

NOTES of the Meeting of the **WHITCHURCH DOWN CONSULTATIVE GROUP** held on **Tuesday 16th April 2024** at 5:30pm at the Council Chamber, Drake Road, Tavistock

PRESENT

Councillors Mrs A Johnson (Chair), N Martin, B Smith

REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER BODIES

Representative of Plasterdown Parish Council – Councillor R Phillips and Councillor J Sturmer

Tavistock Cricket Club – Mr D Manning

Whitchurch Commoners – Mr C Mudge

IN ATTENDANCE

Carl Hearn - Town Clerk, Wayne Southall - General Manager, Becky Rowe - Works Manager, Laura Harley - Support Officer (General Manager).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor S Hipsey and Mr A Jarman (Vice Chairman of the Tavistock Cricket Club).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

3. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

- a. The Consultative Group received and endorsed the Notes of the Meeting of the Whitchurch Down Consultative Group held on 3rd October 2023 (proposed Cllr Phillips, seconded Cllr Smith).
- b. The Works Manager explained that the trees that had been planted on Whitchurch Down by an unknown person were not in the best of condition and that the Council would take on their management.

Plasterdown PC reported that the Beating of the Bounds had gone well.

4. REPORTS/DISCUSSION TOPICS

The Town Council gave an update on: -

- a. **D Day 6th June 2024** – The General Manager stated that the beacon would be lit at 9.15pm on 6th June 2024. This would be a simpler event than the one held for the Coronation to befit the

commemorative nature of the occasion. Plasterdown PC would also be lighting its beacon on the same day and that these Notes would constitute formal notification of the event to stakeholders. It was noted that other events, organised by the heritage community and BID would be taking place in Tavistock town centre.

- b. **Goose Fair Park & Ride 2024** – The Works Manager stated that the Park and Ride would be run with the same arrangements as last year. This year’s Goose Fair would take place on 9th October.

Grazing on Whitchurch Down– The Works Manager explained that the Golf Club had expressed concerns regarding cattle on the fairways and greens, primarily relating to health and safety. Attendees were advised that several meetings had been held recently between Whitchurch Commoners and Golf Club representatives about the matter pertaining to what options could be considered. The General Manager relayed his frustrations about attendance at meetings, where unfortunately this matter could have been discussed at any of the last three meetings if both stakeholders had attended the same time. Emphasis was made around ensuring that these forums should focus on ensuring there was a collegiate approach to debate/discussions and that this matter would again be considered at the site meeting walkaround scheduled for June 24.

It was reported that the area at the top end of Down Road where vehicles park was saturated following the extensive wet weather conditions and a quad bike or gator had ridden around the pimple leaving ruts. It was asked if this area could be protected as the existing historic posts which acted as a deterrent to keep people off the moor had been knocked down. It was noted ground conditions were also poor due to the large herd of ponies currently grazing there. It was also reported that an area on Furzy Lane used by cars to park was deteriorating and extending on to the moorland and attendees agreed that this matter and potential mitigating options would be discussed at the June 24 walkaround.

- c. **Stakeholder Relations** – Stakeholders agreed the meeting of the Whitchurch Down working group to discuss the management plan held in January 24 had been extremely positive and proactive and participants were thanked for their time and input. It was agreed that the date of the next workshop meeting for a walkaround would be Friday 14th June, 9am start, meeting at the cattle grid at

Middlemoor, and it was hoped that all stakeholders would have representatives in attendance.

- d. **Whitchurch Down Management Plan** –The Works Manager reported the work to complete the plan was now underway with Cllr Johnson volunteering her time to support the process. It was explained, as derived from the first meeting in Jan 24 that:
- a) The management plan would cover a five-year period running from 2025.
 - b) No new memorial bench applications would be considered on Whitchurch Down but that a memorial tree programme was being drafted as an alternative.
 - c) The Council is considering remedial repairs to three car parks opposite the golf course, subject to available resources.
 - d) Options were being looked at to obtain aerial shots of Whitchurch Down, possibly from the Dartmoor National Park Authority.
 - e) A comprehensive gorse management plan which required all stakeholder buy-in/endorsement, should be compiled.
 - f) Whitchurch Down stakeholders would feed into the Town Council's tree management strategy.
 - g) An open day for the public on Whitchurch Down would be arranged in 2025.
 - h) A biodiversity assessment would be considered (subject to grant funding).
- e. **Pre-meeting written reports** – No reports had been received.

5. REPORTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

- a. Whitchurch Commoners:

Pertaining to matters not already covered above, concerns were raised relating to the number of people using Whitchurch Down to exercise their dogs off leads and reference was made to the associated issues r impacting livestock and that the rules needed to be reviewed and clarified. Drainage issues were also mentioned reference land near Farmwell.

- b. National Park Ranger

Not present – no report received.

- c. Tavistock Cricket Club

It was explained that an incident had occurred recently causing some ground damage, where the delivery driver had not followed clear instructions from the Cricket Club. Attendees were advised that this had been dealt with promptly and that the ground had been reinstated. A subsequent discussion followed relating to residents' concerns around the access track to properties looking towards the Clubhouse, which had some localised areas of deterioration, due to every day wear and tear, and the general consensus was that any such repairing obligation fell to the respective residents in front of the curtilage, but that further information on the matter was being sought.

Attendees were advised that significant improvement works to the clubhouse had been completed and that there was no further major work planned out of season.

d. Tavistock Golf Club

Not present – no report received.

e. Plasterdown Grouped Parish Council

Representatives outlined their concerns relating to regular littering (primarily drinking) often found on the verges of Whitchurch Down. It was explained that the Council undertake weekly checks of Whitchurch Down and do collect litter as and when it is seen.

6. URGENT BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD

It was agreed that as part of the walkabout on 14th June, due to representation from a member of the public, that attendees would look at the trees that had been planted between the Pimple and the golf course.

7. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is on Tuesday 1st October 2024.

The Meeting closed at 6.25pm.

Signed:

Dated:
CHAIRMAN