

**Minutes of the Herne Hill Users Group**  
held in the Council Chamber, North Street, Ilminster  
at 14:30 26th May 2023

**Attendees:**

Cllr Brian Hamilton, Ilminster Town Council  
Jake Taylor, Countryside Manager, Ilminster Town Council  
Fran White, Member of Public  
Mary King, Member of Public

**1. Apologies**

Margaret Masters – Member of public  
Chris Bestley – Green Ilminster

**2. A welcome place – Review**

- It was discussed that clarification should be made on which paths would be cut to 2m width and which would be cut but to a lesser extent to encourage wildlife and a more rural and natural feel. It was agreed that it would make more sense for the promoted routes to be made wide and connecting paths left a little wider.
- Disabled access and waymarking for people with limited access abilities was discussed, and it was thought it would be really useful to touch base with a local disabled ramblers group.
- Following discussions, a site survey in regard to path surface quality should be carried out with users of Herne Hill and should be carried out to help prioritise works.

**3 Healthy safe and secure – Review**

- It was thought that more clarity was needed on viewpoints and how these should be maintained regarding benches. It was mentioned that many of the viewpoints on the hill have become overgrown and are no longer visible.
- Light levels and lack of picnic tables were also mentioned and should have clarity in the plan with the intention to resolve these issues.

**4. Well maintained and clean – Review**

- There was little comment on this section as the group considered the content was sufficient.

**5. Community involvement – Review**

- It was discussed that we need to attract more users of Herne Hill to get involved and that marketing and showcases of what progress is being made on the hill via the Town Council's Facebook page and also to come up with a way to make the group more accessible.

**6. Environmental management – Discussion**

## **Agenda Item 8**

- The risk of fire on Herne Hill was discussed and an action plan for awareness on what would happen was considered. It was thought that some sites have fire beats at strategic points though these would probably be vandalised. It was discussed that potentially contacting the local fire station and consulting with them on a suitable policy and stance would be beneficial.
- It was also discussed how environmental impact can be reduced through day to day things like ordering local and considering the environmental impact in value analysis.
- The fact we don't have recycling facilities was mentioned and that it may be worth talking to Chard Town Council as they have just implemented a new recycling scheme.

### **7. Biodiversity, landscape and heritage – Discussion**

- Encouraging members of the public to get involved through the use of INaturalist and arranging bioblitz was discussed and thought to be a really useful exercise to help identify species not only on Herne Hill but across the town.
- The presence of dormice that were once here seems to be missing and collecting data on why this happened might be useful. It was suggested that possibly engaging with local universities to help survey the area might be of use.
- Engaging with groups such as the History Society would be important to identify what we know about the hill and what heritage we need to protect it.

### **8. Marketing and communication – Discussion**

- An interpretation plan should be carried out to help identify educational projects that tell the story of Herne Hill and its history.
- A leaflet to help direct people would also be useful as the current leaflet is a little outdated, getting an A4 map that could be used for events and general directions was also discussed and considered to be useful – it was noted that the waymarking project should tie in with this as having the leaflet with no waymarks would be confusing.
- Updating the website with the management plan and other key details was thought to be important and could tie into the wider Town Council project.

### **9. Management – Discussion**

- It was discussed that this section would highlight how we will make sure the plan is carried and progressed while showing clearly how projects will be funded moving forward.

### **10. Date/time of next meeting**

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2023 14:30