



BRAMBER PARISH ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday 22nd May 2024 commencing at 6:30pm at the Beeding and Bramber Hall, Upper Beeding.

MINUTES

Present: The Chair and Clerk of Bramber Parish Council and 17 residents.

The Chair of Bramber Parish Council, Cllr Ann Blakelock, opened the meeting by welcoming those present.

- 1. Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting** – the minutes from the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 17th May 2023 were agreed by those present and signed by the Chair.
- 2. Chair's welcome and Annual Report** – the Chair presented her report which is attached at Appendix A. No questions arose.
- 3. Bramber Brooks** – Pete Crawford (HDC Parks and Countryside Manager) presented details of HDC's plans for the newly purchased site. The presentation is attached at Appendix B.
- 4. Public Rights of Way** – Christine Supiot (Public Path Inspection) referred to her report (attached at Appendix C).
- 5. COUNCIL REPORTS**
 - **West Sussex County Council** – no update; and
 - **Horsham District Council** – HDC Cllr Noel referred to:
 - The May 2023 election resulted in the Liberal Democrats with 28 seats, Conservatives 11, and the Green Party with 8;
 - The draft Local Plan had been circulated and is at the Regulation 19 consultation stage;
 - HDC is reducing their carbon footprint, especially on Council owned facilities. An example of this is the refurbishment of the Capitol Theatre that will include significant carbon reducing features;
 - HDC will sell the Drill Hall; and
 - The new administration will focus more on green issues and has declared a climate and ecology emergency.
- 6. STEYNING AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP – Working Party 9 (The White Bridge)** – Cllr Ann Blakelock presented an update that included:
 - HDC, WSCC and the EA continue to support the project;
 - The replacement bridge only needs to be raised 300mm not 3m as originally thought.
 - The gas company would prefer to submerge the pipe under the river, rather than attach to the new bridge;
 - Works are due to commence in 2025;
 - The Saltings Loop project is ongoing but a licence from the EA may take two months to complete.
- 7. QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**
 - A member of the public asked if Bramber Brooks would be an open access space. Mr Crawford (HDC) advised that there are no plans, at present, to designate the space as open access. He stressed that most of HDC parks are open access but not to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 standard;

- A resident asked if the proposed footpath at Bramber Brooks would be made a hard surface. Mr Crawford advised that the path would be made from grass and stones, but costs would preclude a hard surface. The resident reminded Mr Crawford that the site of the path is under water during most of the winter;
- A resident referred to the “Weald to Waves” initiative and advised that Greening Steyning Greening is encouraging the public to engage by placing their wildlife gardens on the map. The resident asked whether Bramber Brooks would also be placed on the map. The Chairman reported that BPC is in discussion with Greening Steyning to discuss this; and
- A resident asked if the unsightly and disused electricity pylons at Bramber Brooks would be removed. Mr Crawford would review this but had concerns that UKPN would not have resources to fund the removal of the pylons.

The Chair thanked all for attending and the meeting closed at 7:37pm.

Signed:

Date:

APPENDIX A

BPC Annual Report 2023 – 2024

Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting. We have had a busy year and I have outlined below some of the issues we have addressed.

- **BPC have decided to advertise in “Your Steyning” magazine.**

You may recall that newsletters were once distributed door to door but this year the committee felt that since “Your Steyning” magazine was delivered to every household, it would be more efficient to inform parishioners by placing an article in the magazine twice a year – in May and in November. We hope this will ensure all parishioners are fully informed about on-going issues within our parish.

- **BPC’s new Climate Action Plan**

This year Horsham District Council asked all parish councils to develop their own Climate Action Plan. You will be pleased to hear that BPC were on-board straight away!

Our plan consists of three sections. The yellow section shows actions which have been accomplished, the green section shows work we are doing this year and the light blue section shows ideas for the future. The vision is clear, how can we make Bramber a better place to live? A place that is not just good for parishioners but also good for nature. Details of the Climate Action Plan can be seen on the BPC website:- bramber.org.uk

One important aim of the Climate Action Plan is to engage with local groups and outside agencies, so you will see that already we have started discussions with Bramber Social and Greening Steyning. We’ve also been working with neighbouring parishes on the White Bridge Link walking and cycling path and later this year we hope to work with English Heritage and the National Trust to develop an orchard on the western flank of Bramber Castle. Cllr Sarah Green is our link councillor for this project.

We hope that by working together we can improve the environment in which we live. If you have any ideas that could help us achieve this goal, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

- **Bramber Brooks**

After many months we are delighted to tell you that HDC have bought Bramber Brooks. Bramber Brooks will become an intrinsic part of the nature recovery project for The River Adur. At a recent meeting we were told that this year HDC are doing preparatory research to determine how to develop the site. There are several volunteering opportunities such as project ambassador, citizen scientists, scrubland superheroes, dog walking advisors and digital volunteers. If you are interested, please get in touch with Alex Briggs at Adur River Recovery.

- **Highways**

The biggest headache for BPC this year has been the damage to the bollards situated in The Street. On three separate occasions a bollard has been damaged. On two occasions the damage was caused by a passing bus. Fortunately, the bus company paid for a replacement but frustratingly, on the third occasion the driver could not be identified, so BPC had to stump up the replacement cost!

The need for speed reduction along the A283 continues to be an issue. We are especially concerned for school pupils that use the Castle Lane crossing. Paul Linehan, our WSCC, is looking into this.

We have two Speedwatch teams who have been out with their cameras at the bottom of Clays Hill and in The Street. The idea behind Speedwatch is to educate and remind drivers that they are in a residential area and that they need to lower their speed for the safety of others. A big thank you to our Speedwatch teams for their sterling work.

We also continue to maintain the fixed vehicle activated speed sign on Clay’s Hill and the mobile sign that we share with Upper Beeding parish.

Potholes have proved to be a problem on Clays Hill and deep rutting of the road surface on Castle Lane. Both roads have been reported to Highways and repairs are due later this year.

Finally, you will all have noticed that trees have been pruned in Castle Lane. Dustbin lorries can now collect rubbish from resident's homes in the section of Castle Lane beside Clays Field and pedestrians, cyclists and drivers can now safely use the section of Castle Lane running alongside the castle moat.

- **Public Rights of Way**

Councillors were dismayed at the flaying alongside the Downs Link and by the deepening puddles and ruts. You will appreciate that the Downs Link is heavily used not just by cyclists and walkers but also by wheelchairs and buggies etc. We are fortunate that Christine Supiot volunteers to monitor our Rights of Way. She has single handedly ensured that issues are flagged up to WSCC and we are very grateful to her.

We have noted that the steps underneath the bridge which go from the Downs Link up to the Walks for All are disintegrating and we have requested they be renewed.

Some parishioners have expressed concern about fly tipping at the side of the River Adur. Branches, twigs and sticks blight the footpath and the landscape but can also cause a problem at high tide should they be swept downstream and get lodged under the bridge and then causing a flood risk. Please report any incidence of fly tipping to the Environment Agency.

- **Joint Parishes Youth Committee**

Our previous Youth Club, run by The Youth Service, went into administration last year but Steyning, Bramber and Upper Beeding parish councils have been working hard to set up a new Youth Club that will be run independently by the joint parishes. Cllr Helen Bayford has been involved in job applications and interviews so that a new team can start as soon as possible. The youth club will provide a valuable and much needed service for our young people.

- **Finances**

Internal and external audits have been completed this year. However, since overall costs continue to rise, the precept rose to take account of this. Fortunately, our finances at the end of year look to be stable and sufficient for our needs. Thank you to our clerk Paul Richards.

- **New cables along The Street**

In the past few weeks those living in The Street will have been inconvenienced as utilities e.g. Southern Water and UK Power Network, have been updated. However, we hope that residents now have a better service.

- **Bramber Car Park and toilet**

Bramber car park toilets have also caused problems this year because the toilet drain became blocked. The drain runs under the neighbouring house and Southern Water are responsible for the drain in question. At present the toilets are open every day from May through to December and on weekends throughout the rest of the year.

- **Emergency Equipment**

Councillor Helen Bayford has completed the Emergency Equipment Inventory and relevant items have been added while out of date items have been retired. The EEI has now been added to the BPC asset register.

- **The Railway Boards**

The Steyning and District Community Partnership have installed Railway Information Boards near Bramber roundabout, sponsored by the South Downs National Park and the Community Rail Network. Bramber Parish Council have now taken on the maintenance of these boards as a community asset.

- **The White Bridge Link**

WSCC are doing preparatory work this year but hope to build a new bridge by the end of 2025. In the meantime, SDCP working party 9 have secured a Rural England Prosperity Grant for The Saltings Loop. This will be an all-

weather path for walkers and cyclists running from Upper Beeding newsagents NORTH along to the pumping station and then round and into Saltings Way. A further section will run from the same newsagents SOUTH along the river bank and down to Dawn Crescent.

- **Neighbourhood Wardens**

Bramber continues to be supported by our Neighbourhood Wardens and Cllr Goodall, our link councillor, keeps us up to date about on-going issues. If you have any anti-social concerns, the Neighbourhood Wardens are your first port of call. If our wardens cannot solve the concern, they will inform the police who will investigate further.

- **Planning Applications**

We have received several planning applications throughout the year and we have tried to assess each application on its own merit and according to our Bramber Design Code. We are fortunate in having our own BPC tree officer who helps us with applications regarding the pruning or removal of trees.

- **Thank you**

Thank you to Cllr Mick Tilley who serves on the Bramber and Upper Beeding village hall committee. We are also very grateful to Cllr Tilley for running our BPC website - bramber.org.uk

Thank you to all our BPC councillors who give their time so willingly, where would we be without you?

Thank you to our Horsham District Councillors, Cllr Mike Croker and Cllr Roger Noel, who continue to give us comprehensive updates on District matters.

Thank you to Cllr Paul Linehan our West Sussex County Councillor who, although he can no longer attend BPC meetings, is attempting to progress the Traffic Regulation Order to reduce speed on the A283.

Thank you to our extremely efficient clerk who offers important advice on how to follow due process.

Thank you to Horsham Association of Local Councils which supports all parish councils across the county.

- **Finally**

I hope residents are encouraged by this report and I hope that some may even offer their services in the future. We are a friendly and supportive council and we have just signed a **Civility and Respect Pledge** to show our commitment to good working practice. So do please come along, a warm welcome awaits you.

Ann Blakelock

Chair of Bramber Parish Council

APPENDIX B

Bramber Brooks

A RARE OPPORTUNITY TO ACQUIRE
Approx. 34 ACRES OF LAND IN BRAMBER, WEST SUSSEX
Including a private Nature Reserve and Community Orchard



BRAMBER BROOKS

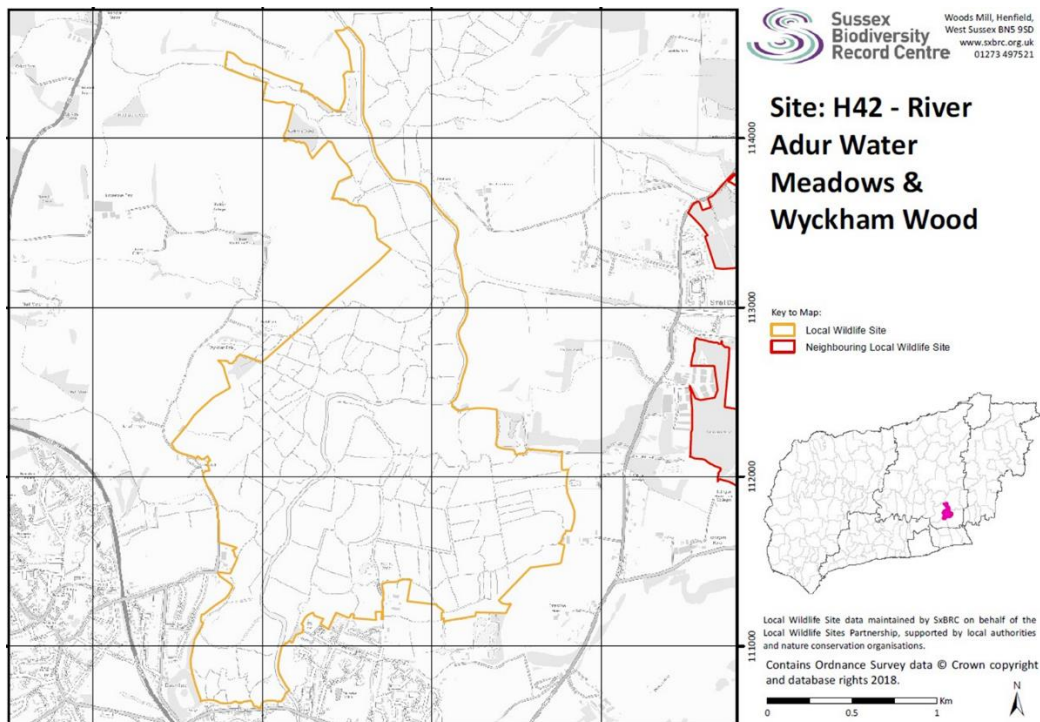
THE STREET, BRAMBER BN44 3WE

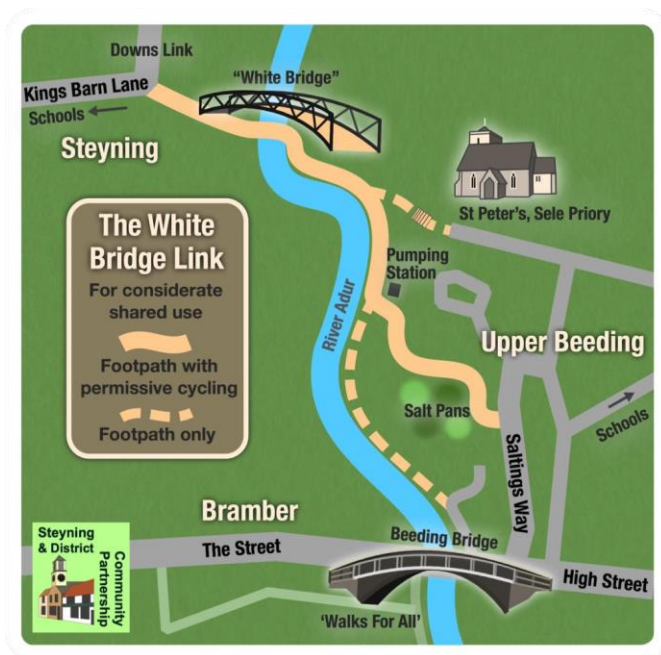


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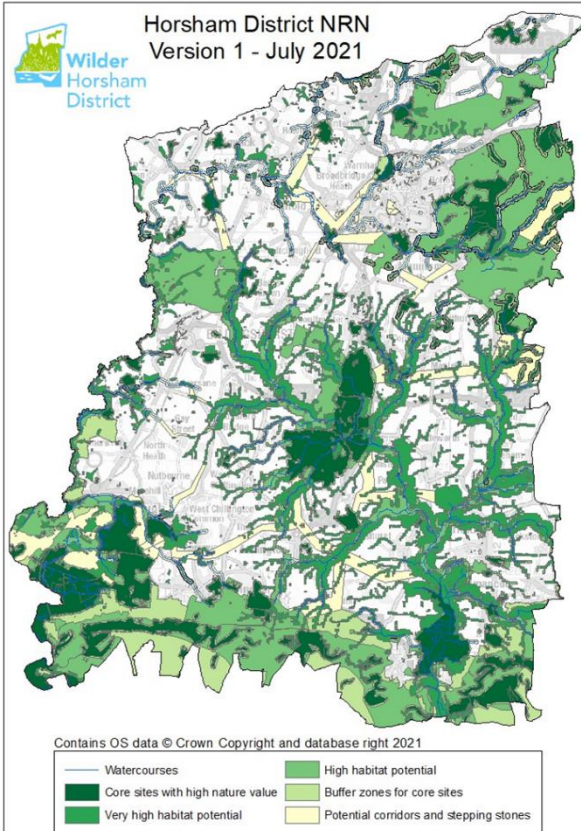


Parks & Countryside portfolio

HDC owns & manages 400 ha / 988 acres.
Over 250 separate sites include play grounds, farmland, woodland, playgrounds and recreation grounds

- Our biggest sites include:
- Warnham Local Nature Reserve
- Chesworth Farm
- Owlbeech and Leechpool Woods
- Sandgate Park
- Henfield Commons,
- Monkmead Woods





APPENDIX C

BRAMBER PARISH ANNUAL MEETING 2024

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) report - Christine Supiot, Public Path Inspector (PPI)

As volunteer PPI for WSCC I have in April walked all the Public Rights of Way in Bramber Parish in April for maintenance inspections.

WSCC are responsible for maintaining the signs, the surface and vegetation from ground growth and obstructions. Landowners are responsible for gates and side vegetation. I have to report on things as I see them on the day of inspection. The inspection months are rotated to reflect the different seasons. Between inspections any issues are best made via the website following the links to RoW > report a problem.

Bramber has a new area RoW ranger Louise Gandolfi based at Clapham Dept.

In general the paths are in good condition (compared with other counties) and we have a large network of RoW's , up to the top of the Bostal.

There is some increasing erosion on some of the BWs on the Downs due to water and the increased use by MTBs over recent years.

There is evidence of illegal equestrian use of FP 2779 & 2296-1 (the open field between the A283 & river). You may want to consider placing some signs.

There are many low priority issues in my report i.e. worn wooden finger posts I have only listed the main ones here but am happy to receive any questions.

A SUMMARY OF MY REPORT

Main issues:-

- I stressed to need for summer clearance (late last summer) of the walks for all and its declining surface, its getting too bumpy for mobility buggies
- They have the flood issue behind Riverside on file.
- Stile in Maudlin lane needs replacing, Recommend with a kissing gate and steps
- Missing steps to kissing gates on Maudlin Lane and roundabout
- FP 2294 between farm, Lower Maudlin Farm gate and kissing gate, add the summer clearance and kissing gate into twitten floods needs infilling
- FP 2933 south of BW bridge part of safety fence missing
- BW 3171 - I cleared width of brambles at entrance with Coombes Road to improve access
- FP 3204 north of bridge - brambles between path and river. I trimmed some overgrowth from the homes the homeowners need to be careful to trim any shrubs from their gardens

Regards

Christine Supiot