Hurst Meadows Advisory Board
Minutes of Meeting 6.30pm Tuesday 29th October 2019 at the Village Centre, Hurstpierpoint BN6 9UY

Present:

Allan Brown – Chairman	Claire Majsai	Helen Brangwyn
David Evans	Michael Nailard	Malcolm Llewellyn
Patrick Howarth	David Brown	Donna Willis
Tony Whitbread	Georgina Judd	

In attendance:
Nick Sinclair – Facilities Manager (Clerk)
Lorna Cooksey – Assistant Clerk
Hamish Raby – Maintenance Officer

HM19.1. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest: The following apologies for absence had been received prior to the meeting and were accepted: Stephen Hand, Martin Sadler, and Rachel Felton.
Patrick Howarth and David Brown expressed an interest in item 11, Millennium Gardens.

HM19.2. Minutes of the meeting of the Hurst Meadows Advisory Board 21 February 2019: The board received and approved the minutes which were then signed by the Chairman.

A member of the Advisor Group noted that a previous action of the group was that Mr Ian Maskell would be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss accessibility issues. A Councilor noted that this was not the appropriate time due to the number of postponed meetings of the Advisory Board, but that this has not been forgotten and will certainly be actioned in due course. *(REF: HURST MEADOWS Adv Board Minutes 21 February 2019 ATTACHED)*

HM19.3. Hurst Meadows Management Committee meeting 19th March 2019 and 16th May 2019: The Board was asked to note the minutes. (*REF: Hurst Meadows Man Comm MINUTES 19 March 2019 and Hurst Meadows Man Comm AGM Minutes 16 May 2019 ATTACHED)*

HM19.4. Hurst Meadows Progress Report: The Facilities Manager gave an overview of the work carried out in the Meadows since the last meeting of the advisory board, as per the information contained in the briefing note. Georgina Judd went on to expand this into more detail, in preparation for the next item on the agenda. Details of static point monitoring were tabled at the meeting, with an update from Georgina regarding management advice received from SDNP, MSDC and Friends of the Green Circle at Bedelands. The board also heard that Georgina has been working on Dormouse and botanical surveys, so far identifying 100 species. The Board was asked to note the Progress Report. *(REF: Hurst Meadows Progress Report 22 October 2019 ATTACHED)*

HM19.5. Management Plan: After the update on work to date, as minuted under HM19.4, the board discussed how the current management plan needed revising after the last years practical experience. It was agreed that a new, revised management plan is required in time for the spring. The view of the board was that in areas such as Buckwilly and Bellows Nose, due to the already nutrient leeched soil, the grass could be cut and arisings removed much more frequently to promote the growth of wildflower. The cost of this action to the larger fields is prohibitive with around £7,000 per cut just to dispose of arisings. In the larger fields it was discussed that the meadows would be broken down into areas or zones, and that each area will be managed in a different way to suit its strengths/weaknesses and objectives. Some of this could include letting areas develop into scrub, or only cutting on a 2-year rotation.
With the current infrequent meeting schedule of the Advisory Board, it was discussed that measures need to be put into place to enable much more responsive management of the meadows. A smaller working group was discussed, and it was agreed that once established, this group would develop the Management plan and implement works, circulating documents and feedback with the Board for input and information where possible – with full progress reports coming to quarterly meetings. The Chairman updated on budget restraints with only around £20,000 per year to manage the whole area, this furthers the need for selective management and volunteer support.

A Councillor raised that £5,000 had been budgeted for fencing the Woodland and that they are keen to progress this as soon as possible, before bird nesting season. The Chairman responded that this had not been carried out due to the large amount of safety and remedial work required in the woodland. Once completed, the fencing issue would be reconsidered and defined, if possible before the bird nesting season in the spring.

HM19.6. Working Group: The discussion followed from the previous agenda item discussed under minute HM19.5. It was agreed that an informal working group would be established in order to discuss and make management decisions regarding Hurst Meadows on a much more responsive basis. Documents produced by this group such as the management plan, will be circulated with the wider Advisory Board for information and comment, with detailed progress reports coming to quarterly meetings. The working group will be able to take actions directly to the Estates & Facilities Management Committee for approval where necessary. The working group is established of the following members:

Allan Brown Claire Majsai
Malcolm Llewellyn Georgina Judd
Nick Sinclair

HM19.7. Marchants Close Boardwalk: The Chairman and Facilities Manager updated on the progress with the Marchants Close Boardwalk and that the project must now be put on hold until the Spring 2020, due to MSDC Ecologists requiring the Parish Council to conduct a survey of the Fauna within the ancient woodland, to be submitted with any subsequent planning application. The Board noted the progress and that the item will be taken forward by the working group for further discussion at the next meeting of the Board scheduled for 20th March 2019.

Representatives of Hurstpierpoint Village Society expressed their intent to establish a suitable route for residents, linking the Bovis development to the Village and also the Village to the Meadows – it was noted that this intent is shared with the Parish Council and that the route is already in place, the boardwalk is an addition to remove pedestrians from the vehicle track for safety and also to permit cycle use.

HM19.8. Hovel Field Planting: The board noted the discussions that had taken place at the Hurst Meadows Management Committee 19th March 2019 under minute PA18/047.
The Chair briefed the Board on the planting scheme, with a Councillor raising that there are actually 55 trees listed on the plan – 15 individual and 40 in the crescent. The Board were in agreement that Ash and Crack Willow were not suitable for use in the scheme, particularly due to the problem with Ash Dieback in this area. The Chairman and Facilities Manager updated that there was a meeting scheduled with a contractor to discuss this scheme on 6th November and that the Parish Council need to progress this soonest, ideally before Christmas 2019.
The briefing note details that the trunk size must be 10-16cm trunks, although advise from the President of the Sussex Wildlife Trust, present at the meeting, indicated that this cost would be prohibitive and that whips would actually catch up with more mature trees and overtake them, as they can establish much quicker. Further clarification on the planning requirements of this scheme has been sought with MSDC.
(REF: BRIEFING NOTE Hovel Field planting plan 12 March 2019 ATTACHED)

> **RECOMMENDATION: The Board makes a recommendation to Estates and Facilities Management Committee that the planting scheme identified for Hovel Field is approved, subject to the Working Group agreeing the species used.**

HM19.9. Buckwilly Planting: The Facilities Manger updated on the progress with the Apple Orchard and planting in Buckwilly Field, with the Chairman expressing thanks to Martin Sadler who has put in a considerable effort into establishing the Orchard, with 12 more trees to be planted over the coming months. The Board also heard that some infill planting is required to the hedging in Buckwilly, to address lost whips and increase the hedgerows into the adjacent existing hedgerows/fencing. It was also noted that further seeding of the Orchard wild garden was also required as this had not established over the dry spring and summer months.

A Councillor asked to note that it is proposed that the Apple Orchard be re-named after the Late Amanda Geel, who sadly passed away in 2018, after offering so much to the community as a resident and Councillor.

> **RECOMMENDATION: The Board makes a recommendation to Estates and Facilities Management Committee that the infill planting requirements for Buckwilly Field, including the orchard, are approved.**

HM19.10. Volunteer Support: The Board discussed how the they can access and engage with volunteer support for Hurst Meadows, particularly where some links are already established, such as with Millennium Gardens. Patrick Howarth offered to coordinate volunteers, which was agreed by the Board, thanking him for his support. It was agreed that once the Working Group have identified jobs for volunteers to do through development of the Management Plan, that these activities would be publicized through noticeboards, newsletters, websites and social media.

HM19.11. Seating and Benches: It was explained that a request had come in from a resident asking for seating within the Meadows. The letter explains that whilst elderly people want to enjoy the Meadows, it is sometimes difficult to get around in one go. The Chairman notified the Committee that this would be discussed by the Estates & Facilities Management Committee in due course.

HM19.12. Millennium Gardens: The Advisory Board noted the work done by the Facilities Manager and the Millennium Garden Trust to agree the tree safety works being carried out after the tree survey was commissioned by the Trust, and prior to the handover of the Gardens to the Parish Council. The Board agreed to take into account maintenance and management works to the Millennium Gardens as part of the overall Hurst Meadows Management Plan being developed for 2020/21.

It was discussed that the Millennium Garden Trust will be passing over a file of all relevant details and management plan on handover of the Gardens.

HM19.13. Questions: The following matters were raised by members of the board:

1) A Councillor noted the Skills and Knowledge in the room, and that the Parish Council is lucky to have the support of the Board.
2) A special group representative congratulated the Parish Council on the work done in regards the meadows to date.
3) A special group representative raised the previously proposed access to the north east corner of Buckwilly from College Lane. The Facilities Manager and a Councillor updated that there was a land ownership issue and at the current time, the land owner was not willing to support this access.
4) The Chair thanked the board for their help and support.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.52pm

Chairman

Parish Council representatives	Special groups representatives	Members of the public
Stephen Hand Allan Brown David Evans Malcolm Llewellyn Claire Majsai Nick Sinclair (Facilities Manager) Lorna Cooksey (Assistant Clerk) Hamish Raby (Maintenance Officer)	Patrick Howarth (Hurstpierpoint Society) Michael Nailard (Woodland Flora + Fauna Group) David Brown (St Georges Millennium Garden) Tony Whitbread (Sussex Wildlife Trust) Rodney Jackson (Mid Sussex District Council)	Donna Willis Helen Brangwyn Rachel Felton Georgina Judd Martin Sadler