

NOTES of the Meeting of the **WHITCHURCH DOWN CONSULTATIVE GROUP** held on Wednesday 7th December, 2022 at 5:30pm at the Council Chamber, Drake Road, Tavistock

PRESENT

Councillors B Smith, P Ward

REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER BODIES

Representative of Plasterdown Parish Council – Councillor R Phillips

Dartmoor National Park Authority – Mr R Taylor

Tavistock Cricket Club – Mr A Jarman

Whitchurch Commoners – Mr C Mudge

Tavistock Golf Club – not represented

IN ATTENDANCE

Carl Hearn Town Clerk, Wayne Southall General Manager, Lesley Reeves Community and Compliance Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor Ms T Eperon, B Rowe Works Manager, Mr C Kenworthy Tavistock Golf Club (Secretary)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

3. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Consultative Group received and noted the notes of the meeting of the Whitchurch Down Consultative Group held on 6th July, 2022.

4. REPORTS/DISCUSSION TOPICS

The Town Council gave an update on: -

- a. **Potential development works at Middlemoor** –It was reported that there were concerns amongst the community regarding potential development works at a property on Middlemoor and the potential impact on access and rights of way. Attendees were asked to forward any concerns they may receive. The National Park Ranger reported that informal discussions had taken place regarding proposals to divert the current footpath and that DNP considered the proposal to be an improvement on the existing arrangements. At the time of the meeting a formal application had not yet been submitted. It was also reported that some unauthorised work had taken place on Council land in the area and that the Council would

be putting measures in place to identify who commissioned, and the purpose of, the work. It was clarified that permission of the Council should be sought before undertaking works on Council land.

- b. **Dartmoor National Park Authority Bye-Law changes** – The Town Clerk reported that the meeting originally scheduled for 15th November had been rescheduled to allow for the final draft to be discussed. The National Park Ranger reported that the proposed changes had been well received following initial consultations and full details were available on the Dartmoor National Park website and that some really positive compromises had been reached. It was reported that once a final version of the revised byelaws has been approved, they will be sent to DEFRA for final approval.
- c. **Goose Fair Park and Ride** – The General Manager reported that the Park and Ride site on Whitchurch Down had been a success, with no traffic or ground issues. Stakeholders asked how it compared to the previous years and were informed that it had performed better than the Harford Bridge site. It was reported that the Council planned to use the same site in 2023, but would look at increasing the bus provision.
- d. **Tree planting (lower Whitchurch Down)** – The General Manager reported that six new trees had been planted without permission. Attendees requested photos of the newly planted trees to enable them to consult and provide additional information. It was reported that the Works Manager would continue to liaise with Dartmoor National Park regarding planting scheme as part of the Queen’s Green Canopy Initiative. A request from Plasterdown Grouped Parish Council to plant a tree near Warrens Cross as part of the Green Canopy Initiative was welcomed with location and planting ceremony to be decided.
- e. **Hawthorn management** – The General Manager reported that the works would be outsourced to a contractor in 2023 and the Works Manager would consult with stakeholders to agree locations. It was agreed that the Cricket Club area would be looked at once the building works were completed.
- f. **Pre-meeting written reports** – One report was received prior to the meeting from Tavistock Golf Club.

5. REPORTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

- a. Whitchurch Commoners

An update was provided regarding recent dog attacks and the challenges farmers face in relation to livestock attacks. Thanks were given to the Council for the gorse and road verge management.

- b. National Park Ranger

An update was provided on such aspects as positive public engagement through Goose Fair and Junior Life Skills events, ongoing maintenance of footpath access gates, the use of body cams and partnership working with Devon and Cornwall Police, challenges in relation to bye-law consultation and timescales for Government agreement, and financial challenges that have forced DNP to conduct internal reviews of the current service.

c. Tavistock Cricket Club

An update was provided around the cricket club extension. It was explained that due to heavy rain the ground conditions were not great but measures had been put in place to minimise further damage. It was explained that the Club were confident that the ground issues would be resolved and rectified by April as part of the usual maintenance plan.

d. Tavistock Golf Club

It was reported that works during the previous six months included a new bore hole drilled to allow greenkeepers to continue watering the course throughout the drought. This 2nd bore hole is part of phase one of the plan to provide irrigation to the greens on the course through a small pipe network which is to be connected to this bore hole.

Discussions have been made with the chairman of the commoners and additional discussions to be made with the Council, commoners and DNP next year to ensure everyone agrees with the proposal.

It was also reported that the next quarter will see various works to maintain gorse bushes and various elements of the course including re paving the 2nd tee slope to ensure the safety of golfers.

e. Plasterdown Grouped Parish Council

A concern was raised around missing dog bins and waste not being collected. It was explained that one bin had been relocated due to ongoing damage by livestock and one bin was missing. It was also explained that a contract was in place with WDBC for regular waste collection, however TTC was in regular contact with WDBC regarding the collection schedule not being adhered to and that a meeting was planned for January 2023 where the issue would be raised again.

6. WHITCHURCH DOWN MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

A discussion was held around the production of the Whitchurch Down Management Plan for the period of 2022-2027. It was explained that the Council would circulate the previous plan to stakeholders in the next few weeks for feedback to take forward. Maps highlighting plans for gorse management from the last report would also be circulated.

7. URGENT BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD

It was reported that the Dartmoor Common Owners Association were undertaking research into the level of bike damage on the moors. It was advised that reports of damage could be sent direct to Anne Kelly or passed on via the Chairman.

8. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 25th April, 2023.

The Meeting closed at 6:39pm

Signed:

Dated:
CHAIRMAN