

Minutes of DIGS meeting Tuesday 25th July 2017 at DWT, Brooklands Farm, Forston

Present : Alan Holiday, Pete Bath, Andy Bradley, Charles Jackson, Ian Hacker, Geoff Pettifer, Paul Ramsden, Geoff Rowland, Malcolm Wright.

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** Stephen Baughan, Bob Christian, Jeremy Cranmer, Kelvin Huff, Rhiannon Rogers, Pat and Roger Snelgrove, Jo Thomas, Niall Simpson, Giles Watts.
- 2. The Minutes** of the last meeting on 23rd May 2017 were approved as a true and accurate record. Matters arising: Nothing received from Sam Scriven with reference to item 4 Community Involvement. 9 a No further development on the Corscombe potential L.G.S. Other items came up later in the meeting.
- 3. Financial Update.** Nationwide account balance: £3,846.20. Lloyds account balance: £127.15. Rhiannon indicated that there is a need to transfer some funds from the Nationwide account to the Lloyds account.
- 4. Recent happenings. (a) Rockpit Farm, Maiden Newton 20th June.**

The conservation day was sparsely attended (4) but it was very hot. Roger has since completed another day's work there so it is good for the next year. The site is now in a good state because of Roger's work and also local council work extending the grass area cut. During the work the Parish Clerk visited the site. We discussed developing an information board for the site. This was followed by a visit by Pat, Giles Droop and Alan to review the building stones used in Maiden Newton in preparation for the information board. **(b) Wanderwell Quarry Bothenhampton.** All the trees felled by Dorset Countryside over the winter have been cut up and cleared. Thanks to Andy Bradley, Paul Ramsden and Geoff Rowland who helped. Roger has also cleared vegetation growing on the lime kiln. The new information board has been a great success. People have been very interested in its contents and some have also looked up the additional information on the DIGS web site. **(c) Poxwell, 29th June.** Work was carried out removing ivy from the northern rock face. Also some clearance of the western end of the face to expose rock lower in the succession took place. Because Roger felt it would be unsafe to use the brush cutter on wet vegetation after a lot of heavy rain on the day agreed for conservation there, he went on Thursday 13th July and cut all of the ground vegetation. Thanks also to Geoff Rowland who turned up unexpectedly to help and Geoff continued clearance of the lower part of the rock face mentioned above. The job was completed so this site is now good for visitors over the summer. **(d) Liaison meeting at Swanworth Quarry July 13th.** This was attended by Giles and Malcolm. The following are Giles' notes. Swanworth Quarry produces a variety of roadstone and building materials from graded sands and small pebbles up to large boulders used in sea defences. Unfortunately, the rock is generally fractured and often veined. Consequently, there is very little freestone suitable for more expensive facing stone or worked pieces. The usage is mainly local (Dorset) with some larger blocks exported up the coast to Brighton or further. All materials are processed and graded on site which means that there does not have to be external warehousing. This reduces the number of lorry loads and the environmental impact (which is very much in their favour which considering planning consents).

The quarry is leased until 2024 but the current quarry will run out of rock to work in the next few years. Suttles are proposing to open up an extension to the NW towards Kingston this would involve crossing the gully down to Chapman's Pool. They propose

a short bridge and tunnel (or cut and cover) through to the adjoining field. They are hoping that the rock will also be less fractured than at Swanworth (by extrapolation to other quarries on the coast and through observation from boreholes) and so may be suitable as a freestone. A planning application has been sent to the council to consider. They are expecting a negative reaction from residents in Kingston. Part of their argument is that Swanworth Quarry is a more efficient and environmentally sensitive solution both for waste disposal and provision of quarry materials.

Suttles also want to change the restoration plan. Currently the plan is for an ephemeral lake in the centre with sloped landscaping down to it. On the Eastern side this would involve a long graded slope into the adjoining field and removal of the current cliff edge. Instead they suggest building up the level of the waste in the centre (although the lake would remain it would be smaller and leaving a ~10m exposure of the Purbeck which would be good for us.

5. South Dorset Ridgeway Project. This is due to be completed in the spring of 2018 and Alan has agreed to visit the DIGS sites and produce a report. Geoff Rowland reported on recent work on 11 and 12 July, he and a handful of other volunteers worked with the South Dorset Ridgeway Partnership, Dorset County Council Countryside Rangers and Rob Buckley of the Dorset Centre for Rural Skills repairing/restoring Bishop's Limekiln, near Abbotsbury. The kiln had been damaged several years ago by fire. They put in two replacement oak joists and re-fixed much of the fallen stonework. They also removed the cement mortar, used for previous repairs, and repointed with lime mortar. There is still more to do, but it should have stabilised the structure. There was some discussion of further work. More stone to repair the top/parapet. Even digging out the kiln itself, also, a possible information board. Geoff mentioned that the local Abbotsbury Oolite rubble stone for further repairs might be sourced from Ilchester Estate's Oddens Wood Quarry, at the base of Linton Hill.

6. Future events

a) 15th October DIGS / Wessex OUGS joint event at Upwey Cutting.

Conservation morning followed by field trip in the afternoon visiting local exposures.

b) Dippy the Diplodocus exhibition. This will be at Dorset County Museum from February 2018.

7. Sites and conservation. A number of sites are in need of conservation activity including Church Close and Birds Quarry Todber, Portesham Farm, Red Lane, Crack Lane, Holt Farm Quarry and Hardown Hill. It was agreed that we would have a conservation session at **Todber on Friday 11th August** starting at 10.30 at Church Close and then hopefully continue at Bird's Quarry later. It was agreed that **Holt Farm** was in need of work and Monday 21st August was chosen (however I now realise this is not suitable for Roger!!!!) so I suggest **Tuesday 22nd August** at 10.30 (apologies!!!). It was agreed that Roger can decide on a suitable date for Hardown Hill and circulate date chosen and hopefully some members can attend (Paul, Geoff Rowland and Andy at least). Alan visited Red Lane and Portesham Farm on 25th July and Red Lane needs so work although the area inside the gate has been cared for by Peter Bagley. Alan will liaise with Peter and see when some work can be carried out. Portesham Farm is not in urgent need of attention. The grass in front of the site is low

and there are no brambles and limited nettles. It was agreed that Pete Bath would contact the owner at **Longburton** to arrange a visit and he will circulate the date to members of the group.

- 8. A.O.B. (a) Fossil Forest, Lulworth.** Recent emails from Sally King (Jurassic Coast Trust) say it has been agreed that work will be carried out to remove the over-hanging rock above the steps leading down to the Fossil Forest. A contract has been offered to Vertical Technologies. Alan offered to attend when the work starts to which Sally King has agreed.
- (b) DIGS website.** Gillian Gunner has offered to redesign the DIGS website in the near future.
- (c) The Geology Trusts.** It was agreed that the DIGS group would link up with the Geology Trusts organisation.
- (d) Hog weed.** Andy reported an allergic reaction following the work at Rock Pit Farm and raised awareness of the problem of contact with this group of plants.
- (e) Down to Earth.** Malcolm distributed copies of the latest Down to Earth.
- (f) Ramues Gallois** has been in touch with reference to DIGS sites at Eggardon Hill and Bincombe because of his research interest in the Upper Greensand.
- 9. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 12th September at 7 p.m.** AGM followed by general meeting