members.

7. **FERRETING**

Further enquiries into ways of smoothing out some of the rabbit holes are being made.

8. **REQUEST FOR MEMORIAL SEAT/BENCH**

Members considered a family's request for a memorial seat in memory of the late Mr. and Mrs. Fox Bassett. Mr. Bennett reminded Members of the current policy not to have any more memorial seats on Green Hill.

RESOLVED: The Committee agreed in principle, subject to the following conditions being met:

- (i) the seat to replace one of the existing worn seats (consideration may be given for a new seat if a location is identified elsewhere on Haffenden Field or Whiteleaf Down)*
- (ii) site meeting to be arranged to identify the location of the proposed seat*
- (iii) the Committee to receive and approve details of the design of the proposed seat – this should be in keeping with existing seats on the Reserve*
- (iv) appropriate public liability insurance to be supplied by the family's chosen contractor for installing the seat*

9. **BUDGET**

RESOLVED: The draft budget for the remainder of 2020/21 was noted. The estimate budget for 2021/22 was approved.

10. **INFORMATION REPORT**

There was no report received.

11. **REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS /CO-OPTED MEMBERS**

(a) Grazing on Green Hill

Currently the fencing is old and worn and not entirely stock proof. Part of the scheme mentioned in 3(a) above will allow for replacement of worn fence posts and wire to secure the area for sheep grazing. The Clerk had conveyed this to the sheep owner and it is hoped that the sheep could graze from middle December 2020.

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday, 3 February 2021

The meeting closed at 8.19 p.m.

Signed by Chairman :

Date: