



REIGATE HEATH STEERING GROUP Meeting via Zoom video conference call Wednesday 3rd March 6.30 pm **MINUTES**

Membership			Comment
Name		Position/Representation	
Cllr Natalie Bramhall	NB	Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services (Cllr) (Chairman)	Present
Cllr Michael Blacker	MB	Ward Councillor (Deputy Chairman) (Cllr)	Present
Cllr Rosemary Absalom	RA	Ward Councillor (Co-opted Cllr)	Present
Cllr Christopher Whinney	CW	Ward Councillor (Co-opted Cllr)	Absent
Mr David Watts	DW	Secretary (RBBC Officer)	Present
Ms Holly Short	DB	Reigate Heath Residents' Association	Present

Mr Steve Carter	SC	Veterinary Adviser	Present
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)	Present
Ms Jenny Newell	JN	Surrey Archaeological Society	Present
Mr Trevor Mansfield	TM	Natural England	Present

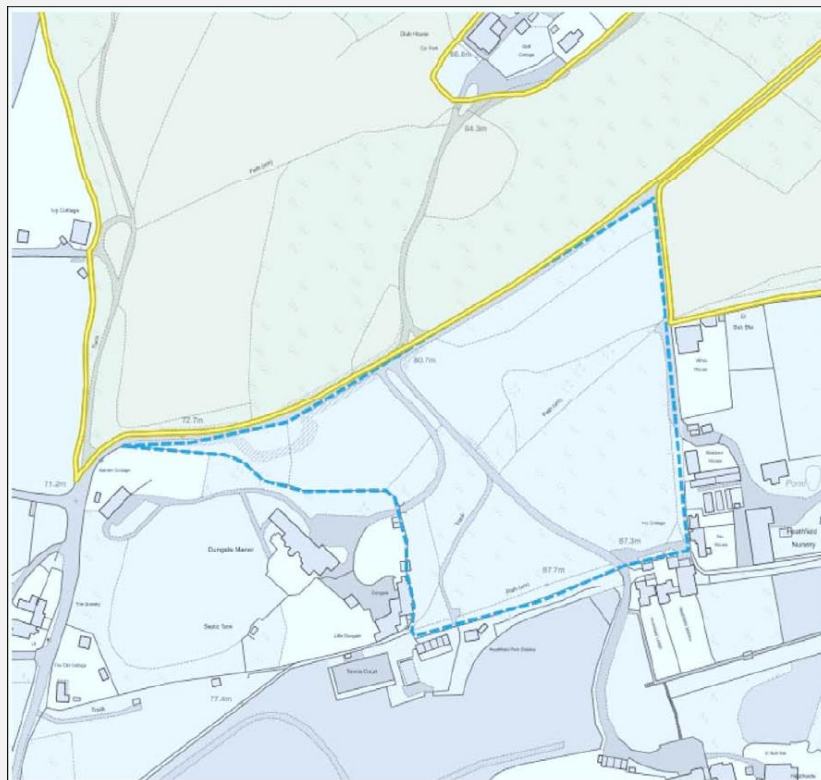
21/01	Chair's opening remarks and meeting attendance
	The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting.

21/02	Apologies for absence
	No apologies

21/03	Minutes of the last meeting
	<p>MB reported that efforts to contact Charles Wragg from the Reigate Society have been unsuccessful. MB will now contact the Reigate Society directly regarding a representative attending steering group meetings.</p> <p>The minutes agreed and no further comments.</p>

21/04 Reigate Heath SSSI extension


TM provided an update on the SSSI boundary extension which is shown in the below plan submitted by Natural England which contains species rich grassland and lowland heath.



Reigate Heath SSSI Extension area

Key
Ordnance Survey (Greyscale) © Ordnance Survey

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 Map Produced from WebMap2 on 09/10/20
Map Projection: British National Grid
Map Scale at A4: 1:2,500

This was welcomed by the steering group

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Heading H2

21/05	Car parking impacts on Bonnys/Flanchford Road
	<p>HS reported on persistent car parking on the edges of the heath along Bonnys and Flanchford Road. There is an evident risk to the safety of heath users, motorists and residents caused by congestion and vehicular movement. HS proposed putting in measures to control this problem. Installation of wooden posts was discussed in detail, JN questioned who would be responsible for installation and maintenance, NB confirmed it would be Greenspaces. JN also raised concerns about damage to archaeological and ecological features, DW commented that under Common Land Legislation a section 38 application to the Secretary of State would have to be made for consented works which would be a lengthy process. RA suggested making use of the Surrey Hills ANOB model that addresses driving and parking problems. MB objected to using post making a preference towards enlarging the car park, SE objected to this on the basis that it would be at the expense of the SSSI features. Rather RBBC should concentrate on issuing more efficient enforcement of heath byelaw infringements. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to capture the positive use of the heath and wider open spaces as a tool to combat illegal parking. NB agreed to take this matter up with the head of service for Neighbourhood Operations. SC questioned why double yellow lines could not be used, NB commented that this would require SCC input and would be a lengthy process. It was agreed that MB would progress this idea to SCC Cllr Duff if enforcement does not solve the problem. SE suggested public engagement on this matter through 'Love where you live' campaign, NB confirmed RBBC is currently undertaking PR initiatives of this nature. It was agreed that a temporary no parking sign be installed by RBBC.</p>

21/06	Permissive horse ride repairs
	<p>EL reported that some of the horse rides are becoming deeply rutted making riding difficult. The group was asked for their comments on using a digger to make repairs to the affected areas. DW commented that Natural England may object to this, TM agreed that Natural England would need to provide consent for works of such nature. JN reported of horse damage evident on other section of the heath where riders have not kept to the rides however it is not known if this is a consequence of deep ruts, EL did not think so. SM suggested that the SSSI features of the heath could benefit by the removal of scrub encroachments along the effected horse rides. SE questioned who would fund the repair works, NB suggested that CIL allocated funding could be sought for a project of this nature. It was agreed that a subgroup meet within 3 weeks</p>

	to discuss the matter further and report back at the next meeting. Members who volunteered to be part of the subgroup were EL, JN, MB and SM.
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21/07	SES Water and BT Open Reach applications for easements
	<p>DW provided an update that Sutton and East Surrey Water have recently expressed interest in obtaining a easement to connect to an existing water pipe located on the golf course adjacent to Bonny's Road, it is for the purpose of serving one of the Skimmington Cottages. They have been advised that they would require permission under SSSI and Common Land Legislation and have not proceeded with their application to date. DW to submit any plans that SES send.</p> <p>DW provided an update that BT Open Reach are currently applying for an easement to install an underground tele-comms connection between two existing masts located in the SSSI woodland opposite Ivy Cottage and White House, Flanchford Road. DW has issued BT Open Reach with a tree root protection zone plan to ensure mature trees are not damaged. Natural England have requested they submit a method statement before any consent is given. TM said is not aware of any application. DW provided him with the name of Natural England Officer managing the application so he can check.</p> <p>SE requested that the Steering Group create a protocol of standards and conditions that can be issued to utility companies when making such applications. All agreed this would be worthwhile. DW will prepare a protocol for utility operations on Reigate Heath.</p>

21/08	Memorial Bench application
	DW requested the groups comments on an application for a memorial bench on the edge of the 4th golf course fairway due north from the club house. Whilst the golf club did not object there was a unanimous preference to replace one of the other damaged benches with a memorial bench with the view of reducing clutter.

21/09	Any other business
	<p>HS reported residents have complained about overgrown holly opposite Skimmington Cottages being used for a toilet. DW requested that RBBC receives reports of this nature in good time so they can be actioned appropriately and raised during Steering Group meetings. DW confirmed that this holly was thinned two years ago and can be done again this year outside of the bird nesting season. DW explained that it is gradually thinned to ensure that the mature trees that it surrounds are not suddenly exposed to extreme climates which could cause harm.</p> <p>HS asked why the bridlepath that runs from Bonny's road to Flanchford Road was not repaired like the section by the Skimmington Pub. DW explained that the bridlepaths are SCC right of ways, therefore only they could answer this. NB will investigate this matter at SCC.</p> <p>HS asked whether the litter bins on the heath could be emptied more frequently, NB will ask the cleansing team to carry out an extra round. NB confirmed that RBBC can facilitate volunteer litter picks if they get in touch. JN reported that broken litter bins were not being replaced, JN will provide NB with the location so she can send to RBBC Cleansing.</p> <p>SM enquired when there would be another habitat group meeting. DW agreed that they of value, MB will chair the meeting and liaise with DW to arrange a next meeting. SE agreed and requested that Work Programme and Management Plan be on the next agenda.</p> <p>SM suggested holding open days and exhibitions in the sports pavilion to better engage with the public using the heath. SC commented that support for this has declined over the years but was in full support. The former organiser of heath events recently passed away this would be a good opportunity for a memorial occasion. SC left the meeting for another appointment. SE suggested a 'Love your heath' day which would also help to connect with new users. TM confirmed Natural England held similar events on sites in the Thames Basin and offered support for any events on the heath. NB agreed to plan an event for August when COVID restriction may have relaxed. SM, SE, HS, JN and SC also offered assistance. A meeting to discuss further will be held within 3 weeks.</p>

	<p>SM asked whether a Lighting Plan for Bat Conservation existed, there is concern that the levels of light from buildings around the heath may be having a negative impact on bat populations. RA commented that bat conservation and buildings is regulated through the local planning process, she offered to share a recent report of bats and buildings with the group. DW offered to share the last bat survey on the heath with TM.</p> <p>SE reported that this topic was addressed at the recent Planning and Biodiversity Conference. Unfortunately, RBBC did not send a representative to attend. Bat walks could be included in Love your Heath day.</p>
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21/10	Date of next meeting
	To be arranged by DW who will contact members for their availability.

End of meeting.

Table of actions

Item	Actions
21/03	MB to contact the Reigate Society about nominating a representative to attend meetings
21/05	RBBC to install a temporary no parking sign along Bonnys Road
21/06	Horse ride group to meet within three weeks and report back to Steering Group upon repair strategy
21/07	DW to prepare a protocol for utility operations on Reigate Heath
21/09	DW to arrange holly thinning when appropriate
21/09	NB to investigate Reigate Heath SCC bridleway repairs
21/09	JN to send NB location of broken bin, NB to forward to Cleansing Team
21/09	DW to add Work Programme and Management Plan to the next agenda
21/09	Reigate Heath events group to meet within 3 weeks and report ideas back to the group
21/09	RA to share bat and building report with group
21/10	DW to share Reigate Heath bat survey with TM

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