

Meeting Notes
Blandford + NP Monitoring Group Meeting
20th February 2024

In attendance

Cllr C Tompsett (CT) – Chair BPC
Cllr R Carter (RC) – BFTC
Cllr A Cross (AC) – BFTC
Nicci Brown (NB)
Graham Stanley (GS) – Dorset Council Rangers
Julie Wigg (JW) – Committee Clerk

In attendance via Teams

Cllr F Stocks - BPC

1. Apologies

Cllr J Dallison – BSMpc

2. Co-option of Nicci Brown

The group agreed that they would be very happy to have NB on board. Her expertise will be a great asset. NB is also willing to join the Climate Change and Biodiversity Group as she is also on the Blandford Environmental Trust committee.

3. Graham Stanley

The group discussed the Ward's Drove planning application and the railway route. CT said that a working group had been formed to investigate formally designating the new railway route but were pleased to learn that the Rangers have it in hand. The BNP group would like to see that more is made of this route away from the main road and GS confirmed that the route is as per the plans. CT asked what the group can do to ensure that it goes ahead. GS said the group needs to make sure it is mentioned in the Neighbourhood Plan and, even if the development does not go ahead, the route could still be put in place. RC reiterated the importance of ensuring The Trailway does go ahead as per the plans and is not re-routed.

CT asked if the route can be included as a non-designated heritage asset. FS said he does not think it would be considered a heritage asset as it is already a designated bridleway - St Mary's Way.

CT suggested we contact Robert Lennis to ask his opinion and whether a Lidar/Geophysical Survey could be carried out to establish if there is evidence of the old BSM station and railway and to support it being a heritage asset. **ACTION - JW/CT**

GS confirmed that they receive S106 funding from developments for the signage. NB said that previous interpretation/information boards have been designed and made by Flick Baker, a local artist. It was agreed that NB will approach Flick to ask if she will be willing to make the boards when things progress. **ACTION - NB**

JW asked GS what their priorities are going forward so we can ensure the NP priorities align. GS confirmed the following:

- Increasing public rights of way links into the town. We need to identify good links (that don't flood!).
- Support for the wider trailway. Eventually they would like to extend it into Poole but for now support in Spetisbury/Sturminster Marshall.
- Extending the Milldown Nature Reserve. RC was pleased to hear this as rewilding is an important aspect of the neighbourhood plan.

- The Rangers have a vision of expanding public open spaces including extending the Marsh & Ham.

GS said would like to obtain more land around the Eastern side of the town so large parts can be rewilded. He also said that incorporating properly managed meadows within developments is important. RC said we will put this to the Climate & Biodiversity group on Thursday for their support and ensure it is included in our next modified plan, along with tree cover and green infrastructure.

AC asked who cuts the grass and public areas around Preetz Way. GS confirmed they do. GS said they will also have responsibility for developments on the other side of the bypass where footfall will increase through pathways in sensitive areas with SNCI status. CT thanks GS for taking the time to come and speak with the group. GS left the meeting.

4. Update from JW

1. Re: Invite to Dorset Council Senior Planning Officer – it was agreed to ask Sara to attend a meeting in the Autumn when we will have a better idea of group direction/priorities. – **ACTION - JW**

2. JW to email Robert Lennis to ask that when considering the Ward's Drove development another caveat be included for ensuring the preservation of the trailway route as designated in the plan. FS suggested that we refer to the Dorset Explorer 1988 map which shows the original route.

Action: JW to draft an email and forward to CT for approval. **ACTION JW/CT**

5. Update from CT re: meeting Wyatts/BGP

Confidential

6. Update from CT re: Changes required to the Design & Guidance code.

CT is pleased the Planning department are referencing the document. CT expressed her concern that the errors are far beyond what we originally thought and asked the group for their opinion. RC said that as it's a working document its important it is correct. We are waiting to hear back from Ed Gerry who has offered to proof-read the document. The group will also read through again and compile a list of amendments to send to AECOM. It is hoped that the final amendments will be considered as minor amendments.

7. Blandford + Monitoring Group and Climate & Biodiversity Group.

CT said it's great that some Blandford + reps have agreed to join the Climate & Biodiversity group as it's important that we have the same priorities. RC will update the Climate & Biodiversity group with notes from today's meeting.

8. AOB

Re: The monitoring form.

The group agreed that the existing form is very useful but needs some tweaking as it is missing dates, and the notes are too detailed. There should be clear priorities of where we want to move forward, and it was suggested that we also have an action plan.

JW will work on both forms and email drafts to members prior to the next meeting.

ACTION - JW

9. Date of next meeting

JW to send doodle poll with the following dates: - 25th March, 8th April or 29th April.