

009/07

Novington Sandpit Residents' Committee

Minutes of Meeting Held on Tuesday 25 September 2007 7.30pm, Plumpton Village Hall – Committee Room

Present: Julie Barnard; Charles Dampney; Jean & Neville Eagle; Jane Gane; Jane George; Veronica Harris; Tom Hawthorne; Rod Maclaren; Jeanie Muddle; Paul & Carole Nicholson; Julie Russell; John Sheeran; Katie Wride.

Others who had expressed interest in helping/unable to attend meeting: Mr & Mrs Robin Akers; Mike Barnard; Gordon Barr; John and Sue Bonnett; John Bowden; Barbara Cheal; Kevin Cohen; Laurie Collins; Jennie Davies; Mr and Mrs Galletly; Keith and Carol Gutteridge; John and Carol Hendry; Nigel Hills, David Holmes; Sally Huband; Tony Hutson; Jean Scott-Moncrieff and Cornelius Medvei; Mr & Mrs Clive Mountford; John Muddle; Timothy Parmenter; Oliver St John; Gary & Lindsey Smith; Ginny Smith; David Tetley; Jim Thornton; Teresa Wells; Dominic Williams.

(All of the above listed residents will receive a copy of these minutes)

A representative of Natural England had been invited to this meeting but felt unable to attend as he had not yet formally been given a copy of the appropriate report. See item 3 below.

1. Minutes

Those present approved the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 11th July.

2. Matters Arising

All will be considered as part of the meeting.

3. Pre-conditions

Paul Nicholson updated the meeting on the status of each of the pre-conditions; the two outstanding ones being:

- 24 Aftercare
- 25 Ecological Survey

The discharge of these is dependant on the issue of the Revised Conservation Management Plan ("CMP") which had been requested by ESCC back in April. Paul Nicholson had contacted Douglas Symes (consultant to Dudman Group) and had been told that the delay in the issue of the Revised CMP had been due to the absence on vacation of the author of the original report at ECOSA. The revision involves extending certain works into the pit extension area (towards Stanton Cottages) as and when working takes place in that area. Therefore no major revisions should be required. As soon as the revised CMP is received a copy will be made available to residents.

At the stage of finalisation of the CMP, Natural England will be sent a copy by Dudman Group and at that stage will be able to comment fully. We will also re-invite a Natural England representative to a future Residents' meeting.

The meeting was again reminded that the outstanding conditions would not prevent Dudman from starting on site; rather they are ongoing obligations and would, along with other conditions, evolve as the site progresses through its working life.

Paul Nicholson undertook to encourage the finalisation of the CMP.

Action: Paul Nicholson

4. Activities on Site

There had been a degree of activity on site recently as Dudman had begun trial digging of the sand and stockpiling; the stockpiles can be seen clearly from off-site.

Work had also been started on the installation of a new gate at the inner entrance to the site, adjoining the footpath. This gate and recontouring of the sand bund along the footpath running N-S, will ensure that access would be prevented. It is anticipated that CCTV cameras and lighting will also be installed.

Paul Nicholson commented that Dudman had taken a tougher line on access to the site, arising from a string of issues which had prevented work commencing. However, Paul reminded residents that it was in everyone's interests to maintain a good working relationship with Dudman and that residents should follow site access limitations.

Paul would speak to Dudman to try to improve ongoing access at least for the monitoring required as part of the CMP and Liaison Group.

Action: Paul Nicholson

5. Traffic

Site traffic continues to be minimal although there has been some early morning movements to and from the site as set up continues.

There was a discussion about priority alterations at the Half Moon junction. Tom Hawthorne commented that this would have a very low chance of receiving a sympathetic hearing from Highways.

The replacement of one 20 mph sign on the western side of the Half Moon junction and the cutting back of tree and hedge growth around the sign on the eastern side was discussed and Tom Hawthorne undertook to take these issues up with Plumpton PC.

Action: Tom Hawthorne

It was noted generally that there had been few road movements of Dudman vehicles and those noted had been driven carefully and at appropriate speeds.

Tom Hawthorne noted that any significant issues concerning traffic could ultimately be referred to the Transport Executive in Eastbourne.

Paul Nicholson commented that he had noted the possibility of on site signage directing vehicles to travel south of the site. He would follow this up with Dudman.

Action: Paul Nicholson

5. Ecology

The CMP had been discussed earlier.

Tony Hutson had continued to monitor the site as far as possible. The little ringed plovers raised two young at their second attempt and a rather late-nesting pair of hobbies raised a single young. The site therefore continued to prove of interest. It must be a priority to maintain access for monitoring purposes.

Action: Paul Nicholson/Tony Hutson

Carole Nicholson explained that shortly after the last Residents' meeting, it was suspected that a discharge of water from the site had taken place. SOCS had attended and taken measurements and had notified the Environment Agency ("EA") of a possible issue. EA attended site and informed the operator that no discharge licence was in place for the site.

At around the same time a resident had noted dead trout in the stream.

More recently, a resident had noted a possible outflow from the site into Stantons Pond. Again SOCS immediately inspected the area and found no evidence of recent outflow. SOCS noted that even if such discharge did occur, it was at a point high on the stream which would mean that SOCS own regular measurements would pick up any increased turbidity. It was emphasised that vigilance is needed here because of the status of the Plumpton Mill stream and Bevern stream. If any emergency issues arise the EA hotline should be contacted on 0800 80 70 60 with a note also to Paul Nicholson.

6. Date of Next Liaison Group Meeting

Paul Nicholson commented that he had again written to ESCC to encourage the re-engagement of the Liaison Group with the operator. He would continue to pursue this.

Action: Paul Nicholson

7. Any Other Business

Tom Hawthorne asked whether aerial photographs might be an appropriate method of site monitoring and it was generally agreed that, subject to cost, this might prove worthwhile.

Action: Paul Nicholson

John Sheeran asked what impact the possible South Downs National Park designation would have on the site. It was noted that the bodies currently involved with the South Downs management had commented on the planning application from a visual impact viewpoint and nothing else. Tom Hawthorne now sat on a body dealing with the proposed National Park (the South Downs Joint Committee) and would ascertain how this might impact on the site; albeit that it was generally felt that any impact would be on the limitation of any future expansion of the site.

Action: Tom Hawthorne

Julie Barnard noted the poor state of the field to the south of the pit where the footpath crosses to Plumpton Lane. Although the ragwort had been removed the field had deteriorated badly. Paul Nicholson would discuss with Dudman.

Action: Paul Nicholson

Paul Nicholson noted that the value of sand and gravel extracted in the South East of England had risen significantly in the last two years and that the commercial viability of the site would therefore have improved equally.

8. Date of next Residents' Committee Meeting

This will be held on **Thursday 22nd November 2007 at 7.30pm** in the Committee Room in the Village Hall.

Action: All