

GLAMORGAN HERITAGE COAST ADVISORY GROUP

Minutes of a meeting held on 27th November, 2020.

Present: Councillor Mrs. S. Hanks (Chairman); Councillors L. Burnett, V.P. Driscoll, R.N. Finn and N.C. Thomas (Vale of Glamorgan Council); Mr. B. Acott (Friends of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast), Mr. J. Golunski (Dunraven Estates), Mrs. E. Felton (Natural Resources Wales), Mr. R. McLaggan (Merthyr Mawr Estate), Councillor A. Trousdell (One Voice Wales) and Mr. K. Rogers (Glamorgan Wildlife Trust).

Also present: Mr. P. Chappell, Mr. P. Locke, Mrs. N. Summer-Smith and Mr. G. Teague.

(a) Apologies for Absence –

These were received from Mrs. H. March (Friends of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast), Councillors A.C. Parker, (Vale of Glamorgan Council); and Councillor Ms. N. Clarke (Bridgend County Borough Council).

(b) Announcement

As new representatives, the Chairman welcomed Ms. E. Felton (Natural Resources Wales) Councillor A. Trousdell (One Voice Wales) and Ms Rhian Howells (Crown Estates).

The Chairman also praised the contributions of Mrs. H. March, long serving member of the Friends of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast, who had decided to stand down from the Group on health grounds. The Group agreed that a letter of thanks and appreciation would be sent to Mrs. March in recognition of her valuable contributions.

(c) Minutes –

AGREED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 20th November, 2019 be approved as a correct record.

(d) Presentation by Site Ranger, Mr. Paul Locke – Achievements and Issues Since the Last Meeting –

In commenting on the work, achievements and issues since the last meeting held in November 2019, Mr. Locke outlined the following:

- Maintenance work had generally gone well until the Covid pandemic had hit in March;
- From then there had been a “disjointed” approach as staff were affected by Covid;
- The Team had been one member of staff down, and their replacement who start work in the new year;

- Due to Covid, volunteers were unable to travel to help out, although some local volunteers had been able to assist in the gardens on an individual basis;
- Winter conservation work had started and N.R.W. had requested works to be undertaken up at the Common,
- Some weekends had seen lots of visitors, possibly as a way to relief stress built up because of Covid.

Councillor Nugent-Finn queried the impact on the number of volunteers. Mr. Locke advised that usually there were 8 volunteers, but they could not help out due to travel restrictions. This year had illustrated how important the contributions of the volunteers were.

In response to a query from Councillor N. Thomas regarding the impact on wildlife, Mr. Locke stated that the biggest difference was during the first 2 weeks of lockdown when people were not able to travel. The Team had seen animals such as hares in the Centre and wildlife took over for those 2 weeks until people returned.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Locke for the update.

(e) Verbal update on Heritage Coast Centre discussions – Nicola Sumner-Smith, Programme Development Officer, Creative Rural Communities.

Nicola Summer-Smith, Programme Development Officer provided an update on discussions held with Dunraven Estates regarding the ongoing relationship between the Estate and the Council and the future of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast Centre in Southerndown.

Plans were at the early design phase and aimed at attracting more visitors. This meant that the Council had been looking at ways of improving the facilities. This included better access and car parking, as well as proposals for a café/tea room. Further discussions were ongoing.

Mr K. Rogers commented around the sustainability elements of the design, which should include, for example, energy efficiency measures, grey water systems, green walls/roofs as well as potential biodiversity improvements such as bat spaces/sparrow terraces boxes etc. These needed to be factored in as early as possible.

The Chairman thanked Nicola Summer-Smith for the update.

(f) Verbal update on works undertaken to the Wales Coastal Path – Mr. Gwyn Teague, Public Rights of Way Officer.

Mr. Teague provided an update on the progress in redrafting the Vale of Glamorgan Rights of Way Improvement Plan. He stated that the Local Access Forum had been involved in devising a new draft and as a result a number of changes had been made and a number of new actions included. The Improvement Plan still contained the main overarching themes which were as follows:

In terms of coastal projects for 2020/21, Mr. Teague outlined the following:

- There had been two cuts to clear vegetation from the Coastal Path;
- Drainage works at Aberthaw had been completed;
- The route of the Coastal Path had been rolled back at two sections, the first between Nash Point and St. Donats, and the second to a section west of Tresilian;
- Improvement works to section of the path by Monknash which had wash away had been progressed, with a design agreed with an expectation for the practical works to commence in 2021;
- Works to the path at Cwm Colhugh had been progressed with new steps partially completed and a new link path created. Funding for the remainder of the steps had been secured for 2020/21;
- Funding had also been sought in order to improve escape ladders.

Mr. Teague was thanked for the update.

(g) Matters to be Raised by Bridgend County Borough Council –

None.

(h) Matters to be Raised by Natural Resources Wales –

The Group was advised that during Covid, Natural Resources Wales had worked with Paul and his staff particularly in relation to water quality monitoring at Monknash.

(i) Matters to be Raised by the Friends of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast –

Mr. Acott of Friends of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast stated that as a result of Covid, the work of the Friends had been affected. No formal meetings had taken place, but it was hoped to be back up and running in the New Year.

(j) Date of Next Meeting –

To be arranged.