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**LEWES  
TOWN  
COUNCIL**

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**To: Cllrs Bird; Burrows; Handy; Henman; O'Keeffe; Sains and Vernon**

A Meeting of the **Landport Bottom Management Committee** will be held on **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020**, via Zoom video-link (*please see below*) at **7:00pm** which you are summoned to attend.

**\*VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE:** This meeting can be joined using computer video and audio using any suitably equipped digital device (*eg* laptop; tablet or smartphone) or, by audio only, using a telephone.

**To join this meeting** either follow this link: <https://zoom.us/j/96293942519>

Or telephone 0131 460 1196 or +44 (0)330 088 5830. Use **Meeting ID: 962 9394 2519**

**\*Please also see the note below regarding password-controlled access to this online meeting**

S Brigden, Town Clerk 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020

## **AGENDA**

### 1. QUESTION TIME

To consider any questions received regarding items on the agenda for this meeting.

### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

To receive apologies from members of the committee who are unable to attend.

### 3. MEMBER'S DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

To note declarations of any personal or prejudicial interests in matters on this agenda.

### 4. MINUTES

To agree Minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

(attached **page 3**)

### 5. REPORT by SPECIALIST ADVISER

To receive a progress report from Lewes District Council's Specialist Adviser

(notes attached **page 6**)

### 6. UPDATE TO SITE MANAGEMENT PLAN

To consider an updated Plan

(discussion draft to follow)

*For further information about items on this agenda please contact the Town Clerk BY E-MAIL at the above address*

### **PUBLIC ATTENDANCE – Covid-19 emergency arrangements:**

Members of the public have the right, and are welcome, to attend\* this meeting of the Council – questions regarding items on the agenda may be heard at the start of the meeting with the Mayor's consent. Questions or requests to address the Council must be submitted by email to the Town Clerk at least 3 days in advance.

This meeting will be held online via Zoom Pro video link. To join the meeting follow the instructions above.

**\*Members of the public wishing to join this meeting must request a password by email at least 24 hours before the published start time. Please submit your request to [townclerk@lewes-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@lewes-tc.gov.uk)**

**For guidance on joining online meetings please see the notes overleaf**

**This agenda and supporting papers can be downloaded from [www.lewes-tc.gov.uk](http://www.lewes-tc.gov.uk)**

## Guidance on attending ‘virtual meetings’



### Joining a meeting:

1. Invitations to COUNCILLORS and officers to join a virtual meeting of the Council; a committee, or Working Party will be included in an email accompanying the agenda, and will look similar to this (*examples only*):

Lewes Town Council is inviting you to a meeting of ??????????????????

To join the meeting, use this **link**: [zoom.us/j/nnnnnnnnnnnn](https://zoom.us/j/nnnnnnnnnnnn)

**Meeting ID**: 123 4567 8910 (*example only*)

**Password**: 123456 (*example only*)

OR dial by your location

+44 (0)131 460 1196 United Kingdom or +44 (0)330 088 5830 United Kingdom

The link (but not the password) will be also repeated at the head of the Agenda and can be accessed from either. The **password** should not be shared, as **PUBLIC** attendees are asked to request a password by email at least 24hrs before the scheduled start.

2. Using a digital device with camera and microphone (*eg* laptop; tablet, smartphone), access can be gained by following the link. If audio-only is preferred (or problems interfere with video connection), telephone connection can be made using either of the numbers and following the prompts. Meeting ID and Password may be required dependent upon your chosen method.
3. If using computer audio and video a screen will open, similar to this:

Launching...

Please click **Open Zoom Meetings** if you see the system dialog.

If nothing prompts from browser, [click here](#) to launch the meeting, or [download & run Zoom](#).

If you cannot download or run the application, [join from your browser](#).

4. If you cannot download the application (or choose not to), or cannot run it, you may join from your internet browser by selecting that option.
5. On first connecting with the meeting you will be admitted to a virtual **Waiting Room**. Please follow any prompts, whether on-screen or audible. Attendees will be admitted once the meeting starts and what you see or hear after entry to the meeting may depend upon the equipment you are using.
6. To begin each meeting, the Chair will introduce some **meeting protocols** and all those attending will have live audio connections but will be asked to ‘mute’ their microphone when not speaking. Those wishing to speak will be asked to indicate by raising their hand or using the ‘hand up’ icon or sending a Chat message and they will be invited to do so by the Chair. The Chair can mute all attendees and selectively unmute individual speakers if there are interruptions or background noise issues.
7. While it is possible to use on-screen options to signify **voting** this will NOT be used. Should a vote be called during any meeting the Chair will ask Members to signify by raising their hand or, if there are any voting members attending by audio only, asking each in turn to voice their vote or abstention.
8. Attendees can send short **‘Chat’ messages** to one another privately and publicly during the meeting.
9. Meetings will be recorded, but records kept only until the Minutes have been subsequently validated.

### PLEASE NOTE:

**Before connecting**, it is good practice to ensure that your equipment is adequately charged; that you will not be interrupted, and that your camera’s field of view or microphone do not capture anything you would prefer is not seen/heard publicly. Functions will be available once you have entered the meeting to alter the background, and your camera and microphone can be muted at will.

Please also ensure that other equipment nearby does not introduce audio ‘feedback’; that background noise is minimal, and that you select appropriate levels of microphone sensitivity and speaker volume on your device.

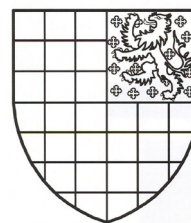
To learn more, a number of helpful FAQ’s and video tutorials are available at [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us)

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## **MINUTES**

of the meeting of the **Landport Bottom Management Committee**, held on **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020**, online via Zoom Meetings at 7:00pm.

**PRESENT** Cllrs Bird; Burrows; Handy and Sains.

**In attendance:** S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); B Courage (*Town Ranger*); Ms T Outram (*Lewes District Council Special Adviser; Downland & Reserves*)

**LBMC2020/01** **ELECTION of CHAIRMAN:** Cllr Bird was elected to chair the committee for the 2020/21 year.

**LBMC2020/02** **QUESTIONS:** There were none Two members of the Friends of Landport Bottom were present.

**LBMC2020/03** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies had been received from Cllr Vernon, who was working. No message had been received from Cllrs Henman or O’Keeffe (belated apologies were received from Cllr O’Keeffe – who had been unable to connect).

**LBMC2020/04** **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Cllrs Bird and Handy declared that they live adjacent to Landport Bottom.

**LBMC2020/05** **MINUTES: it was resolved that**

**LBMC2020/05.1** The Minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019 are received and signed as an accurate record.

**LBMC2020/06** **REPORT on SITE MANAGEMENT**

Members received a brief update report on operational matters from Ms Outram, which covered:

*Grazing:* Southdown sheep had been introduced, with young lambs, as lockdown started. There had been sheep-worrying incidents and one lamb death - the shepherd considered this was due to stress. More strongly-worded notices were posted. The Southdown breed lambs were very popular. They had been weaned and replaced by Tegs (a non Southdowns breed, in their second year). A second sheep death (a Teg) due to a dog attack had occurred on 25/26 June. Plumpton College had been reimbursed for the cost of the sheep. It was acknowledged that there had been an unusually short lead time between posting of warning notices this year and the arrival of the lambs – this would be prioritized for future occasions. The sheep had grazed the pond field and the tumuli field over the spring and summer. The orchids had flowered in the pond field, and all fields looked attractive and floristically diverse.

*Infrastructure:* The water supply had failed temporarily due to nearby work by Southern Water. Supply had been reinstated with a new meter. New signs to inform the public of the presence of sheep in each field had replaced those broken some months ago. Fence repairs had taken place where needed.

*Community Engagement:* There had been no walks or community wildlife events over the spring and summer so far, and none were planned. There had been some conflict observed between the dog walking community and those keen to allow the skylarks space to nest undisturbed. Members of the public had added their own signs to those erected by the ranger. These were left in place due to the special circumstances of Covid-19 but would be removed shortly.

*“Changing Chalk project”:* A consultant has been appointed by Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council, for development work on this project, and it was

hoped that there would be funding for a community ranger to develop community nature engagement across the Downs; based on Lewes and Eastbourne councils sites. This would include Landport Bottom and hopefully include some work on responsible dog ownership. If the final bid is successful, a 4-year post should be in place at the beginning of 2022.

*Lewes District Council Staff:* One of the two Specialist Advisor for Downland and Reserves (SADR) had left the LDC and is not to be replaced. Thyone Outram (SADR) remained and anticipated an increased work load, but would continue to spend the time contracted with LTC on Landport Bottom work. This may mean a slight reduction in work around volunteering or community engagement since SADR work tended to exceed the agreed monthly hours.

*Stewardship agreement extension:* The Rural Payments agency has advised that extensions to Higher Level Stewardship agreements were usually not offered until two or three months before the end of the agreement (current agreement ends April 2021). Government consultation on changes to the programme had been halted due to Covid-19 and, although pilot studies were in place around the country, it was thought unlikely that the scheme would change before 2024. It was also unlikely that current agreements would be extended for that long. It may be possible to apply for Countryside Stewardship (a newer scheme). Applications for Countryside Stewardship 2021 open in February so this would be reviewed at the turn of the year to establish the situation.

*Woodland:* The woodland at the lower part of the slope beside the Nevill Road was mostly felled due to ash dieback. There was dying ash remaining in the upper part of the woodland. A risk assessment was needed to establish how much of this part of the woodland may need to be felled.

Members thanked Ms Outram for her helpful and informative report.

**LBMC2020/07**

#### **UPDATE to SITE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The committee considered a discussion draft of an update to the Site Management Plan, which would represent the third major revision since the original Plan was adopted and was designed to cover a five-year period.

There followed a lengthy discussion on various points of detail, and submissions were noted for a second draft, which would be prepared for review in Mid-September. Members asked if the meeting to conduct that review could be preceded by an escorted site visit, and it was agreed that this would be arranged.

There was a brief discussion on the proposed treatment of Ragwort, and Ms Outram advised that it was recommended good management to remove this, particularly when growing close to areas frequented by horses and other animals vulnerable to its toxic effect.

**LBMC2020/08**

#### **BENCH SEAT**

Members considered a request to install a bench seat, proposed to benefit a nonagenarian who regularly walks on the land. The applicant had been advised that as a general principle, man-made structures were only installed at Landport Bottom if essential to the management of the land *eg.* water troughs for livestock. Such things as bench seats and litter bins were not considered in-keeping with the land's natural state and its management within environmentally-sensitive land programmes. It had been agreed that the Management Committee would consider the request, nonetheless, as it may be felt appropriate to allow a suitably natural-looking bench at a particular location where the impact was minimal. Councillors discussed these principles at length and agreed that a clear policy statement might helpfully be included in the revised Site Management Plan. The immediate request was refused, for the reasons stated, although there was interest in the possibility of an 'invisible' structure such as a stone-filled and grassed gabion which could be constructed so as to blend with natural contours of the land. This would be investigated for discussion at the next meeting.

**LBMC2020/09**

**HISTORIC RACECOURSE SIGN**

Permission had previously been agreed for the Lewes Racecourse History Group to site a commemorative wrought-iron sign on Council land. There had recently been some contention in social media as to the ownership of the sign, but TC advised that he had been provided with sufficient detail of the history of its origination that he was satisfied it was the Group’s property. The sign was understood to be awaiting some re-finishing and delivery of a new mounting post; and could then be placed as agreed with the Group.

**LBMC2020/10**

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed, and thanked everyone for their attendance. *The meeting closed at 8:45pm.*

Signed ..... date .....

Draft

## **LDC Specialist Advisor (Ranger) Progress Report 07/10/20**

### **Grazing**

- Two separate groups of Southdown sheep were tupped (mated) at Landport Bottom. The group being serviced in the small field did well and the shepherd reports many successful pregnancies. The group in the Tumuli field did not do so well with less pregnancies. This could have been because the ram was young and inexperienced or could have been increased disturbance or some other factor. This group of 10 sheep will be removed for a second attempt back at Plumpton College
- All ewes – a mixture of pregnant and not breeding ewes including Southdowns and other breeds - have been moved to the pond field where they will spend most of the winter.

### **Cutting**

- Annual cut and collect has been taking place in parts of all fields.

### **Infrastructure**

- Some new permanent oak signs warning of sheep in fields have been installed and others are being repaired. These signs have a significant effect on the amount of sheep worrying.
- Contractors continue to repair gates and fences as needed

### **Surveys**

- The flora survey attracted skilled plant surveyors from all over Sussex including some locals and friends of Landport Bottom. The grassland was surveyed using the HLS-plus assessment method with many plants beyond what the stewardship agreement requires also recorded.
- Overall the numbers and frequencies of indicator species has increased slightly since the last full surveys in 2015 and 2018. Chalk grassland restoration is a slow process.