

NOTES of the Meeting of the **WHITCHURCH DOWN CONSULTATIVE GROUP** held on Tuesday 3rd October, 2023 at 5:30pm at the Council Chamber, Drake Road, Tavistock

PRESENT

Councillors A Hutton, Mrs A Johnson, B Smith

REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER BODIES

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

Tavistock Cricket Club – Mr A Jarman

IN ATTENDANCE

Carl Hearn Town Clerk, Wayne Southall General Manager, Becky Rowe Works Manager, Lesley Reeves Community and Compliance Officer, Cllr P Squire – Ward Member

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Nominations were invited for the Election of Chairman of the Consultative Group for the 2023/2024 Civic Year.

It was RESOLVED THAT Councillor Mrs A Johnson be elected Chairman of the Whitchurch Down Consultative Group for the 2023/2024 Civic Year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Nominations were invited for the Election of Vice Chairman of the Consultative Group for the 2023/2024 Civic Year.

It was RESOLVED THAT Andrew Jarman be elected Vice Chairman of the Whitchurch Down Consultative Group for the 2023/2024 Civic Year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Ms A Roberts (Dartmoor National Park)

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

5. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

- a. The Consultative Group received and noted the Notes of the Meeting of the Whitchurch Down Consultative Group held on 25th April, 2023.
- b. There were no matters arising.

6. REPORTS/DISCUSSION TOPICS

The Town Council gave an update on: -

- a. **Goose Fair Park and Ride** – As previously reported the Park and Ride site on Whitchurch Down had been a success in 2022 and would be utilised again in 2023. The General Manager reported that it would be the same footprint and operation as last year. Stagecoach would be providing the bus service, timings slightly changed to reflect earlier finish. Matting would be available if the ground conditions were not good. Any ground damage would be repaired by TTC.
- b. **Middlemoor** –It was reported that DNP had confirmed that the gate to Shorts Down had been reinstated and that no new concerns had been raised.
- c. **Planting Schemes** – it was reported that approximately 12 hawthorn trees were lost on the Down during Storm Eunice in 2022 and TTC is to look into replanting in that area.

It was noted that the trees planted in 2022 by persons unknown were not in a good condition.

Attendees were advised that a Coronation Oak Tree is to be planted by Plasterdown Parish Council on 14th October.

- d. **Stakeholder Gorse Management arrangements** – it was reported that the Works Manager was proposing site visits with stakeholders to consider works for 2024.
- e. **Whitchurch Down Management Plan** – following circulation of the 2016 – 2021 Management Plan, it was reported that not all stakeholders had responded. Stakeholders were asked to discuss the plan with their colleagues and a workshop would be scheduled in 2023 to discuss feedback and proposals.
- f. **Pre-meeting written reports** – Email received from DNP

7. REPORTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

- a. Whitchurch Commoners
Not present – none received
- b. National Park Ranger
Not present – an update on works undertaken in the area since April 2023 was provided.

It was reported that annual path surveys in the local area had been undertaken with checks to be made to all field furniture to ensure safe and fit for purpose.

It was reported that the gate on Whitchurch FP3a had been moved back down to its original position at the foot of the sunken lane.

It was explained that a new replacement gate and post had been fitted beside Stoneycroft in the Sampford Spiney Parish on the Public Footpath.

It was reported that Security Marshalls had been in place this summer to educate and advise evening visitors to Dartmoor, particularly motorhome occupant's, about the relevant bylaws on the Dartmoor commons.

It was explained that following TTC concerns the DNP Sector Ranger had liaised on site with workers from Wales and West utilities about the "storage area" on Whitchurch Down close to the cattle grid. The storage area is in connection to gas works taking place in the nearby housing estate. All relevant information was passed on to Tavistock Town Council.

c. Tavistock Cricket Club

It was reported that the pavilion extension/upgrade had been completed and they were very pleased with the outcome.

Thanks were given for the superb job the TTC Works Team had made on refurbishing the benches, it was reported that the benches had never looked so good.

It was noted that additional repairs had been carried out to the Chollacott Lane gate following a second car collision (TTC undertook the initial repairs). The repairs had been carried out by persons unknown, presumed residents, and they had done an excellent job.

d. Tavistock Golf Club

Not present – none received

e. Plasterdown Grouped Parish Council

It was reported that Beating of the Bounds was planned for 7th October 2023, starting at 10am from the Dartmoor Inn at Merrivale.

8. URGENT BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD

It was reported that a meeting with the Neighbourhood Development Plan Committee and Westcountry Rivers Trust had taken place on 27th July to discuss the Rapid Response Catchments project in the Tiddy Brook catchment area. As part of the project John Hunt, Senior Natural Capital Advisor (Westcountry Rivers Trust), has been working with landowners across Middlemoor to identify possible natural flood management opportunities. As such, John and the GIS team would be mapping and modelling where the hydrological surface flow routes across TTC managed land on Whitchurch Down are likely to run and after further investigation will provide the Council with a report detailing their findings and advice on natural flood management options for this area.

The Works Manager explained that the Bat Survey had been a success with a good uptake from members of the public. Various species had been identified, including some rare species, and it highlighted what a great asset Whitchurch Down is to the community. The findings from the survey will be fed into the National Register and the Whitchurch Down Management Plan.

The Works Manager also reported that she had been approached by a local athletics club regarding some runs across the area. No dates had been agreed at this point.

9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is on Tuesday 16th April 2024.

The Meeting closed at 5:58pm

Signed:

Dated:
CHAIRMAN