

TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL – EXTERNAL COMMITTEE
KILN FIELDS RESERVE AND WILDLIFE VENUES SUB-COMMITTEE
NOTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON 22.02.21

PRESENT:

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

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

Tenterden Town Council Staff: Lesley Owers taking notes.

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** Jon Burnell
- 2. MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON 27th JANUARY 2021.** The minutes of the virtual meeting held on 27th January 2021 were agreed.
- 3. MATTERS ARISING.** None.
- 4. DECISION ON HOW TO DETER MOTORBIKES FROM ENTERING KILN FIELD.** Jean Curteis asked if anybody had anything to say about the different scenarios that had been presented to them.

Callum Knowles reported that he had spoken with the Town Clerk right at the beginning about what we were trying to achieve at Kiln Field. Part of it was to get people from the new estate transiting the wildlife area and using the wildlife area and part of that, was to get the young mums to take their children in there and take them through there. Callum was very mindful that whatever we did it needed to have access for them and their pushchairs and he agreed that although we needed to think about the undesirable element, it couldn't be at the cost of another demographic that we were trying to get in there. Callum was hoping that once the Redrow estate was actually built that there wouldn't be anybody coming through there on a motorbike. He had only heard about motorbikes getting through the bollards at the end of Abbott Way that people were complaining to him and the police about.

Jean Curteis asked if there were any comments on Roger's suggestion that if we made the entrance so that the turn is feasible for both, it would look like an entrance to a nature reserve because it was natural wood and would be an inexpensive deterrent. Callum agreed with this idea. He said that there was a similar deterrent on the pathway that led from Abbots Way to the Leisure Centre, although this was made out of stainless steel pipe but it was like a baffle and you can't get a bike round it. Cyclists can still use it but they

needed to dismount and then lift the bike to get round it and it would be difficult to do with a motorbike so it would dissuade people with motorbikes from going through there but would still allow the mums through. Callum thought it was a good idea and would look more in keeping if it was wood.

Richard Masefield expressed his concerns that maybe it was a bit premature to go ahead and do something already and suggested that maybe it would be wiser to wait, as it would be expensive but Jean Curteis replied that Roger's option would be less expensive than the other options. Jean added that we had to put a gateway in there anyway to put an access there suitable for wheelchairs and mobility scooters and the question was how we could shut it off for motorbikes.

Peter Friend commented that he had lived in Abbott Way for 15 months and in that time had never had a problem with motorbikes trying to enter the nature reserve. There had been a couple of incidents with youngsters driving small motorbikes along the road but these were dealt with through an active neighbourhood watch group and reported to the police. Peter was also concerned as to whether a kissing gate would be noisy for his neighbours who live opposite, with people walking their dogs first thing in the morning and last thing at night.

Roger commented that the gate would not be noisy as it could be hung the other way and it would swing through 180 degrees and shut to the post but not against the post so there would be no noise there whatsoever, just maybe perhaps the odd squeaky hinge. Roger said that he would be perfectly happy to have the gap there and to just put up a simple baffle so that it made a chicane effect for people going into Kiln Field. If we were in agreement that we did not need a gate there, it could easily be done by increasing the post and rail fence round to create a baffle. We had already got the block pavers and everything for the hard surface.

Callum made the suggestion that as Peter lived across the road from the entrance, if just the surface was done Peter could keep an eye on it and if nothing happened then we would not need to do anything or as Roger suggested simply put a tory gate at a distance in there so that a motorbike could not be driven through it and add chicanes so people with pushchairs could get around it.

Roger suggested that we did not get a gate now and left a gap there and if in the future we needed to put a wicker gate or a utility gate in there at some point, we could. We would have just a clean entrance into there and just a simple barrier each side so that people had to go round it rather than straight through it and that would probably suffice.

Dave Bourner's internet connection was very poor and he had been struggling to hear anyone so his contribution to the meeting was very

limited. He did comment that he agreed with Roger's idea provided the gate swung without hitting a post and it centred itself.

Peter Friend expressed his concern on whether the turning circle of a mobility scooter was too limited for the room available to come up Abbott Way and was able to swing into the opening and around on the other side. He said the surface was not very flat on the roadside and sloped up to the gate.

Kate commented that mobility scooters were heavy and if they got into trouble they were really awkward. Also the tyres were a real weak point. If the tyres went then you had got a real problem. If we were going to make it mobility scooter accessible and friendly we would have to ensure that it was so rather than just described as such because if somebody was using a mobility scooter, it would be because they were not physically able and it would be quite a different proposition from a pushchair if things went wrong. A pushchair was something you can pick up quite easily and deal with but it would be really awful to say to people that this was a disabled friendly entrance and it turned out not to be.

On the concerns about the gate, Kate commented that if a gate is hung properly it doesn't make a noise and we had our maintenance team so we would not have to wait for somebody else to fix it but Kate's experience with disability scooters was that it could be really distressing for users if the tyres went and if there were problems with them. You would then have a whole load of other problems including the fact that the person who had made the journey to do something that was available to them before but had now been removed, would be quite difficult for people emotionally and we were trying to offer something that was accessible. Someone on a disability scooter would go once and then never go again if it went wrong. Callum agreed with Kate's comments.

Peter suggested that we should think about doing the entrance in two phases. Put the hard surface down, monitor what goes on, which Peter was happy to do and then if we did have a problem fit the gate. Roger agreed that there was no reason why we couldn't do that. As regards the access, Roger reported that they were going to graduate the pull from the gate so there would not be as much kerb and they would make it as easy as they could for access for wheelchairs and mobility scooters. There would not be any steep gradients. The maintenance team have the kerbing and materials and they could smooth out the gradients.

ACTION: That we go ahead and do the surface of the entrance, put up a baffle there rather than a gate and then monitor the situation and if needed put up a utility gate in the future.

5. DECISION ON OFFICIAL NAME FOR KILN FIELD AS A NATURE RESERVE AND ANY AMENDMENTS OR ADDITIONS TO BE ADDED TO

THE FACT SHEET ATTACHED. Callum commented that he had been told by people that live around Kiln Field that Kiln Field was a made up name but a lot of people round there do know it as that now and it is also known as Kiln Field in the Title Deeds from Ashford Borough Council. It was a nice name and people are used to it.

Jean Curteis suggested putting the word 'The' in front of it calling it 'The Kiln Field Nature Reserve'. Roger and Callum agreed with Jean's suggestion. Roger commented that it then gives a reference to the Kiln Field houses too.

Richard Masefield suggested a couple amendments on the fact sheet, commenting that on the habitat types at the bottom of the first page, a watercourse had not been mentioned and the watercourse was quite an important part of the habitat that should go in. He also commented that although we suspect that one of the hedgerows might be medieval Richard did not think that this could be put in as a designation.

Richard also suggested that there were two really good fact sheets and species lists which should be attached to the application, one produced by Jon Burnell and one produced by Kent Wildlife Trust. They were both very comprehensive and would give information on what to see at Kiln Field.

Jon Burnell had taken some brilliant photos which we should get together and attach to the application.

ACTION: The official name on the designation application would be 'The Kiln Field Nature Reserve'. The amendments and additions that Richard Masefield suggested would be made. The two fact sheets produced by Jon Burnell and KWT would be attached to the application together with a selection of photos of Kiln Field.

- 6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.** Kate Walder commented that she had not had time to do a Hedgehog Fact Sheet and that one of the main sources Kate was using for her hedgehog information was the Wirral Hedgehog Hospital. Kate needs people to know that if people want to feed hedgehogs they should feed them cat food and water and not milk and bread as this would kill them.

Jean Sugden reported that she had spoken with Richard Harvey as he would be putting an article on hedgehogs in the next Council magazine. Kate suggested that we needed to advise the public on where the nearest hedgehog rescue centre was located. Kate commented that we need to go back to Richard Harvey to request that an article is not published until we have all the links to give people the information they need. Jean Sugden reported that Richard's article was only intending to advise people to look out for more news in the future. Kate would do some further work on hedgehogs.

Roger asked for an update on the delivery of the owl boxes. There is a production delay at the moment due to the pandemic but The Nest Box Company Limited would despatch them as soon as they could.

Peter Friend reported his concerns that he had recently seen a couple of people with hunting dogs in Kiln Field. Lisa Lovelidge had also seen people hunting at the back of Shrubcote and suggested that we should stay vigilant. Callum suggested that if there are any more sightings to report these to the PCSO and they will increase their patrols of the area. Kate Walder commented that there is a National Wildlife Crime Unit that people can contact.

- 7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING.** Roger and Dave will be starting work on the gateway in 2 to 3 week's time. Another meeting will be arranged after the gateway has been finished.