

**DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Committee for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes.

Notification of one Deputation has been received. The spokesperson is entitled to speak for 5 minutes.

**1. Proposed Changes to Grazing Arrangements on the Beacon Hill Nature Reserve**

**Spokesperson – Boyd Darling**

Members of the deputation:

Dawn Jones  
Libby Darling  
John Bryant  
Mike Sexton

**Proposed Changes to Grazing Arrangements on the Beacon Hill Nature Reserve**

This deputation is made in response to the “*proposed changes to grazing arrangements*” on Beacon Hill Local Nature Reserve (BHLNR) as detailed on the [Rottingdean Parish Council \(RPC\) website](#); and requests that funding for the erection of permanent ‘stock fencing’ along the north-eastern border between the grassland and woodland on BHLNR be refused and any future requests for new permanent fencing be refused in perpetuity.

This deputation is supported by [600+] signatories to a petition (See Appendix 1). This deputation objects to the installation of permanent fencing because we consider it unnecessary; we believe it would effectively enclose the grassland and it would divide up the currently open space; permanently changing the character of BHLNR. This deputation also asserts that the objectives of sheep grazing can still be achieved whilst avoiding the impact that a permanent fence would have on both wildlife and other users of BHLNR.

Currently, the only justification provided in the proposal described on the RPC web page is that the fence “*would reduce staff and volunteer time and the number of materials required to compartmentalise the hill for purposes of grazing sheep.*”

The use of permanent fencing on BHLNR has been a contentious issue since first proposed in 2009. Then there was a petition of protest signed by over 220 local residents. (reported in the Argus on 16/12/2009 – see Appendix 2). The protest led to an agreement at the February 2010 RPC Meeting, that **permanent fencing would not fully enclose BHLNR and “it would only bound the two main roads”** (See Appendix 3). Since this agreement, grazing on BHLNR has been managed by City Parks Rangers with the assistance of RPC’s Beacon Hill Stewardship Group (Formerly ‘Working Group’) and the Friends of Beacon Hill volunteers, using mobile equipment and temporary electric fencing. **This deputation asserts that the “proposed changes to grazing arrangements” at BHLNR can still be achieved through the use of temporary fencing, rendering the proposed permanent fencing unnecessary and disproportionate to the issue it attempts to resolve.**

BHLNR has been open, accessible land and a much-loved local feature for generations; formally designated as an LNR in 2004, it has since become part of the South Downs National Park. The management of the LNR is primarily meant to protect the habitat of endangered skylarks by supporting a range of plants and insects associated with chalk grassland. However, the woodland along the eastern edge of the site also forms a vital part of the overall biodiversity, supporting a diverse community of wild animals.

The proposed fence would, for large sections, separate the two contiguous habitats and, when in use, the temporary gates would turn this into a continuous barrier for the entire length of the hill which could be in place for 3 - 4 months of the year. While there have been opinions expressed on social media and in the RPC statement, regarding the possible effect that the proposed fence may have on the local wildlife. We believe the claim that the fence “will not be a barrier to wildlife” is un-founded and this deputation asserts that the erection of a fence in the proposed location would have SOME effect on the wildlife, the degree of detriment being unquantifiable, it may be benign, like forcing animals to deviate from their usual movement patterns, or it may cause injury or death. (See Appendix 4 for examples of wildlife and livestock entangled in fencing like the type proposed for Beacon Hill.

## Supporting information Item 90(c)(1)

**APPENDIX 1:** Petition To: Brighton & Hove City Council, Rottingdean Parish Council, Friends of Beacon Hill and the Stewardship Group. "Stop the enclosure of Beacon Hill Nature Reserve Rottingdean in perpetuity." Full details of all signatories attached.

**APPENDIX 2:** Argus Article published 16/12/2009

Argus, Wednesday, December 16, 2009

News

theargus.co.uk/news

### ta Bus on road again

and his bus will be out to spread Christmas again tonight. Argus Appeal charity will be back in Wood, setting off from Cresve North.

I head to Shipley Road,



Drive and Bexhill Road moving on to Langley nt, Falmer Road and Road. Santa Bus is raising for The Argus Appeal e Martlets Hospice in

year the tour raised £12,000. y effort will be made to santa and his bus down rest. ever, from time to time experience technical diffi-

### Two hurt in car crash

TWO women were hospitalised after a three-car crash at about 9.15am yesterday on the A272 to Midhurst.

One woman was treated for chest and abdomen pains and another for minor injuries at St Richard's Hospital in Chichester.

An elderly man and a woman had to be freed by West Sussex Fire and Rescue crews.

### Alcohol safety scheme

PLANS to reduce alcohol harm has been supported by Alcohol Concern. An East Sussex strategy called Have Fun, Stay Safe has been awarded a Kitemark by the national charity.

East Sussex Drug and Alcohol Action Team's scheme will target under 18s who drink alcohol, 18 to 24-year-old binge drinkers and harmful drinkers, while helping families and carers.

### Homeowner fined £500

A HOUSEHOLDER has been fined £500 for damaging his historic home. Daniel Lowe was ordered to pay up after removing parts of the inside of his 15th century, Grade II listed property during renovations in 2007.

Mr Lowe, of High Street, Hastings, admitted the charge at Brighton Magistrates' Court (sitting as Crown Court) on Friday.

PICTURE: TERRY APPLIN

TA141209-A3



ANGER: Campaigners do not want to see land, where they walk their dogs, permanently fenced off for sheep

### Sheep grazing protest

DOG walkers have staged a protest against plans to graze sheep on a popular nature reserve.

More than 220 residents in Rottingdean have signed a petition against proposals to erect a permanent enclosure on Beacon Hill.

Dawn Jones, 48, of Grand Crescent, Rottingdean, organised the petition.

She said: "Last year, the council said it was going to put sheep up there but we didn't want a permanent fence all the way around it. It is already difficult for people to walk dogs where there isn't livestock."

She added that most residents are happy with the current situation, where sheep are grazed in the area for a few months every year and temporary electric fencing is put up.

A council spokeswoman said: "Our plans to expand and enclose the grazing area have resulted in some concerns around road safety."

"We are in discussions on the best way to ensure the safety of the sheep, walkers and motorists."

## APPENDIX 3: Extract from Minutes from Rottingdean Parish Council Meeting February 2010

### MINUTES OF THE ROTTINGDEAN PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1<sup>ST</sup> 2010 IN THE WHITEWAY CENTRE.

Present: Cllrs: Mr J Bastard, Mr F Conisidine, Mr J Canning (Chairman), Mr K Humphreys, Mr J Jense Van Vuuren, Mr B Planch, Mrs S Preece, Mr G Rhodes and Mr W Spencer. Five members of the public were also present.

The Chairman invited comments from the public. Mr H Williams noted that all the pavement defects reported in the Traders' Association's Quarterly report had been repaired. He expressed concern that 75% of the West Street short-stay car park would be commandeered by Southern Water later in the year when work started on sinking a shaft for the new sewage system. It was essential that the PC and the Traders' Association were in full possession of facts relating to what alternative arrangements were being put in place for the bus terminus and controlled parking elsewhere in the Village. The Parish Council and the Traders' Association, the City Council, Southern Water and the White Horse Hotel management to ascertain full details, should create an in-depth study group. Ms Frances Thetford asked what steps had been taken during the prolonged icy spell to safeguard feeding and swimming for ducks on the pond and to protect them from hooligans throwing snowballs. She also complained about vehicle clamping on the frontage of the Lloyds Chemist shop on a Sunday. There was nothing on the signage there to indicate that parking on a Sunday, when the premises was closed, would result in clamping. Mr Williams offered to take this up on behalf of the Traders' Association and report back to the Parish Council.

1. Apologies for absence: There were none
2. Declaration of Interests: The Chairman noted that he was remaining as President of the Rottingdean Branch of the Royal British Legion. Cllr Bastard declared an interest in planning application B02009/02854.
3. Minutes of the meeting held on December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009. These were proposed by Cllr Humphreys, seconded by Cllr Bastard and unanimously approved as a true record.
4. Matters arising from the minutes:

**Sheep Grazing Meeting:** The Chairman reported that the public meeting held on December 15<sup>th</sup> had been far from satisfactory. City Officer David Larkin had given the impression that 260 sheep would be used to graze the nature reserve. The proposed fencing had not been adequately described in view of the agreement reached, immediately prior to the meeting, between the City Council and the LNR Working Group that fencing be reduced and pedestrian gates removed when sheep were out on the Hill. Ward Cllr Mary Means had suggested a further public meeting and this would take place on February 4<sup>th</sup> when the shepherd, who would be responsible for making sure the Hill was not over-grazed, would be present. The Chairman noted that LNR specialists Bill Cook (birds) and Alan Holden (butterflies) were resigning and volunteers were needed to take over their important roles in monitoring the area. The clean-up session would take place on 20/2/2010 and it was hoped that more volunteers than usual would come forward. Cllr Conisidine asked whether there was a conflict of interests from the PC Chairman also being Chairman of the LNR Working Group. It seemed that residents who were opposed to sheep grazing were informed that it was nothing to do with the Parish Council in which case why did Rottingdean have a Parish Council? The Chairman said that the LNR belonged to the City Council and it was they who decided how it would be cut with the Parish Council having no say in the matter. The Working Group had been set up to try to influence the City Council on how the Hill was managed in the best way for the Village and its residents. Originally fencing was going to go all round the area but the Working Group had influenced the City so that it would only bound the two main roads. Cllr Conisidine was of the opinion that the sheep grazing scheme was a Public Relations disaster. The City's savings cuts did not add up as they failed to take into account expenditure on fencing, water troughs and the work that these would involve.

**Beacon Hill Fencing and Water:** Cllr Jense Van Vuuren said that no final decisions had been made at the December meeting and the chances of getting external funding were now negligible although this was still being pursued. The LNR was a City asset and it should spend the necessary money to maintain it.

**A259 and Village vehicle weight restrictions:** Cllr Bastard felt that the A259 bus lanes' project was now finished as far as any further influence from the PC was concerned. There were still no warning signs on side roads that vehicles were accessing a bus lane area despite the PC's having drawn this to the City's



## Supporting information Item 90(c)(1)

### APPENDIX 4

Examples of the wildlife and livestock entangled in stock fencing..

1. Local sheep caught in stock fence.



2. Fox caught in stock fence  
(<https://www.midsussextimes.co.uk/news/video-fox-rescued-fencing-746545>)



3. Fox caught in stock fence  
(<https://www.shutterstock.com/editorial/image-editorial/fox-gets-caught-in-a-wire-mesh-fence-leighton-buzzard-bedfordshire-britain-13-jan-2010-1085197a>)



4. Horned sheep caught in stock fence:

