

**Minutes of the Herne Hill Users Group**  
held in the Council Chamber, North Street, Ilminster  
at 14:30 21st July 2023

**In attendance:** Jake Taylor (Countryside Manager)  
Fran White  
Mary King  
Vernon Higgins

**1. Apologies.**

Chris Bestley – Green Ilminster  
Brian Hamilton – Ilminster Town Council  
Claire Duncan – Member of Public

**2. Countryside Managers Update**

Attendees were updated that since the last meeting action had been taken to reinstate the missing seats. Four new benches have been installed and a further five will follow shortly.

It was explained that all the paths have been cut and all steps and benches would be strimmed soon.

**3. Map Herne Hill and signage**

Attendees discussed which elements of the example maps they preferred. Maps 2 and 3 being most favoured as they were simple and easy to follow. We discussed the features to be included on the map, along with benches, stairs, and viewpoints. The waymarked routes were considered important as well as standard sign information such as contact info, what three words etc.

We discussed that the older maps on the other entrances would remain in place for the time being but new ladder signage would be added to inform people that they are entering the nature reserve and what activities are prohibited to prevent anti-social behaviour and damaging activities.

**Recommendation:**

Members to approve the purchase of an A1 landscape board and an A2 noticeboard to be situated at the entrance from the ridge path and five entrance ladder signs to include “Welcome to Herne hill nature reserve” and engraved prohibit activities symbols for the smaller entrances.

**4. Management Plan Draft – Comments**

The management plan was discussed and that as it is a working document it is likely to be added to in the following years as and when we obtain further information about who is using the site and as other data becomes available.

Though everyone was happy with the content there were some confusing format elements, mainly the numbering of the objectives didn't line up with the chapter making it confusing to understand

It was agreed these formatting changes would be made before the plan went before the open spaces committee.

**Recommendation:**

The open spaces committee approve the management plan and the projects highlighted within. Open Spaces Committee members to recommend to full council to approve the budgetary elements moving forward from year 2 onwards.

**5. Leaflets**

Example leaflets were passed around and discussed. Leaflets 1, 5 and 8 were the favourites.

The best way to decide on the leaflet content was discussed. It was thought that a basic leaflet to introduce Herne Hill, how to get there and what to expect when there would be most useful.

After the Interpretation Plan had been finalised, we can consider making more in-depth leaflets for the History and Nature of the site rather than trying to squeeze all the information into one leaflet.

**Recommendation:**

The Open Spaces committee approve the commission of an A3 folded leaflet for Herne Hill to be designed.

**6. Questionnaire**

The potential benefits of a survey or a questionnaire were discussed. The most productive method to obtain the data would be via a face-to-face survey on site. This would help to prevent respondent bias.

Whilst discussing the methodology it was suggested that starting at 7am people would be too busy to answer but it was explained that to obtain the most accurate data a true cross section of respondents need to complete the survey.

It was mentioned that in the future an online survey would be useful, the school could help distribute it.

Members of the group indicated they would be interested in helping man the survey.

**Recommendation:**

The Open Spaces committee grant permission for a face-to-face survey to be carried out at Herne Hill as described in the methodology discussed.

**7. Year 1 Action Plan**

The year one action plan was discussed, it was considered realistic and achievable as we are already in month 7 of year.

**8. Date/time of next meeting**

Next meeting date will be decided following the meeting of open spaces committee on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023