

THE BEACON HILL SOCIETY  
Minutes of meeting held Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020  
Waggon and Horses Free House Old Frome Road  
Shepton Mallet

1. Chairman :- Matt Brookbank opened the meeting at 19.10hrs, welcoming all members present to the unanticipated venue

Present : Matt Brookbank (Chairman, Publicity/Website); Peter Banks (Treasurer/Membership); Lesley Stewart (Secretary); Mary Newman (Events co-ordinator); Richard Raynsford; Janet Raynsford; Margaret Hares; Paul Newman; Jennie O'Kane; Nicola Stoaite

Apologies Paula Jordan; Jo Baverstock; Lucy Chard; Stuart Jenkins; Doug Robinson

2. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as drawn.

3. Matters arising from the minutes and not on the Agenda : None

**4. Officers Reports :**

Chairman:

Matt reported to the members present that the Society now holds a First Aid kit, curated for use within a woodland environment. This is now available for use at activities held in the Woods and led by Society members who are WT volunteers with the appropriate First Aid training. On this subject, Matt confirmed training would be arranged by the WT, when they had enough volunteers from the South West region. He would give more information when available. He also had an archaeology update. *See further*

Secretary:

There was nothing to report

Treasurer/Membership:

(a) Peter informed those present that there were now 25 members as Doug Robinson has joined the Society. Peter confirmed that Doug had also signed on as a WT volunteer.

(b) The account balance is £783.94. The fee for website hosting, due to Matt, has now been paid (£40) as has a donation to Frome Bats in Care (£30) for the walk led by them in September. There is £16 in Petty Cash.

Events: Mary suggested that a Geology Walk could be arranged for the half-term which could then include children. It is hoped that several members will hold a suitable First Aid qualification by this time, which will ensure that children (accompanied by an adult) will be able to attend and the WT will be informed, to cover the insurance requirements.

Mary was happy to confirm that Les Cloutman will be leading a Fungus Foray in October, following the cancellation of the last Foray in October 2019.

There was brief discussion about the possibility of a party in the Woods to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first recorded archaeological survey taking place. It could be combined with a walk/talk about the history and geology of the Woods. There was a suggestion that the event could be opened to the general public with the possibility of everyone bringing a picnic to enjoy in the Woods.

Publicity/Web site manager: Matt confirmed that the website and Society's Facebook page are up to date and that he has uploaded some of the diaries of Rev. Skinner. *See further*

## **5. Beacon Hill Society – events/projects**

A litter pick has been arranged for 9<sup>th</sup> February 2020, commencing 10.00am. This will take place within the Woods only. Matt will liaise with the WT so that the road side clearance can be undertaken by the WT contractors.

## **6. Woodland Trust**

- Peter reported on a WT volunteer's day he attended at Avoncliff Wood near Bradford-on-Avon. This wood had been donated to the WT fairly recently but was suffering so badly from Ash Dieback that it was unsafe to be opened to the public. The WT had therefore arranged for the wood to be fenced off and will use it to monitor the natural progression of dieback; will any Ash be immune to the disease, what will grow in place of the fallen trees and what wildlife will regenerate and thrive?
- In the morning volunteers helped plant a wide variety of young saplings in fields, situated between the wood and the nearby River Avon, which had also been donated by a landowner.
- In the afternoon the volunteers retired to a nearby Inn and, after a pleasant lunch, had an update on WT volunteer activities and discussion of future projects. Volunteers described their activities and suggestions for promoting further involvement. WT officers were interested to hear about Beacon Hill Wood and have agreed to pay us a visit in the near future.
- Matt told members that the thinning at the Woods has not yet started because of a backlog of work for the contractors due to the recent poor weather conditions at other sites they have been dealing with. It's anticipated that the work will start shortly and members have volunteered to attend the Woods when requested by Paul Allen to mark off the areas that have to be avoided by the contractors.
- Matt also confirmed that the roadside clearance will go ahead but will be under a traffic light system that will still allow vehicles to use the Old Frome Road rather than send lorries etc. through the villages if the road was closed. It will take longer but has a lesser environmental impact.

## **7. AOB**

- Archaeology Update – Matt has received an appointment at the County Museum, Taunton, to look through a box of material from Shepton Mallet museum that appears to have come from excavations within the Woods. He is also undertaking further research in to the Enclosure Acts (*majority passed 1760 – 1860*) so that it may be possible to see how the area looked as Common Land before it was enclosed.
- Matt has also updated the website with copies of the diaries of Rev. John Skinner who excavated in the Woods in the 1820's. The maps/illustrations which accompany the diaries cannot be uploaded as they are under copyright to the British Museum. If anyone would like to see the maps which Matt holds, please contact him direct.
- Nicola asked about the signage at the entrance to the Woods. Peter and Matt were able to confirm that the sign and posts has been repaired after damage by a contractor's vehicle

and although the map etc had not been replaced, they had been cleaned and returned to the board.

- A question was raised as to whether there was a LiDAR \*\* map of the Woods available. Matt confirmed that he had obtained one but it was not of particularly good

definition. (Light Detection and Ranging. See *lidar-uk.com* for more information on what it is, how it works and how it is used)

Next Meeting – **AGM** - 8<sup>th</sup> April 2020 at 7.00pm at SESC, Moons Hill Quarry Stoke St Michael  
Meeting closed 20.32pm

*For information*

**LITTER PICK (within the Woods) February 9<sup>th</sup> 10.00pm**