**REIGATE HEATH STEERING GROUP**

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

**Wednesday, 15 January 2020 at 6.30pm**

**M I N U T E S**

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| **Membership** | | | | | **Comment** |
| **Name** |  | **Position/Representation** | | |  |
| Cllr Natalie Bramhall | **NB** | Chairman and Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services | | (Cllr) | Present |
| Cllr Michael Blacker | **MB** | Ward Councillor | | (Cllr) | Present |
| Cllr Rosemary Absalom | **RA** | Ward Councillor | | (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 | | | Present |
| Mr Nigel Ellis | **NE** | RBBC Officer | | | Absent |
| Mr Simon Elson | **SE** | Reigate Area Conservation Volunteers | | | Present |
| Mr Dave Clarke | **DW** | Reigate Heath Golf Club | | | Present |
| Ms Elinor Leech | **EL** | Reigate Heath Horseriders | | | Present |
| Ms Susan Medcalf | **SM** | Botanist | (Co-opted) | | Absent |
| Ms Jenny Newell | **JN** | Surrey Archaeological Society | | | Present |
| Mr Trevor Mansfield | **TM** | Natural England | | | Present |

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| **20/01** | **Chair’s opening remarks and meeting attendance** |
|  | The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting. An introduction was given by all members. Also in attendance was Holly Shaw, Reigate Heath Residents Association who will be replacing David Bellamy at future meetings. Trevor Mansfield introduced himself as Graham Stevens replacement as the representative from Natural England. |
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| **20/02** | **Apologies for absence** |
|  | No apologies |
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| **20/03** | **Minutes of the last meeting** |
|  | Actions from last meeting  Item 4. Policy and incident reporting procedure being followed. Resolved.  Item 5. DW to send Terms of Reference to all members.  DC to provide advance notifications of golf course works as well as post reports.  DW has provided clarification on the grass cutting regime on Flanchford Road. The verges are cut to a height of 75 mm in August. Resolved.  DW and JN to investigate whether an up to date Historic England Archaeology report for Reigate Heath is available for viewing.  MB to print off a copy of the Management Plan for those who need it. Maps to be printed in A3 size.  Item 6. MB to provide clarification to SE on Planning permissions regarding the Ranmore restaurant sign at the golf club. Resolved.  DW has compared the costs of notice board suppliers, both are similar, Norbury Sawmill will be the chosen option. Resolved.  Item 8. Members are reporting illegal parking to Joint Enforcement Team. Resolved.  DW to circulate grassland survey. It has still not been received, all members of the group are unhappy about the delay.  Item 10. DW to liaise with SE about hibernaculum locations. SE to check his email that DW sent him on this matter.  Item 11. DC to send disclaimer and route for proposed golf buggy trial. Resolved.  DW to investigate amending Byelaws on Reigate Heath. An application needs to be made to the Secretary of State as well as a full consultation process. DW to circulate byelaws to members and it will be discussed as the next meeting.  DW to investigate the problem with the footpath/bridleway leading from Bonny’s Road to the car park. DW commented that this is a bridleway and it is reasonable to expect it to be muddy with horse use. DB commented that at one time the path was divided by wooden posts, the group had safety concerns for horses and riders. The Chair agreed to give this matter consideration.  DW to forward approval of 2019/2020 work programme from Natural England. Resolved.  DW to send access map to JN. Resolved.  DW to investigate erosion on access points from Flanchford road car park and opposite the White House. To be discussed under Item 7.  There were no disagreements with the minutes. |
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| **20/04** | **Natural England: New contact for Reigate Heath** |
|  | Trevor Mansfield (TM) advised that Graham Stevens is still at Natural England for any advice. TM reported that as a priority he will be reviewing the condition of other SSSI Units on Reigate Heath that are not within ownership of RBBC. RA queried whether Natural England would be giving consideration to the extension of the AONB boundary from Reigate Hill to Reigate Heath. TM could not confirm this but indicated that if his seniors are involved then it is likely to be the case, he will check to see if there are any time frames, he can provide. SE commented that a Landscape Architect consultancy has been commissioned by Surrey County Council and District and Borough Councils to report on this. The Chair suggested that RHSG invites Denise Turner Stewart Cabinet Member of Surrey County Council for a tour of the AONB boundaries that are under review.  CW outlined that recent attendance from past Natural England contacts has been minimal, TM agreed to attend when his diary allowed. DW to liaise with TM to ensure he can attend future meetings.  SE wished to register a thank you to Graham Stevens for all his advice and help for Reigate Heath matters. The group agreed unanimously. |
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| **20/05** | **Work Programme: Updates from members** |
|  | DW reported on the success of the recent heath restoration works in Area 2.  SE reported that the work RACV recently carried out in the northern area adjacent to Buckland Road went very well there was a good public response and he thanked RBBC for the swift clearance of arisings. DW confirmed that all stumps in both areas have been treated with herbicide.  DC reported that the golf club carried out gorse clearance using mechanical ‘swiping’ on the western slope of the club house (Area 4). There was concern that this operation could cause damage to archaeological features. SE commented that the swiping was not discussed at the last Habitat Sub Group meeting, preference would be that in future gorse is cleared using tools such as bow saws, chainsaws or brush cutters as they have less impact on the ground. DW to circulate the work programme for clarification.  DC also reported that repairs have been made to the footpath that runs from the 1st Tee to the 10th Tee. Fittleworth Stone has been used to make the repairs.  Further work to be carried out by volunteers is scheduled for the remaining winter period.  DB circulated photographs of a wet spot that has developed near the pavilion. A discussion was held as to whether this would have a negative impact on public access. SE commented that any increased wetland areas are positive for biodiversity but agreed that it should be managed to find a balance so that access is not compromised.SE asked TM whether Natural England held an up to date Water Level Management Plan, he does not know but agrees there should be one.  It was agreed to discuss the management of wet spots at the next Habitat Sub Group. |
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| **20/06** | **Management Plan** |
|  | The Chair stated that she would like to submit the Management Plan to the next Executive meeting for adoption by Council.  SE is not happy with the Management Plan in its current form as in his view it lacks key information on projected habitat restoration, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and access management. SE and CW to send their comments to the Chair who will discuss with DW and Lee Wilcox.  CW pressed his view that printed copies of the plan should feature some maps in A3 size to make viewing easier. There was agreement that all maps could be printed in A3 size. MB will send a copy of the plan to those who require it. |
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| **20/07** | **Repairs to access points: Flanchford Road car park and footpath from Flanchford Road up to the Club House** |
|  | DW expressed his wish to make repairs to the two access points that are becoming badly eroded making access difficult. He asked the group for any suggestions, SE answered that this topic should be addressed in the Management Plan. DW replied that managing access is addressed and the finer details of repairs can be discussed during meetings. JN expressed her concern that the Tumuli next to the car park is at risk of disturbance from visitors and that they should be diverted away from it. DW suggested using a mini digger to reprofile the sand on both access points, EL suggested that the sand could be penned in using logs. There were no objections. SE suggested that the access point by the car park could be left as a natural feature and visitors are diverted around it. This will be discussed further at the next habitat sub group. Any works that involves machinery will require consent from Natural England as it is an operation that can damage the SSSI. |
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| **20/08** | **Reigate Heath Signs: New notice board and permitted horse ride way marker replacements** |
|  | DW circulated a very rough draft of the Reigate Heath notice board graphic, he had only received it the day before the meeting so there was no time to circulate it. Comments were largely negative, DW will arrange a meeting with RBBC Communications and Graphics designers in February, the Chair and members of the sign sub group will attend also. DW will send a copy to all members and they should send their comments about the graphic to the Chair by the 31st of January.  EL and JN recently carried out a survey of horse-riding signs and way marker posts. The group went through the survey and agreed on which posts and sings need removing or replacing. DW will order the materials with the intention to install between March and June. SE offered help from RACV which DW thanked him for. SE passed his thanks to JN and EL for the time taken to compile the survey. |
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| **20/09** | **Ranmore Restaurant (Reigate Heath Golf Club)** |
|  | It was confirmed that the golf club was granted Planning Permission to install the Ranmore Restaurant sign at the entrance to the golf club.  SE queried why parking bays in the golf club’s car park were reserved for golf members when the car park is owned by RBBC and therefore all bays should be available for users of the Heath. DC will provide confirmation on the parking rights here. Any issues relating to parking matters should be discussed at future meetings. |
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| **20/10** | **Heathfield Nursery Planning Application** |
|  | The recent Planning Application for the demolition of Heathfield Nursery and rebuild of new homes was discussed. After a vote there was a majority objection for this application. The three Ward Councillors abstained from voting. The Chair will notify the Planning Team of the verdict.  The Chair outlined that any future high-profile Planning Applications would be discussed in a separate meeting with RHSG members.  CW requested that Reigate Heath residents are notified of the Planning Application outcome through the Reigate Heath Residents Association. |
| **Trevor Mansfield left the meeting at 8.30 pm** | |
| **20/11** | **Any Other Business** |
|  | Overnight Parking at Flanchford Road car park.  There have been several reported incidents of overnight parking in the car park, the JET Team have been made aware and have used registration details provided to investigate the matter. It was agreed that sign be erected informing drivers that overnight parking is prohibited under the Byelaws and that they can overnight park in Gloucester Road Car Park. DW asked the Chair whether the cost should come from the JET budget, the Chair agreed that it should.  SE reported that another vehicle overnight parking and he believes it to be used by the driver of the Moonhall School minibus who was recently sent a letter outlining the legal implication for unauthorised parking. DW will report the incident to JET.  Golf Course buggies.  DC provided a proposed route of the trial course and a draft legal disclaimer that buggy drivers would have to sign before operating them. There were concerns over the likelihood of drivers keeping to the route, the attraction of other vehicles on the Heath and the overall safety of the buggies. It was confirmed that one golf member who has mobility problems is using an invalid carriage modified for golf use. The question of how legally correct this is was asked. DC argued that under the byelaws invalid carriages are exempt from vehicle restrictions, the Chair commented that this is for a Legal Expert to determine. The Chair will follow this up with the RBBC Legal Team and arrange a visit to the golf club to look at the buggy. The Chair to liaise with DC. Comments from Greenspaces and the Chair on the disclaimer and the route are to be submitted to DC.  The matter is unagreed and not resolved, it will be added to the next agenda. |
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| **20/12** | **Date(s), time(s) and venue(s) for future Steering Group meeting(s)** |
|  | **The date of the next meeting will be arranged via email as well as a date for the next Habitat Sub Group meeting.** |
| **The meeting closed at 9.30 pm**  **Table of Actions** | |
| **20/13** | **Actions** |
|  | Item 3. Minutes: DW to circulate currents Terms of Reference.  DC to send advance notifications of works carried out by Golf Club.  DW and JN to investigate Archaeological report by Historic England.  MB to print a copy of Management Plan with A3 size maps for those who need it  SE to check email sent by DW on hibernaculum location.  DW to circulate Byelaws to RHSG members. |
|  | Item 4. DW to liaise with TM about dates when he is available for the next meeting. |
|  | Item 5. DW to circulate work programme for the clarification on golf course work. |
|  | Item 6. SE and CW to send their comments on the Management Plan to the Chair DW and the Chair to discuss comments. |
|  | Item 7. Access repairs to be added to the next habitat sub group agenda. |
|  | Item 8. All members to send their comments on the notice board graphics to the Chair by the 31st January. DW will arrange a meeting with Graphics, Communications, the Chair and sign sub group. |
|  | Item 10. The Chair to notify Planning Team of RHSG’s comments on the Heathfield Nursery Planning Application. |
|  | Item 11. DW to report further overnight parking in Flanchford Road to JET  Greenspaces and the Chair to send their comments about the proposed buggy routes and disclaimer to DC.  DC and the Chair to arrange a viewing of buggy.  DW to add Golf Course buggy to the next agenda. |