

Sandstone Volunteers meeting

The Junction October 11 2004 at 7.30pm

Present 23 in all:

Tim Skinner, Ute Wegerhoff, Brian Mead, Oliver Hill, Geoff Pearson, Steve Jackson, Steve Durkin, Sarah Cullen, Robin Mazinke, Mike Vetterlein, John Galloway, Graham Adcock, Ian Stronghill, Ian Hufton, David Unwin, Neil Atkinson, Julian King, Angelika King, Rob Foster, Graham West, Guy Keating, Bob Moulton (chair), Martin Brice (minutes).

Apologies from Frank Shannon, Chris Boylan, Tim Daniells

Meeting agreed Bob should chair

1. Bowles

BM said he'd met Randall Williams at Bowles. BM had asked for some bolt placements above *Fragile Wall* to be altered/moved, but the response was negative. BM said the meeting needed to find someone to follow up these issues at Bowles. Tim said bolt and sling at top of *Skiffle* needed attention. Robin said he could follow this up, although not until after January. Brian asked if Bowles paid for the work. Answer generally affirmative. **Action RM**

2. Bulls Hollow

Graham said work had allowed rock to dry substantially, and looking to the future, logs had been moved into habitat piles for wildlife. Next step was to dig a series of drainage channels, Conservators were planning this. Steve Budden is keen that the work done should not be lost, as are climbers, May be necessary to cut back scrub, Commons Conservators were monitoring the situation. Rob Foster volunteered help from TWMC in scrub cutting. **Action GA to keep under review**

3. Eridge Green

BM said a number of initiatives had been discussed in the past to maintain the climbing agreement with Sussex Wildlife Trust. Someone was needed to meet SWT ideas include: producing a leaflet for climbers (to have in a box at the Rocks) explaining the sensitivity of the area (e.g. use a piece of carpet above *Equilibrium* etc), and a notice on the importance of not using chalk on the three routes at *Sandstorm*. This is because of rare mosses and the danger that chalk would change the Ph of the rock. The possibility of having a complete ban on chalk at Eridge was discussed but it was decided that it would be better to stick to the existing agreement with SWT. Tim volunteered to meet SWT. **Action TS**

4. Harrison's

BM said big issue was ownership. Local climbers want ownership of car park, and toilets (and campsite?) passed by Sport England to Forestry Commission, and of

Rocks to BMC. Dave Turnbull agrees with this. It needs BMC & FC to come up with a proposal for a “dowry” from SE. The next step was for DT to contact the FC. JG suggested that we ask DT to delegate it to a local volunteer to follow this up, but BM’s explained his view that because it involved a financial commitment by the BMC the matter had to be dealt with by a paid official of the BMC. **Action BM and GK to chase DT**

5. High Rocks

a) Clearance:

Oliver said project had the owner on board. 98 trees to go, most sycamore saplings, 19 larger beeches about 120 years old, 60 ft high, 140 cu metres of wood, need to create 10 metre wide at corridor in front of the crag so a flow of air and sunlight. Quote of £10,000 plus VAT, 12 days of three tree surgeons, with 9 volunteers per day (£24,000 total project value). Scrub clearing needed before. Ideally in 12 consecutive working days, which would make volunteers hard to find in the week. OH was pursuing a compromise involving more weekend work. Plan is to start scrub work at October 30 and 31. Earliest trees could go is late November, needs Forestry Commission permit because the work involves more than 5 cubic metres of tree wood. Reply in five weeks. BM had spoken to Dave Turnbull on Friday – DT hopes that full funding could be found by the BMC. OH said plan must fit into finances. Next phase was finding volunteers, GA had volunteered to find people. RF asked about waste disposal, OH said piles would be made for wildlife habitat, some wood to be removed from the site, and scrub to be burnt. GA said we should look at the resources within the climbing community in terms of finance and voluntary labour. Graham Adcock to flush out certificated chainsaw holders. Julian King said the FC had used a permanent injection solution for rhododendrons. **Action OH and GA**

b) Bolts

John Galloway years ago obtained permission (from owner and English Nature) to put in some bolts. The question of the hut boulder mushroom was raised. Work needed to be done, and funded. TS said the hut boulder mushroom should not be pursued. BM said it has been 5 years on the agenda. RF said the TWMC would sort this out. Steve Durkin asked how many bolts would be needed instead of the mushroom – answer from JG was five but he had strong reservations about putting a bolt in above *Roofus* – a view that was shared by the meeting. JG ran through the tortuous and troubled history of bolts at High Rocks. Meeting decided on the bolts option rather than the mushroom (vote of thanks to Chris Boylan on his research on getting a mushroom made). **Action TWMC to get it sorted**

c) Entrance fee

MB reported he had spoken to the owner of High Rocks. JG recommended a continued series of conversations with Mr C. JG was eloquent against the lump sum idea as the money would be better spent on conservation work. Meeting concurred but the situation to be kept under review. **Action MB**

5 Stone Farm

a) Graham West said he was about to submit a bid for £1,000 to Access & Conservation Trust for funding for work. Woodland management needs doing at western end of crag. Some planting is planned of rowan, wild cherry and field maple, to fill gaps and stabilise the slope, all in the best possible taste. GW agreed to include filling in the gaps in the hedge above the crag in his plans. **Action GW**

b) **Replacement of fencing below Inaccessible Boulder.** JG had started work, unable to finish. Fence needs removing, replacing, and BM said a stile needed replacing and the boundary to be marked out. Someone was needed to fix all this work. No volunteers. East Grinstead club to be contacted. **Action BM to approach EGMC.**

c) **West boundary of land owned by BMC**

Neil Atkinson agreed to make an attempt to fix the boundary using GPS – BM to provide copies of the relevant land documents. **Action NA & BM**

6) **Other crags**

No matters

7) **Across-the-board issues**

a) **Sandstone code of practice**

Geoff Pearson said new code was close to production. Bid was for 6,000 leaflets and 6,000 postcards. Artwork by Steve Jackson. JK suggested postcode distribution in Summit. GK was asked to ask if it was possible. Ian Stronghill suggested postcards to be handed out by the fee-taker at Bowles, BM suggested at the counter at High Rocks Inn. **Action GK**

b) **Notice boards at entrances to Rocks**

BM said they were on the way, they would be similar to the ones at Harrison's.

c) **Ten Commandments for boulderers**

BM asked how effective this was. GA said it should be more prominent on notices at crags. IH said it should be at all major crags- the meeting agreed. **Action BM**

8) **Any Other Business**

JG said the FC has a remit to increase leisure use in its forests. Suggestion is to create an "artificial Fontainebleau situation" – an artificial boulder in Birchden Wood, perhaps on the left of the "top track". One Three such boulders exists - in Newcastle, Hartlepool and somewhere else. Made by Rockworks. FC likely to do forest management work but not fund the boulder. JG volunteered to do initial planning and costing research. It would be an asset for boulderers. Meeting in favour and wished JG good luck in his research. **Action JG**

9) **Next meeting** January 17th 2005

Meeting closed at 9.44pm.