

## Brendon Commons Council

### **Minutes of First Annual General Meeting Held at 2.00pm on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2015 in Brendon Village Hall**

Attendees:

**Council members:** Mr T. Burge, Mr I. South, Mr R. Thorne, Mr B. Williams (Chairman).

**Council Officers:** Mrs M. Floyd (Treasurer), Miss S-A Cockerill on behalf of Mr J.R Holtom (Secretary)

**Rights Holders:** Mr S. Blinstrop, Mrs G. Woollacott, Mr A. Dunn, Mr A. Floyd, Mr T. Floyd, Mrs W. Floyd, Mr N. Floyd, Mr G. Burroughs

**In attendance:** Mr F. Ulf-Hansen (Natural England), Mrs H. Harley (ENPA), Mr J. Ball (ENPA).

1. **Welcome:** BW welcomed everyone to the First AGM of BCC
2. **Apologies:** Mr & Mrs B. Shelley, Mr & Mrs G. Baker, Mrs K. Auckland, Mr R. Floyd, Miss L. Bradborn & Mr G. Muggleston
3. **Minutes of the First Meeting: To be noted as already approved and signed:** Noted
4. **Matters Arising:** SAC reported three Matters Arising:
  - 4.1 **Rules:** SAC reported that we were now on the 10<sup>th</sup> Iteration of the Rules. The current issue being dealt with by the DEFRA lawyers related to issues concerning the severity of the implications of some of the Rules – e.g. would BCC really take someone to court for not updating the Register? Council members will be informed of the outcome of their discussions.
  - 4.2 **SPS – Costs & Overpaid Monies:** SAC reported the draft costs claim had been submitted, the RPA have confirmed that they have everything that they need to make a decision, but if they needed anything further they would contact JRH. The issue of the apparent overpaid money (reclaimed out of time) is being held in abeyance pending the costs claim.
  - 4.3 **TB Control Plan:** SAC reported a revised TB Control Plan including Woolhanger had been submitted; final approval is awaited.
5. **Chairman's Report:** BW made a brief report on the first year; he noted a few issues, with the major issue being the change of dates of HLS monies which meant no payment had yet been made. BW also noted a few changes to Rights Holders and welcomed GB (Woolhanger) to the meeting.
6. **Secretary's Report – Live Register:** SAC read the following prepared statement from JRH and apologised for his absence due to illness.

*'We have had a very busy year and while a number of these issues referred to under matters arising are coming to a close, they are yet to be resolved. The principle issue is the amendment of the UELS/HLS agreement required due to RPA area changes and co-location issues. We have signed off the new agreement with written assurances that*

*there would be no repercussions as we are aware of the co-location problem. We have now to agree a re-optioning and an LTAI will be prepared as quickly as possible, this should mean that our annual payment will not drop by the (approx) £6k pa shown in the new agreement.*

*The claimed repayment remains outstanding but with assurances it will not be pursued (in its entirety: PIF's will be reclaimed), but we should be prepared to appeal if these assurances do not result in a retraction.*

*Provided all these issues are resolved the Secretaries job should revert to the expected level of time and cost. The successful SPS appeal should result in the recouping of all the costs laid out on that issue.*

*Register: There are still Register issues and outstanding changes to be completed by DCC. Live Register – There has been a request to activate some inactive units in relation to South Stock but this request had now been retracted.*

*Stocking records – Have been collected by the Active Graziers (not yet with the Secretary) but all required documents, Cattle registrations etc must be provided in accordance with the IMA.*

*Other issues – Incorrectly included land in the Commons Register, this issue has been resolved with the owners but if the situation can be amended the Council should perhaps assist with the rectification. In the meantime the Owners have kindly allowed the Council to include the area in their BPS for which I am sure we are grateful'.*

BW clarified this point – stating that during the re-mapping exercise by the RPA it had come to light that a piece of land owned by the Burge family was included within the Common, the issue was being dealt with but the Burge family had kindly agreed to allow BCC to continue to claim on it.

7. **Treasurers report upon accounts:** As attached. MF proposed to pay the outstanding Landsense invoices amounting to £2713.92 – agreed.
8. **Budget for next financial year (including levy):** MF produced a Summary spreadsheet of how the Levy is allocated (attached) and proposed to continue with the £2 levy – carried unanimously.
9. **Election of Officers (Note re-appointment):** BW reported the re-appointment of Jeremy Holtom as Secretary and Maria Floyd as Treasurer for the current year at the last meeting.
10. **Election of Committee/Co-opted Members:** BW reported that Committee members were voted in for a 2 year term which would expire next year so requested the Secretary briefed rights holders of the voting procedure in due course. **Action: JRH.**

BW also reported that John Wyatt had stood down from the Council but was grateful to him for the work he did, and noted he had been replaced by Liz Bradborn.

## 11. Stocking Issues:

**11.1 Active Graziers 2015 onwards:** MF put forward a proposal from the active graziers to change the date for Notification to become an active grazier from the 30<sup>th</sup> September to the 31<sup>st</sup> March, with the aim to stock from 1<sup>st</sup> January the following year to tie in with changes made by the RPA to payment dates/the financial year. Discussion ensued to why this was necessary, alternatives and being fair to all, SAC noted that previous legal advice from John Pearn was that any changes to the IMA had to be agreed by all signatories.

It was agreed that if the Council were able to change the IMA the proposal would be to amend the IMA so as to receive notifications to activate units by the 30<sup>th</sup> June in any one year so as to be able to stock the units from the 1<sup>st</sup> January the subsequent year – carried unanimously. **ACTION JRH to advise on the feasibility of proposal and action if possible.** It was noted that this would not change the previous decision that the grazier would forego payment on the activated units for the first year.

**11.2 Non-graziers proposals to commence grazing:** No new applications (Southstock withdrawn).

**11.3 Grazing records:** MF reported that she had collated the stocking figures at the last Active Graziers meeting and produced the spreadsheet attached. SAC reported that JRH had also received stock numbers from various graziers and noted that GW's numbers were not included. BW suggested adding GW's 10 to the spreadsheet to give to FU-H as a true record.

It was also noted that Mr Tilley had become an active grazier but was yet to stock the common. SAC noted that stocking figures were due monthly so that issue's like this would be picked up sooner. BW requested numbers be sent to the Secretary in accordance with the IMA and requested JRH contact Mr Tilley to query the stocking. **ACTION: JRH contact Mr Tilley.**

**11.4 Sheep Marks:** GB was asked to provide the Woolhanger Sheep Mark which he reported as a blue W on the right shoulder.

## 12 UELS/HLS

**12.1 Area and Option Changes:** BW noted that this had been covered in the Secretaries report.

**12.2 Matters arising from site meeting:** BW asked FU-H if he had any comments following the morning's site visit. FU-H reported the sedge grass on Cheriton Ridge looked great and if it would be useful he would write a short report and send it to JRH to include in the Minutes, he would also go out and look at the 2015/16 burning proposals by September. **ACTION FU-H To send JRH short report on the state of the Common and look at burning proposals.**

**12.3 Capital works/unfunded follow up:** FU-H reported that the 2015 Capital Works budget was mostly spoken for but he was putting together bids for 2016. If BCC had any significant projects to put forward he would look at them, but funding for routine maintenance was unlikely. It was noted that nothing had happened following the Bracken survey carried out by Sarah Eveleigh. JB and HH (ENPA) both have sources for funding. HH provided an application form for a Landscape Conservation Grant that would pay 35% of total cost of project if approved and could be used on some gorse spraying follow up. JB said he may also be able to provide some funding but any invoices must be with him before Christmas.

MF suggested sending TF & AF on a training day to get a licence to shut the road for swaling or to get spraying licences to do the gorse. **ACTION JRH to submit Landscape Conservation Grant application for gorse growth re-spray.**

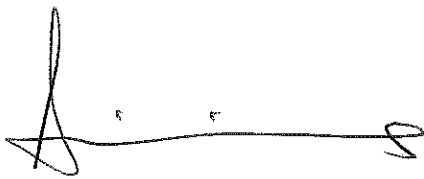
- 13 **AOB:** BW reported that at a meeting of Badgworthy Land Company Directors, they had decided to become members of the Exmoor Pony Society and the Moorland Breeders Pony Group to enable them to have their say on the future of Exmoor Ponies, and asked Council members if they too thought it would be sensible to join both. MF stated that as Exmoor ponies formed part of the HLS agreement then it would seem sensible. BW proposed and IS seconded the proposal to join both. **ACTION JRH to apply to become members of both.**

SAC reported that everyone should be aware of a claim form for extra SPS payments and entitlements that will be sent to common rights holders nationally. BCC will respond for the Common but if people had rights on other commons to be aware.

JB noted the Moorland Units Study and Questionnaire and BW said it could be discussed after the AGM was closed.

- 14 **Date of Next Meeting – ACTION JRH to send out potential dates.**

Meeting Closed 3.30pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. S.', written over a horizontal line.

13/7/16