



# WINDERMERE & BOWNESS TOWN COUNCIL

*Representing the interests of the communities of Windermere, Bowness and Troutbeck Bridge*

## **Notes of Site Visit and Meeting held in the woods on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021 at 3pm**

**Present:** Dr Helen Jones (Chair) Cllrs Adrian Legge, Lisa Greasley & Ian Telford. Gary Hancox (Town Steward), Julie Hartley (Town Clerk).

Also, Jo Wilmott, LDNPA Area Ranger.

**Apologies:** None.

### **1. Items Outstanding from the previous meeting on :**

#### **Benches**

- It was agreed that new benches should be purchased for the commemoration of Fred Atkinson and Kathleen Atkinson for their service to the woods and that they should be sited at the entrance to the newly cleared compartment. It was also agreed that a bench should be located close to the interpretation boards near the Gruffalo.
- The Town Clerk had researched options and presented a proposal for a sustainable woodland bench, manufactured from 100% recycled plastic, durable and low maintenance. Estimated at £545 each. There is also a 2-seater metal park bench available from Black County Ironworks, priced at £356 each and £500 for a 3 seater.
- It was agreed that the 2 existing delapidated wooden benches are used to create one restored bench for locating in the entrance to the new compartment (see below) by the Town Steward.
- It was agreed that the wooden bench on the terrace be moved to close to the kissing gate, to provide better view options.

#### **Recommendation to Full Council:**

- a) Approve expenditure of up to £1,200 on the two commemorative benches to be funded from the Elleray Woods budget (there is over £3,000 remaining in the budget);
- b) Approve expenditure of up to £600 for the additional bench to be funded from the Mayor's budget (nearly £2,000 remaining in the budget).

#### **Oak Trees in field near Steve Hicks:**

The Clerk had made overtures to the NT about taking 20 of these and they had agreed to do so, but nothing has happened since and the trees are now taking deep root. Jo Wilmott agreed to follow this up with both the National Trust and the LDNPA and report back.

### **2. Compartment 18: Thinning, Improvement and Boundary Fence:**

The Town Steward updated on this project and the advisory group complimented the work completed so far. The path is really coming along nicely and the post and rail fencing has been ordered. The cost will amount to £1,000 and was authorised earlier in the year to be funded from the Elleray Woods budget. It is hoped that this lovely new area of the woods can be opened in Spring 2023 and will provide

further peaceful and restorative space away from crowds making their way to the summit.

### **3. LDNPA Access Project & Summit Improvement:**

This project is now nearly complete and the opening ceremony in September was enjoyed by many locals, visitors and councillors. The access track is complete, as is the seating and the signage. The following points were raised:

- The need to plant the hedging between the post and rail fences (Jo Wilmott confirmed this will be done in the Spring);
- Vandalism to the EU sponsor sign has prompted a re-think as to its location and Jo Wilmott will take advice on how best to reduce any future damage to the replacement sign;
- It was agreed that the older benches on the summit should be retained, as they provide additional seating options with varied views.
- Gary agreed to provide a temporary repair to one of the finger posts which has become loose from its standing.

### **4. New Signpost from Tourist Information:**

Kate Barton, from Tourist Information (Mountain Goat), had contacted the Clerk to ask if it would be possible to erect a signpost outside the Information office, to direct visitors to Elleray Woods and Orrest Head. Mountain Goat would be happy to specify, order and site the post, but have asked if Town Council could fund the signpost itself.

This was discussed and it was concluded that Town Council are responsible for signage within the woodland but that it would be unwise to create a precedent of funding directional signage around the Town. As such, it was agreed to thank Mountain Goat, but decline the offer on this occasion.

#### **Recommendation to Full Council:**

- a) That the funding of signage outside the Tourist Information is refused.

### **5. Litter Problems:**

With the growth in visitor numbers and holiday lets, there have been problems with litter, particularly commercial waste and the mis-use of the domestic dustbins which are placed close to the access track, with dog waste bags accumulating around the bins.

Jo Wilmott agreed to continue her investigation into this issue, working with SLDC and CCC to identify possible solutions to alleviate the problems.

### **6. Access Road:**

The work on investigating the situation with the Access Road has been completed by Wellers Hedley and they have made the following conclusions:

- The results of the investigation by Wellers Hedley point to all the properties served by the roadway having a legal right of way over the road;
- None of the rights that are recorded in legal title are dependent on property owners making a contribution to costs of maintenance;
- No form of contractual right exists for the Town Council to require a contribution towards maintenance;
- Town Council is not obliged to maintain the roadway to any specific standard;

- General law states that whoever wishes to use the roadway should repair it. If any specific user is excessive in their use, there may be a case for them to be liable to repairs;
- If the Town Council undertakes repairs to the roadway, it will be liable if those repairs are found to be defective, but this does not place a general obligation on the Council if someone is injured as a result of the poor state of the roadway;
- Town Council may wish to consider writing to individual owners, pointing out that there is no obligation on TC to maintain the roadway to any given standard, but that, if the owners wish the roadway to be maintained to the standard set after recent works, the Council would be prepared to consider doing this if each owner would enter into an agreement to contribute a share of the cost.

It was agreed that the Clerk and Town Steward should identify the length of access road, close to the entrance to the woods which is in most need of repair and obtain quotations from Tarmac companies. The Clerk should then write to property owners as set out above, asking if they are willing to contribute funds.

**Recommendation to Full Council:**

To endorse the actions set out above and receive report back when appropriate.

**7. Any Other Business:**

It was agreed that the Clerk will send thank-you letters to local residents who assisted with the opening ceremony.

**Next Meeting:** Weds 14<sup>th</sup> April at 3pm