

THE BEACON HILL SOCIETY

Minutes of meeting held Wednesday 10th July 2019

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

1. Chairman :- Matt Brookbank opened the meeting at 19.00hrs, welcoming all members present.

Present : Matt Brookbank (Chairman, Publicity/Website); Peter Banks (Treasurer/Membership); Lesley Stewart (Secretary); Mary Newman (Events co-ordinator); Fran Britten; Richard Raynsford; Janet Raynsford; Margaret Hares; Paul Newman; Nicola Stoat; Kevin Gibbs

Apologies : Paul Allen (Woodland Trust); Marion Black; Paula Jordan; Jennie O'Kane; Jo Baverstock

2. The minutes of the previous meeting (AGM) were approved.

3. Matters arising from the minutes and not on the Agenda : Peter reminded those present that there are still 3 vacancies on the Committee

4. Officers Reports :

Chairman:

(a) Matt extended his thanks to Mary for letting him have the catalogue and listings of the items from Shepton Mallet Museum which have been scattered across the County and are likely now in Taunton. It will take some time to collate all the information but he will let members know what he discovers.

(b) Matt provided details of the new posts etc. for the information board at the entrance to the Woods that the Woodland Trust had put up. He thanked Peter for his assistance in repairing the information board surround and remounting the same on the new posts. There was a brief discussion about the possibility of an updated and laminated information board being supplied by the Woodland Trust but it was agreed that this is not likely to occur in the very near future.

(c) The Eco survey has taken place, undertaken by the Woodland Trust. It is not yet available to the Society but it is hoped that this will be resolved in the coming weeks. It was agreed that it will be an interesting exercise to compare the initial Eco survey, done by Chris Smith, to the new one in order to see what changes have taken place within the Woods.

(d) Matt informed those present that he is now a Woodland Trust volunteer (subject to the completion of further courses) which will allow him to lead walks in the Woods and will provide insurance cover when this is done. All members congratulated him on his success.

Secretary: Nothing to report

Treasurer/Membership:

(a) Peter informed those present that there were now 17 members.

(b) As of the Bank statement up to the 21st June 2019 closing credit balance for the Society account was £1148.94

He confirmed that £260.00 from Rod Hill for the Dennis Hill Bequest was to be paid to St Aldhelm's School. Further deductions of £45 paid to Frome Bats in Care as a donation for the talk at the AGM and £50 to SESC for the hire fees for meetings until the 2020 AGM will mean an actual balance of £793.94.

(c) In respect of the Dennis Hill Bequest, Peter received a letter from the School thanking the Society for funding for the continued annual visit the Woods. It was agreed that this letter should be passed on to Rod Hill, via Mary but she will also remind the Headmistress that the bequest is from the family of Dennis Hill and not the Society.

(d) Peter confirmed that the changes to signatories for the Society cheques has been accepted by HSBC. Matt, Peter, Mary and Lesley are now registered signatories.

(e) Peter confirmed that there are now only 2 Beacon Hill booklets available. These are fundamentally correct, apart from the dates in the final paragraph of the booklet. It was agreed that the booklet should be updated but this was not essential at this time. It was agreed that the pamphlet which is available at the TIC should be reproduced ready for the Mid-Somerset Show. Nicola has very kindly agreed to obtain 50 copies and to get these folded in readiness for the Show. All members thanked her for her help.

Events: Matt told the members present about the Bluebell Survey which had been undertaken and showed the map he had been able to produce designating areas of the Woods which have Bluebell coverage. Members were pleased to see how widespread this was. Margaret asked whether any Spanish Bluebells had been discovered. Only one plant had been definitely identified and removed.

A few members met in the Woods for a walk and talk led by Matt as a run through for his Archaeology Walk which is proposed for later in the year. Those who were able to attend agreed that it had been very interesting

Publicity/Web site manager: Matt confirmed that the website is running successfully and looks exactly as it had before. He confirmed that the cost was as reported at the AGM and he will provide Peter with the necessary paperwork for payment of £40 to cover the next 3 years. Matt has also been revising the Society's Facebook page set up. There was a brief discussion about non-members being able to access details of the Society's programmes via Facebook. It was suggested that anyone attending these who was not a member could be asked to make a donation to the Society at the time.

5. Beacon Hill Society – events/projects

(a) It is too late to undertake a Meadow Walk, which had been suggested at the AGM. However, a Bat Walk has been scheduled for Wednesday 11th September in Great Elm aiming for arrival about 6.00pm. Further details will be provided by Jennie, Nicola and Jo nearer the time.

(b) There will be a walk in the Woods in conjunction with Mendip Rocks 2019 (SESC) on Saturday 12th October followed by a series of talks at the SESC commencing at 1.00pm. The cost for attending the talks will be £20, payable on the door.

(c) The Fungus Foray will take place on Sunday 20th October 2019, starting at 10.00am. It has been suggested that the foray is followed by lunch, locally. Mary will be liaising with Len about this and members will be informed.

(d) Matt has also been revising the Society's Facebook page set up. There was a brief discussion about non-members being able to access details of the Society's programmes via Facebook. It was suggested that anyone attending these who was not a member could be asked to make a donation to the Society at the time.

(e) Peter suggested that any members attending the walk in October could remove saplings around the barrows, if appropriate. Fran suggested that any small saplings removed could be offered to Rocky Mountain Store as hedging plants rather than see them die. Matt has agreed to take some for his ongoing hedging at home.

(f) Other working parties will be organised for next year.

Mid Somerset Show – The Society boards will be put up in the Heritage Tent. Matt will help Peter with put up and take down but it was agreed that it is not necessary for the display to be “manned” throughout the day. It was suggested that any member who is at the Show could check that all was in order at any time through the day and answer any questions if required. Pamphlets will be available and a box will be available for interested parties to leave their details to be contacted after the Show.

6. Woodland Trust

The Eco survey has been prepared but is not yet available. Matt will keep members informed of progress.

Peter read out an email from Paul Allen. It seems that the proposed thinning works are unlikely to take place this year as the WT has not yet heard from contractors for the work. The work along the roadside is also not likely to take place this year, either. The WT have laid the blame on Somerset Highways and their delay in providing the necessary road closure licences. Paul did take the opportunity to thank the Society for regular communications and being proactive in respect of the maintenance of the Woods.

Any Other Business

(a) Matt told members that the local quarry had been extending their waste tip and, unfortunately, this had led to the destruction of one of three barrows identified at Three Ashes Lane.

(b) On a more positive note, next year marks the 200th anniversary of the first dig at Beacon Hill. There was a discussion as to whether it would be possible to arrange some sort of celebration. It was agreed that Matt will contact Wells Museum in order to try and collect some of the dispersed artefacts together for a display at Wells Museum.

Next Meeting: Wednesday October 9th 7pm Somerset Earth Sciences Centre, Moon's Hill Quarry, Stoke St Michael

Meeting closed at 20.26pm

FUTURE DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Mid Somerset Show – Sunday 18th August (at the existing venue)

*Mendip Rocks – Walk in Woods from 10.00 (free) Talk at SESC from 1.00pm (£20 on door to incl. afternoon tea) **To book :** www.mendiphillsaonb.org.uk/events/*

Alternatively – contact adel@earthsciencecentre.org.uk tel: 01749 840156

Fungus Foray – 20th October from 10.00am Lunch afterwards TBA