

TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL – EXTERNAL COMMITTEE
KILN FIELDS RESERVE AND WILDLIFE VENUES SUB-COMMITTEE
NOTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON 27.01.21

PRESENT:

Town Councillors: Mrs. Jean Curteis (Chair), Callum Knowles, Dr. Lisa Lovelidge and Mrs. Kate Walder.

Non-Councillors: Dave Bourner, Jon Burnell, Roger Finniss, Peter Friend, Richard Masefield and Mrs. Jean Sugden.

Guest: Cllr. John Crawford.

Tenterden Town Council Staff: Lesley Owers taking notes.

- 1. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THIS MEETING AND FOR THE FUTURE.** Jean Curteis was voted as chair for this meeting and for the future.
- 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** None.
- 3. MINUTES OF SITE MEETING HELD ON 26TH NOVEMBER 2020.** The minutes of the site meeting held on 26th November were agreed.
- 4. MATTERS ARISING.** None.
- 5. ELECTION OF NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER – RICHARD MASEFIELD.** Richard Masefield was voted in to join the sub-committee.
- 6. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS AND UPDATE FROM RICHARD MASEFIELD ON THE VETERAN OAK TREE AND VISIT BY KWT ARBORICULTURALIST TO KILN FIELD.** After a meeting held between Tenterden Town Council, Ashford Borough Council and Redrow on site, it appeared that there was a threat of the removal of an old oak tree and part of a coppiced bank by Redrow at the south-eastern corner and southern boundary of Kiln Field, so Jean Curteis contacted Richard Masefield who she knew to be involved with Kent Wildlife Trust in the designation of Kiln Field as a Local Green Space for the Neighbourhood Plan and in the application of the Government's Nature Recovery Network strategy for the parish. Following a site meeting with Jean Curteis, Dave Bourner, Roger Finniss and Cllr. Crawford, Richard Masefield identified the threatened oak tree as of probable 'veteran status' and the coppiced bank on which it stood to be of ancient origin and Richard agreed to explore the possibility of an ecological survey by Kent Wildlife Trust to confirm his findings.

On Saturday 23rd January, with the agreement of the members of the Town Council and in the presence of Jean Curteis, Dave Bourner, Roger Finniss and Richard Masefield, Neil Coombs, Senior Land Manager for Kent Wildlife Trust conducted a survey of the threatened oak and bank to the immediate south east of the Kiln Field boundary ditch with the permission of Redrow for him to do so. Richard Masefield is awaiting KWT's official report which he will circulate when received.

Richard also advised that Vincent Ganley, the Managing Director of Kent Wildlife Trust Consultancy Service would talk to his contacts at Redrow and their Ecologists to possibly arrange a meeting.

Callum Knowles thanked Richard Masefield for his update.

John Crawford queried the exact detail of where the 'Western Ecology Zone' is as it would be useful for this sub-committee. Callum Knowles would request the definition from the planning officer at Ashford Borough Council.

If the threatened oak is confirmed as likely to have a veteran or ancient status, then it should have a TPO on it. It was suggested that a site meeting should be arranged with the relevant people at Redrow and Phil Cook, the Tree Officer at Ashford Borough Council.

- 7. ACCEPTANCE OF TRANSLOCATION OF REPTILES FROM REDROW SITE TO KILN FIELD – EMAIL RECEIVED FROM JENNY PASSMORE, SENIOR ECOLOGIST AND CORYLUS ECOLOGY 'TILDEN GILL REPTILE MITIGATION STRATEGY' DOCUMENT RECEIVED FROM REDROW.** An email had been received from Jenny Passmore, Senior Ecologist at Corylus Ecology regarding the possible translocation of reptiles from the Redrow site to Kiln Field. Subsequently we received the Corylus Ecology 'Tilden Gill Reptile Mitigation Strategy' document from Redrow requesting our approval. Richard Masefield was concerned that the receptor sites might already be full as all the eastern ones have been relocated.

Peter Friend commented that we should be positive about taking wildlife on to the site but his primary concern was about the suggestion of how we manage the site for the reptiles which is not in line with the KWT Management Plan that Roger and Dave are following at the moment. Jean Curteis agreed that the site should be managed as it is now, in accordance with the KWT Management Plan.

Callum reported that as a planning condition Redrow had to have a reptile strategy but the recommendations had to fit in with the KWT Management Plan and had to be agreed with Ashford Borough Council as part of the lease agreement.

Roger Finniss and Dave Bourner commented that if they didn't mow or manage the grassland as the Corylus document advised, it would end up with a bramble patch with young trees growing. The wildlife has to be managed and there has to be a balance between flora and fauna. Several experts have advised that the current management of the grassland is the right thing to do. Richard Masefield also commented that a grassland expert had looked at Kiln Field and said we were doing a great job.

Callum Knowles suggested that we should agree to take possession of the reptiles and note the recommendations from Corylus but we need to seek advice from Kent Wildlife Trust on our own Management Plan.

- 8. UPDATE FROM MAINTENANCE TEAM ON WORK CARRIED OUT SINCE LAST MEETING (ALDER TREES, TRAIL CAMERAS, BAT BOXES, ENTRANCE TO KILN FIELD).** Dave Bourner reported that the Alder trees had just arrived and weather permitting, he would be planting those from Friday.

The trail cameras will be installed once the memory cards have been received.

A few more Hazel trees had been planted for coppicing in a few years' time and the Bamboo had been cut back and covered.

The Bat boxes had been received and were waiting to be put in the wood.

Peter Friend enquired about an update on the hard surface on the pedestrian entrance to Kiln Field as due to the amount of mud people were being put off from entering. Dave Bourner commented that it was difficult trying to get materials in lockdown and also that due to Covid the maintenance team were working singularly for safety reasons so there would only be one person at a time to carry out the work. Roger Finniss confirmed that their plan was to extend the block pavers out and to make it wheelchair accessible. Callum reported that there is a covenant on the land and the entrance which advises that you are not allowed to put a hard surface across it. It was used to stop people taking a road into Abbot Way so no hard surface can go across the entrance. On the Land Title there is a clear mark on it where the covenant is. Callum reported that we must comply with Ashford Borough Council as part of the Section 9 Agreement. Roger Finniss will check the covenant with the Town Clerk.

- 9. COMMENTS ON DECLARING KILN FIELD AS A LOCAL NATURE RESERVE.** Callum Knowles advised that from Ashford Borough Council's view point they are definitely very excited about this. Richard Masefield and Jon Burnell suggested that the official naming of the nature reserve should be put out to the public for their feedback. Jon Burnell felt that it would give the public some sort of ownership of it. Jean Curteis disagreed with this and suggested the name should remain as The Kiln Field. Callum

Knowles commented that one of the main things is getting the children involved and if people really want to take ownership this is not going to happen if people don't know what it is. Jean Sugden suggested that we should publicise it more as it is difficult for people to communicate at the moment with the pandemic.

The dog fouling is still a problem although it is better than it was. Richard Masefield suggested that the work that the Neighbourhood Plan are doing could help, as Kiln Field is designated as a green space site and people need to respect them and pick up after their dogs. It was suggested that the Dog Warden could be more proactive on the site. Callum Knowles will raise this with the portfolio holder again. Unfortunately the Dog Warden has a large area to cover but people need to be caught and fined.

The naming of the nature reserve has been deferred for debate at the next meeting.

10. POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF 2 OWL BOXES. Roger Finniss suggested that we purchase 4 Tawny Owl boxes and 2 Barn Owl boxes (Tawny £69.60 ea. Barn Owl £129 ea. – total for 6 boxes £536.40). It was agreed that we would obtain a quotation from Richard Styles of Weald Woodscapes who has the tree climbing skills to fix them up in the wood, along with the Bat boxes.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS. Peter Friend had been asked by people if there were any plans for more formal paths through the woodland area as there was a lot of debris around. Dave Bourner commented that he had planned to put a new pathway from the top of the pond through the woods but we need to wait for the spring to see what plants and flora come up on site. Jean Curteis suggested that this decision is left to Dave and Roger.

Roger Finniss reported that the plan for the ash which was lying around was to save this for the 'Open Day', depending on the pandemic and to show the children ash extraction and milling on site for use there, with horses.

Kate Walder reported that she had had brief discussions with Jean Sugden about Hedgehog Highways as Kate had been told that hedgehogs live on the High Street. Kate mentioned this to Kent Wildlife Trust and they are very keen for us to do some more work to see if it is feasible. Kate said she would do a brief piece on it as hedgehogs would be coming out of hibernation in the spring and then advertise it and get people to sign up. Roger reported that there are hedgehogs in the Millennium Gardens.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING. A meeting will be arranged as soon as we know what is happening with Redrow.