

## **MINUTES OF THE BODMIN MOOR COMMONS COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT ALTARNUN CHURCH HALL AT 7.30 PM ON 15<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2016**

#### **1. Present**

Thirteen Members of the Council – Andrew Finnemore, Martin Eddy, Clive Jennings, Nancy Hall, Richard Nankivell, Stephen Nankivell, Alan Finnemore, Wayne Smith, Geoff Smeeth, Stephen Lyne, William Yeo, Jim Goodenough and Ian Smith; and two co-opted members Julie Downton and Jonathan Holt; the Secretary; four members of the public and John Waldon Chairman of Dartmoor Commons Council.

#### **2. Apologies for Absence**

Jim Kempthorne, Rupert Hanbury-Tenison, Bob Clark and Martin Budge.

#### **3. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2016, as amended, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

#### **4. Matters Arising**

Personal contact details of the Members of Council were not to be published. The point of contact for the Council was to be either Julie Downton or the Secretary.

#### **5 Appointment of Officers**

Vice-Chairman – Richard Nankivell was proposed by Nancy Hall, seconded by William Yeo and carried unanimously.

Second co-opted Member – Jonathan Holt was confirmed as Veterinary Advisor to the Council.

It was noted that on occasions the Council may seek Jonathan's advice on matters relating to the welfare of livestock. However the Council makes it clear that any advice he provides is his personal view and the Council Members must decide on any issues using their decision and any decisions will be made by the Council and not by any individual Member or advisor. As a co-opted Member the Council welcomes Jonathan's views but accepts any decisions made are theirs entirely.

At the last meeting Julie Downton was appointed as "*Register and Liaison Officer*". There was a proposal from the Pony Working Group that Julie be also designated as the "*Welfare Officer*" for the Council. Julie outlined her role in that area as attached to the minutes.

It was proposed by William Yeo and seconded by Ian Smith that Julie Downton be also given the title of "*Welfare Officer*" and this was approved unanimously.

Julie was given authority to make appropriate decisions in emergency situations particularly where an unidentifiable animal is suffering and has no hope of recovery. If the animal is identifiable Julie to contact the owner. Jonathan Holt may be able to provide her with advice / assistance if he is available.

## **6. Chairman's Report**

Stephen Nankivell referred to articles that appeared in the press particularly concerning ponies on the Moor and how the Council was mindful of the situation and it was being addressed by the Pony Committee. The public were looking to BMCC to manage / improve the position although it was accepted that it would take a while to get the Rules and Standing Orders finalised before the Council was fully effective. However we should look forward and not backward.

Stephen reported on the visit to the Dartmoor Commons' Office at Tavistock by himself, Julie, Martin Eddy and John Keast. Dartmoor Council were very supportive of BMCC and were already providing considerable assistance.

John Waldon confirmed the assistance that Dartmoor was prepared to give BMCC including by other Members of the Dartmoor Council. He noted that there were 1,545 registered active and non-active graziers on the Dartmoor Commons list and currently the annual levy was 72p / unit for graziers and 12p / unit for non-graziers. They employed an Administrator who worked every weekday morning. In particular they found their Live Register a very beneficial information tool and are regularly consulted by Rural Payments Agency on BPS Claims. They provide the RPA with a copy of their Annual Register. John noted that although they started as a "*policing group*" dealing particularly with the numbers and quality of stock on the Commons that era has now passed and their issues are now mainly around agri-environment and general management of the rights.

## **7. Treasurer's Report Including Financial Regulations**

Martin Eddy reported that they had opened a Bank Account at Barclays Bank, Liskeard and it was agreed that signatories on cheques should be any two of the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.

Martin circulated proposed Financial Regulations the adoption of which was proposed by Richard Nankivell and seconded by Stephen Lyne and this was carried unanimously and signed by the Chairman as attached to these Minutes.

Financial issues that were discussed included :-

It was agreed that the Council does not register for VAT for the time being it being noted that we could register in due course and claim VAT back for up to a three-year period.

- (a) Martin was to hold £50 cash float.
- (b) It was noted that there was an offer of up to £1,000 funding from Councillors Watson, Rounsevell and Hall but that this offer would run out in March. It was proposed by Stephen Lyne and seconded by Richard Nankivell and carried that the Council purchases an EID stick reader capable of reading cattle, sheep, ponies and stray dogs. Martin to check on the availability and suitability of equipment although the Shearwell equipment appeared to be favoured. Alan Finnemore noted that there may be a move towards chips being introduced in boluses and also wondered whether a favourable price could be obtained if the supplier were offered an advertisement on the BMCC website. Martin to procure whatever equipment he considered appropriate.

Other suggestions for the use of the Councillors' funds included :-

- (i) Andrew Finnemore suggested cost of website production
- (ii) Julie suggested an appropriate software programme for the Live Register

## **8. Secretary's Report**

- (a) John Keast noted that he had received correspondence from St Neot Parish Council that they had agreed to make a donation of £200 to the BMCC once chipping of ponies in St Neot Parish begins. This issue to be considered again at a future meeting.
- (b) He had had a number of exchanges with a member of the public who had sought a copy of the Council's Rules and had enquired as to where the ponies removed from East Moor had been placed. It was noted that the Rules will be circulated for public comment in due course when the drafting is complete. The placement of the ponies is not a matter which should be in the public domain.
- (c) There had been a request from landowners for a representative from Savills to represent them on the Council. The general feeling was that the landowners should represent themselves and not through an agent. It was pointed out that an agent would need a proxy to vote from the particular landowner they represented. Consideration of this issue was adjourned for the establishment order to be checked. John Waldon noted that the Dartmoor Commons Council does not allow any proxy voting.

## **9. Standing Orders**

The draft Standing Orders were considered in detail and an amended version approved as attached to these Minutes.

These Standing Orders will be forwarded to DEFRA with the draft Rules for their preliminary comments and will then be brought back to the Council for further consideration before being published for public consultation.

With regard to clause 2(e) (the dates for meetings) Martin Eddy noted that it would be useful if the dates of the BMCC meeting were fixed annually in advance and Stephen Nankivell suggested perhaps the third Thursday in March, June, September and December of any year. To be considered again at the next Council Meeting.

## **10. BMCC Rules**

The draft Rules were considered in detail and an amended version prepared as attached to these Minutes for DEFRA's comments and subsequent referral back to the Council.

In addition to the amendments made to the previous draft the following points were noted referring to the numbered paragraphs of the Rules :-

- 5. Julie was attending a DEFRA meeting in London where the marking of livestock was to be considered and she would report back to the Council in due course.
- 9(b) The Pony Committee to consider a stallion improvement programme.
- 13. BMCC website – this to be developed as soon as possible.
- 14. Pony Welfare Committee Report

The Pony Committee met last week and their Report was presented by Julie.

**11. Any Other Business**

- (a) DEFRA were hosting a meeting in London to consider and update livestock identification legislation. It was proposed by Wayne Smith and seconded by William Yeo and carried unanimously that the Council would reimburse Julie the cost of attending this meeting.
- (b) We have not yet been able to access the old Commons Associations Funds. It was necessary for the remnants of that Association to hold a meeting to agree the transfer of the funds to the Council.

**12. Public Comments**

The point of contact for animal welfare issues was raised. It was agreed that the first point of contact should be Julie Dowton but if she was not available the public should contact the RSPCA or APHA.

**13. Date of Next Meeting**

This to be fixed in due course when we have received a response from DEFRA to the draft Standing Orders and Rules.

The meeting concluded at 9.50 pm.

Approved 14.08.17