**REIGATE HEATH STEERING GROUP**

**Reigate & Banstead Town Hall, Castlefield Road, Reigate**

**Tuesday 10th September 2019 at 6.30pm**

**M I N U T E S**

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| **Membership** | **Comment** |
| **Name** |  | **Position/Representation** |  |
| Cllr Michael Blacker | **MB** | Chairman  |  (Cllr)  | Present |
| Cllr Rosemary Absalom | **RA** | Deputy Chairman  | (Co-opted Cllr) | Present |
| Cllr Christopher Whinney | **CW** | Ward Councillor | (Co-opted Cllr) | Present |
| Mr David Watts | **DW** | Secretary | (RBBC Officer) | Present |
| Mr David Bellamy | **DB** | Reigate Heath Residents’ Association | Present |
| Mr Steve Carter | **SC** | Veterinary Adviser | Apologies  |
| Mr Nigel Ellis | **NE** | RBBC Officer | Absent  |
| Mr Simon Elson | **SE** | Reigate Area Conservation Volunteers | Present |
| Mr Dave Clarke | **DC** | Reigate Heath Golf Club | Present |
| Ms Elinor Leech | **EL** | Reigate Heath Horseriders | Present |
| Ms Susan Medcalf | **SM** | Botanist  | (Co-opted) | Apologies |
| Ms Jenny Newell | **JN** | Surrey Archaeological Society | Present |

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| **19/01** | **Chairman’s opening remarks**  |
|  | The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and apologised for the delay in the meeting. |

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| **19/02** | **Attendance** |
|  | See above. Lee Wilcox, Senior Manager Greenspaces, RBBC also in attendance. Absent. Charles Wragg  |
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| **19/03** | **Approval of minutes of previous meetings** (09 January 2019) |
|  | The minutes for the meeting held on 09 January were agreed and will be added to the RBBC website. Item 06: The Chair reported that since the last meeting he has attempted to contact Susan Medcalf about any monies available for Reigate Heath Maintenance but will need a contact number, SE to provide number for MB. SE confirmed that SM is willing to sit on the Habitat Sub Group and to attend Steering Group meetings. SE also reported that Helen Neave would not be returning to the Steering Group.  |
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| **19/04** | **Steering Group Communication and Communication conduct**  |
|  | The Chair requested that in future emails from Steering Group members about operational matters should be sent directly to him who will pass onto DW. Any policy matters should be sent to the Executive Portfolio Holder Councillor Natalie Bramhall. JN asked how incidents should be reported, DW provided her with the Greenspaces email address that is monitored daily. Steering Group members should use this address and copy in all members when reporting. Any incidents will be sent to the appropriate Team or Officer. The email address is Greenspaces@reigate-banstead.gov.uk CW and JN both asked for an explanation on the communication process for reporting illegal incursions. RA explained that Ward Councillors when aware of such an incident report to the RBBC Duty Officer who will notify either the Joint Enforcement Team (JET) or Greenspaces. DB asked how residents could report incidents using the Report it service on the RBBC website. The link is below:<http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/homepage/76/report_it> SE queried as to whether a representative from the Reigate Society would be attending future meetings, the Chair replied that Charles Wragg has been invited but has not acknowledged the invitation.   |
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| **19/05** | **Management Plan and notes from Graham Steven**  |
|  | DW talked through the notes sent by Graham Steven on the 12th of July in relation to the latest version of the management plan being circulated. There was agreement that the prescriptions in the ten-year work programme is too large and not at all user friendly. DW explained that although this is a nuisance it could be worked with as rewriting it would be very time consuming. An annual work programme would continue to be drawn down from it. Prescriptions that would be non-compliant with the Countryside Stewardship agreement need to be identified and amended.Any prescriptions without a clear rationale or explanation need to be given one.Natural England do not to give advice on day to day management as consent is given under the Countryside Agreement. Any activities that could damage the special interest features must have Natural England consent. DW stated that he still seeks advice on certain matters from Graham Steven who kindly gives it.The wording surrounding Natural England’s approval of chemicals needs to be amended.It was agreed that the Indicators of Success table in the Countryside Stewardship agreement would be included in the appendices as suggested by Graham Steven.It emerged that some members did not have the most up to date version of the management plan and that plans showing boundaries, access etc were missing. DW will send a copy to all members via email. CW requested that the most up to date Terms of Reference are sent to him, the Chair will send a copy of these to him. He also requested that maps from the previous plan be inserted into the new plan preferably in A3 size to make reading easier.   The work programme Autumn 2019- Spring 2020 that was sent to members following the Habitat Sub Group meeting in March 2019 was agreed, NE will be contacted to confirm their agreement. It was noted that both DW and SE had notified the group of all works carried out, DB requested that advance notices be given for works that may impact on residents. DC confirmed that notifications will be sent by the Golf Course when they carry out works. All parties should continue to report to the group before and after works have taken place.EL requested that the Horse Ride be cut back harder, DW replied that the RBBC Ranger has recommended doing this in the winter. DW also pointed out that whilst the horse ride was cut back in the summer the long spells of sun and heavy rain have led to rapid regrowth. LW also commented that this is borough wide which places pressure on resources. The grass cutting regime opposite Flanchford Road cottages was questioned by DB as residents have asked if they are able to carry out extra cuts. The regime is 4 cuts per year, LW said he was happy if residents wished to make extra cuts within reasonable frequency. SE commented that the grass cutting regimes over all areas on the Heath should be visible in the Management Plan, there was agreement for this. DW to investigate the matter. JN highlighted concerns over operations that could damage archaeological features, DW asked that she contact him if she has any concerns with proposed operations. JN also reported that she will circulate the annual condition report by Historic England when it is available.  |
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| **19/06** | **Notice board**  |
|  | It was agreed that the content on the new notice board should include a copy of the Byelaws, clear locations of the Tumuli and Golf course, continue with the existing map on the notice board, notice on dog fouling, copy of work programme and map showing area targeted by work programme (to be changed annually). CW did not agree with using the existing map as it indicates a ‘Druid theme park’ and is highly misleading. CW will send a paper copy of the old map to DW.DW reported that he had sent the board design to Norbury Sawmill for a quote, they said they would not be able to make the board exactly to the design but offered one that was similar. DW to send the details and quote to the Chair. DC kindly brought examples of leaflets that could be produced to further promote the Heath and they could be installed in a drop box on the notice board. Questions were asked how about where leaflets would be stored and who would replenish them. DW raised concerns of the risk of increasing litter problems. The value of QR (Quick Response) codes on the board were discussed and JN suggested whether a QR link to the leaflet could be used as alternative. DW confirmed that it would require assistance from RBBC Communications/Graphics Officer. It was agreed that a signage sub group be formed to develop the notice board plans and to monitor other signs on the Heath. Members who volunteered were JN, EL, the Chair and DW. A meeting will be arranged as soon as possible.SE queried about the new restaurant signs installed by the Golf Course, the Chair will provide further clarification.In addition to this: DW provided an update on the Heathfield Nursery signs, he has spoken to the owner of the Nursery and has explained that RBBC is keen to have the signs removed if the Nursery is no longer trading. The recent refused planning application for the redevelopment of the building has been reopened so it is not yet confirmed whether trading has ceased. DW will call the owner again in a months’ time to get an update.  |
|  | **Meeting adjourned and will resume on the 8th of October at 6.30 pm at the Town Hall**  |
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|  | **RESUMATION OF MEETING. Tuesday 8th of October at 6.30 pm at the Town Hall** |
| **19/** | **Chairman’s opening remarks** |
|  | The Chairman announced that future meetings will be chaired by Councillor Natalie Bramhall. Councillor Blacker will now be the Deputy Chair. Members of the group expressed their thanks to Councillor Blacker for his time as Chairman.  |
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| **19/** | **Attendance**  |
|  | **As previously except below:****Apologies: Stephen Carter, Susan Medcalf****Absent: Charles Wragg ,Lee Wilcox**  |
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| **19/ Update on item 5**  | **Update on Management Plan**  |
|  | DW displayed four additional maps from the previous management plan that will be included into the new management plan as suggested by Councillor Whinney. These are: 1. Location map of Reigate Heath, 2. Reigate Heath boundaries, 3. Land designations, 4. Planning designations. If possible, they will be printed in A3 size to make reading easier. MB will print off version of the Management Plan for JN, DC and CW. CW strongly recommends that they are A3 in size.   |

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| **19/Update on item 6** | **Notice board**  |
|  | Prior to the meeting DB provided information about another notice board manufacturer which may be cheaper. It was commented that the quote from Norbury Sawmill of (£2,081.00 + VAT) is very high. DW noted that the products are of a high quality and they have a good reputation plus they are local business being based in Dorking. DW will look at the other supplier to compare costs. The link to view the board suggested by DB is below: <https://www.theacornworkshop.co.uk/noticeboards-with-doors?lightbox=dataItem-ij03jbz2>  |

**Order of agenda items follows from previous meeting**

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| **19/07** | **Golf course signs. Recent installations to be discussed**  |
|  |  DC circulated a document showing photographs of the new signs in their location. The group expressed their disappointment that they were not consulted prior to these signs being installed as is the protocol of the Steering Group. DC reported that his predecessor Neil Gaynor had initially consulted of the intention to install several signs, but the additional signs had not been. The balance between improving safety for visitors and conserving the natural character of the Heath was discussed as was the management policy of avoiding ‘Clutter’. There was general agreement that the signs need to be of a design that attracts the attention of visitors and they serve this purpose well. There was a mixed opinion on which members liked the colour and design of the signs, but it was agreed that they will remain. They will need to be kept clear of vegetation and should be put on the Golf Club’s grounds maintenance regime. It was agreed that these signs would not set a precedent to expand the range of signage.  |

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| **19/08**  |  **Parking**  |
|  | DW reported that the bus from Moonhall School which has been parking illegally in Flanchford Road car park has been reported to the Joint Enforcement Team (JET). A letter was sent to the school outlining that overnight parking is a breach of the byelaws and that they should stop doing this. The school responded to this letter with a request that they be granted permission to park overnight, permission was not granted, and they were informed in writing. Any further breaches of illegal parking should be reported to the JET Team via the RBBC webpage. <http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20093/community_safety/404/reigate_and_banstead_joint_enforcement_team> In addition RA queried when the surface of the car parks will be repaired and what type of material could be used to provide more durable conditions. DW confirmed that he and the Engineer have inspected the car park and it is on his next maintenance schedule. The type of material used will be subject to approval from Natural England and in accordance with Common Land legislation.DC commented that he has been in conversation with Natural England regarding path repairs on the golf course and is happy to forward suggestions he has received to the group.  |

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| **19/09** |  **Grassland Survey**  |
|  |  DW reported that a grassland survey has been undertaken by Peter Howarth upon recommendation by Susan Medcalf. A full report is to be sent to DW and it will be circulated to group members.  |

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| **19/10** | **Reptile Habitat Conservation: Creation of Hibernaculums**  |
|  |  DW outlined his proposal to create Reptile Hibernaculums using the arisings from SE’s conservation work. He suggested that it would be a good use of the material and enhancing reptile habitats is an objective of the Management Plan. Locations were discussed and it was agreed to build one on the southern slope of the golf course club house in an area that is undisturbed. DW to liaise further with SE on exact location.  |

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| **19/11** | **Any other business**  |
|  |  DB wished to give a vote of thanks to David Hesketh who has recently resigned from the Reigate Heath Golf Club executive committee for his commitment to litter picking on the Heath. All agreed and gave thanks, DB will send this in writing. He was also a member of the Reigate Heath Residents Association. Alastair Watson has replaced his position on the executive committee. |

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| **19/11** |  |
|  | There was a lengthy discussion regarding the use of invalid buggies on Reigate Heath with respect to the request from Mr Hesketh who had contacted Councillor Whinney. It was agreed that the golf club would trial the use of invalid carriages for the duration of 1 year on the basis that a route is agreed prior to the trial commencing. To protect the golf club from injury claims in the event of accidents a legal disclaimer will be produced, anyone wishing to use a buggy on the golf course will be required to sign one. DC will send a copy of the route, disclaimer and rules of buggy use to MB. RA suggested that buggies are fitted with a tracker so that their movement can be tracked to ensure they are being kept to the agreed route, there was agreement for this suggestion. References to disability legislation and landowners’ duties was made by SE for which there was agreement, DB was of the view that buggies may attract other forms of motorised vehicles such as quad bikes. He also suggested that the grounds conditions are unsuitable for buggies, JN agreed with this view.CW commented that the current bylaws would have to be amended as they are very outdated. There was agreement and advice will be sought from RBBC Legal Team. Natural England have been consulted and are supportive of the proposal subject to an agreed route.    |

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| **19/11** |  |
|  |  DB reported that he had been asked by some residents whether the footpath that runs from Bonny’s road to the car park could be improved for walkers as they were getting muddy shoes when walking into Reigate Town centre. EL suggested that this is a Bridleway which will be muddy from horse use. DB commented that there used to be a post division that kept part of the path clear for walkers. DW will investigate.  |

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| **19/11** |  |
|  | SE outlined that there has been no confirmation of approval of the annual work programme by Natural England. DW will seek clarification from GS. SE also asked whether there was a need for another habitat sub group meeting, it was agreed that the next one would be in March 2020. On the 29th of November RACV will be celebrating 30 years of conservation on the Heath and they will be holding a special task day to mark the event.  |

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| **19/11** |  |
|  | JN requested a map showing the access points on the Heath. DW will send her a copy.  |

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| **19/11** |  |
|  | Ranmore Restaurant. SE asked whether the golf club was given permission by the Local Planning Authority to open this facility as a change of use. CW reported that he has had conservations with the LPA about this and that they were consulted. SE requested written evidence from a Planning Officer that states that the activity was carried out legally. MB to provide evidence, CW agreed to send this evidence the next day.  |

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| **19/11** |  |
|  | Terms Of Reference. CW highlighted that the membership in the TOR’s need updating to reflect that Ward Councillors are invited to meetings. He suggested that all relevant papers including minutes of the last meeting and the Agenda by distributed by e-mail to all Steering Group members are sent no less than 14 working days before any Steering Group meeting. The addition of working days would allow sufficient time prior to any weekend when members may be away to read minutes and the Agenda before a meeting. Minutes from sub groups meetings should also be sent out to the wider group within 14 days of the meeting.  |

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| **19/11** |  |
|  | Access points on the Heath. DB reported that the footpath that leads from the club house across Flanchford Road to the White House is badly affected by heavy rain and the top surface is being washed away making access difficult. DW replied that he is aware of this and of another access point by the car park (notice board side) which is vulnerable to erosion. This is exacerbated by walkers, dogs and horses. He has inspected with the Engineer and is looking at possible solutions however Common Land legislation restricts repair materials.  |

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| **19/11** |  |
|  | CW stated that following the illegal parking of caravans on Wray Common earth bunds have been installed to stop such illegal parking. Since caravans have parked illegally on the heath in the past CW enquired whether such bunds are sufficient to exclude caravans. SE reminded the meeting of the conditions of SSSI must be observed.  |

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| **19/12** | **Date of Next Meeting**  |
|  | The next meeting will be on the 15th of January 2020, 6.30 pm at the Town Hall |

**Table of actions**

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|   | **Actions**  |
|  | **Item 4**. All Steering Group members to report Policy matters to Councillor Bramhall Cllr.MrsBramhall@reigate-banstead.gov.uk Incidents should be reported to RBBC Greenspaces Greenspaces@reigate-banstead.gov.uk . Illegal incursions should be reported via <http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/homepage/76/report_it> |
|  | **Item 5.** DW to send group members the most up to date copy of the Management Plan. MB to send CW a copy of the most up to date Terms of Reference. DC to send notifications of works carried out by golf course as per the work programme. DW to provide clarification on the grass cutting regime on Flanchford Road verges.JN to circulate the annual Archaeological condition report from Historic England to Steering Group members when she receives it. MB to print off a copy of the Management Plan for JN, CW and DC.  |
|  | **Item 6.** MB to provide SE with clarification regarding Planning Permission pertaining to the Ranmore Restaurant facility at the Golf Club. CW offered to send evidence also. DW to provide an update on the Heathfield Nursery signs on Flanchford Road verge.DW to compare the costs between the two notice board suppliers.  |
|  | **Item 8.** All members to report illegal parking to JET via <http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20093/community_safety/404/reigate_and_banstead_joint_enforcement_team> DC to forward the suggestion from Natural England regarding resurfacing materials.DW to circulate the Grassland survey when he receives it from Peter Howarth. |
|  | **Item 10.** DW to liaise with SE regarding hibernacula location. |
|  | **Item 11.** DC to send to the group a copy of the legal disclaimer for buggy users, a proposed route and buggy use rules prior to a trial period commencing. DW to investigate amending byelaws on Reigate Heath.DW to investigate the problem on the footpath/bridleway leading from Bonny’s Road to the car park. DW to seek written clarification from GS for approval of the annual work programme.DW to send Reigate Heath access map to JN.DW to investigate erosion at access points at Flanchford road car park and the footpath opposite the White House leading up to the Club House.   |