

# DRAFT

## THE BEACON HILL SOCIETY

### Minutes of Meeting held Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018

#### Somerset Earth Sciences Centre Moon's Hill Quarry Stoke St Michael

1. Chairman - Richard Raynsford opened the meeting at 19.00hrs and welcomed those present.

Present: Richard Raynsford (Chairman); Peter Banks (Treasurer/Membership); Lesley Stewart (Secretary); Matt Brookbank (Publicity/Website); Fran Britten; Paula Jordan; Christine Mayle; Lucy Chard; Paul Newman; Janet Raynsford

Apologies: Paul Allen (Woodland Trust); Marion Black; Jennie O'Kane; Mary Newman; David Thorley; Sarah Hutchinson; Bo Walsh; Jo Baverstock; Rick Gledhill; Stuart Jenkins

2. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as amended:

Treasurer's Report: should read ... "a credit balance of £891.43"

3. There were no matters arising from the minutes and not on the Agenda

#### 4. Officers' Reports:

Chairman: Richard extended his welcome to all members present

Secretary: Lesley confirmed that a hard copy of correspondence from Paul Allen of the Woodland Trust and a copy of Chris Smith's email was attached to the Agenda given to all members present.

Treasurer/Membership: Peter informed the members that the current balance of the Society's account remained at £891.43. The Petty Cash holds £32.30; the increase includes subscriptions from three new members who joined at the Shepton Show and sale of booklets.

Events: Mary was not present but Lesley reminded members that the Fungus Foray (grammar courtesy of Paul Newman) will take place on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> October commencing 2.00pm and was limited to members and close family only.

Publicity/Web site manager: Matt confirmed that the website was fully updated with details of the quarterly meeting and the Fungus Foray.

#### 5. Beacon Society

##### Future projects and events:

1. Peter suggested that a litter pick be organised. He reminded the Society that Paul Allen (WT) had previously informed members that the WT would undertake litter picks at the Woods. As this has not yet happened it was decided that Paul should be contacted (on his return from holiday) to enquire whether this assistance was still available from the WT and when it might take place.

2. Janet asked whether the Society had made any further progress with a calendar. She suggested that it could be prepared in readiness for sale at the 2019 Shepton Show. There was a brief discussion regarding cost, availability of suitable photos and the short "window" for sale – agreed to be between September and January in any year. Matt reminded members that the Beacon Hill

booklet required updating. Peter confirmed that there were very few booklets available and a reprint was required. Peter has a digital copy of the booklet and he and Matt will liaise to organise an update and reprint and Matt volunteered to update the archaeology section.

3. Paula asked whether it would be feasible to set up a Sculpture Trail through the Woods to encourage visitors. This has been a success elsewhere. Members were reminded that permission would be required from the Woodland Trust as well as finding local sculptors who might be interested in the project.

4. Peter asked for volunteers for a sapling clearance from the Barrows in the Woods, before they grew too large and their removal would cause damage. It was agreed that this would take place on 24<sup>th</sup> November, starting at 10am.

### **Shepton Show – debrief**

Members who had manned the Beacon Hill stand in the Heritage Tent at the Show confirmed that it had been successful. The Society boards had been revamped by Peter and Matt and raised comments from many visitors – some of whom were not aware of the location of the Woods! Three new members joined at the Show and several booklets were sold.

### **Web site**

1. Matt that the web site was running well and has been updated with details of forthcoming events.

2. Matt continues to research and update the archaeology information on the web site. He is currently researching excavations which took place in the Woods in 1949 and 1952 and will be contacting the Stoke St Michael caving group in the hope of locating any relevant documents.

### **6. Woodland Trust**

1. Richard read out an email from Bo concerning the meeting which members had had with Paul Allen at the Woods in September. Members had a copy of the email which Paul had sent in reply to Richard's request for clarification concerning the Management Plan.

The major alteration to the Management Plan, which was initiated by Jo Middleton, is that there will not be 30m clearances in the Woods but a 1 in 5 thinning of trees (this will vary across site depending on species, size and location and discussion with English Heritage with regard to the SAM).

2. Peter confirmed that Chris Smith, who had provided the original ecological survey of the Woods, has agreed that he would be happy to provide an updated report for the Society and the Woodland Trust, subject to paying his fees for the production of the same. There was a further discussion about this. Paul Allen had commented at the meeting the Woods in September that an updated Eco report could be useful provided it contained "repeatable methodology" and could be undertaken on the same principles in the future. Matt, with assistance from Lesley and Peter, is to contact Chris Smith in respect of this.

It was agreed by members present that the revision of the timber clearance was acceptable management for plantation trees but they expressed concern that until after 2022 no areas in the Woods were now to be cleared in a way which would allow diversity and a potential reintroduction of native species of trees eg.oak. It was felt that the Society should perhaps make enquiries as to

whether this recent change of tree management was the result of a revision of national WT policy. Members expressed concern that WT liaison with the Society was still not as close as expected.

3. The board at the entrance to the Wood containing information about the Society was discussed again. It had been discussed previously (October meeting 2017) and Paul Allen had not raised any objections. Matt will obtain some quotes for a suitable board which will be in keeping with the Woodland Trust board and will have the Society name and web site details for contact. Confirmation of approval of the design will be sought from the Woodland Trust before purchase.

#### **Any Other Business**

1. Paula gave details of a talk taking place at Pilton Village Hall on 18<sup>th</sup> October (Bo Walsh and MDC). She reminded members that there is also a Tree Conference at the Merlin Theatre in Frome on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> October.
2. Matt is to contact Roy Vbranch about Quern stones which have been found locally
3. Bo raised the idea of a Moth Day and/or a Bat Day to take place in the Woods in 2019. Adel Avery is to be contacted to see whether this is possible.

**Next Meeting: Wednesday January 16<sup>th</sup> 2019 7pm Somerset Earth Sciences Centre, Moon's Hill Quarry, Stoke St Michael**

Meeting closed at 20.20pm