

Agenda for DIGS Meeting

7.00 pm Tuesday 22nd March 2016

Dorset Wildlife Trust, Brooklands Farm, Forston

Present: Andy Bradley, Bob Christian, Ian Hacker, Alan Holiday, Kelvin Huff, Rhiannon Rogers, Geoff Rowland, Pat Snelgrove, Roger Snelgrove, Malcolm Wright.

1. Apologies for absence: Pete Bath, Michael Gates, Charles Jackson, Sam Scriven, Jo Thomas,
2. New members were welcomed. Valerie Goodwin, Katherine Southgate, Malcolm Wright.
3. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising. These were taken as read. AH had forgotten to contact Ilchester Estates about access to Red Lane now most of the site has been fenced off.
4. Financial update: Nationwide balance £3,838.52
 Lloyds balance £747.07

RR commented that there had been a small increase due to some sales. AH indicated that there was a chance for further sales at Lulworth Heritage Centre and coming events mentioned in 6. below.

5. Recent happenings:
 - (a) Dorset Local Nature Partnership Forum 25th February. Jo Thomas attended this meeting on behalf of DIGS and had circulated information on the Economic Value of Dorset's Environment. Various assessment methods were mentioned which seemed to produce very varied and broad ranging figures for the financial and employment benefits. There has also been a meeting of the Jurassic Coast Steering Group on March 10th where a paper reported significant benefit of the Jurassic Coast to the local economy in terms of revenue and employment. This is likely to be discussed at the next JCSG meeting programmed for 7th July.
 - (b) Curry Fund meeting 11th March. AH reported on recent Geologists' Association Curry Fund meeting at Burlington House, Piccadilly. The Fund provides financial support for geological projects. One of local interest discussed was a bid by the Friends of Ham Hill (Somerset) for a project with a guided walk leaflet and markers for this important site. The Fund Committee requested further information on the content before the project could be supported.
 - (c) Fleet Study Group Meeting 18th March. The main item of interest at this

meeting was discussion about the siting of a path along the Fleet through Ilchester Estate land at the northern end of the Fleet. Natural England have indicated their preferred route but Ilchester Estates and the Fleet Study Group want the route to be taken well inland to limit disturbance of over-wintering and nesting birds. Further discussion is taking place. Another item of interest is that Charlie Wheeler has taken over from Don Moxon as warden of the Fleet Reserve. Anyone wishing to access the Fleet Reserve area should apply to www.fleetandchesilreserve.org for a permit which can be for a single event or a period of time. This is to enable monitoring of access to the site.

6. Future events:

(a) Lyme Regis Fossil Festival Friday April 29th – Sunday May 1st. AH reported that there had been a change in the arrangements for the Fossil Festival and the marquee on the beach has been scrapped and small marquees and other venues around Lyme Regis, including the Theatre, will be used. This has resulted in some previous attendees dropping out this year including Rockwatch and the Geologists' Association. AH pointed out that it is a pity that there is not more support for the event from the local council considering the event attracts thousands of people to Lyme Regis particularly on the Saturday and Sunday and local schools benefit from the Friday events. DGAG will be attending and AH will be helping. Any support welcome! It is hoped that there may be some sales of DIGS publications at this event.

(b) Architectural Heritage Week Blandford is 8th to 15th September. Jo Thomas raised awareness of this event and there will be further information in due course

(c) G.A. Conference Portland 22nd-23rd October. This will take place at the Heights Hotel Portland with lectures on the Friday and two field trips have been arranged for Saturday 23rd, one led by Sam Scriven, based on Purbeck including visiting Keats' Quarry (DIGS site) and Steve Etches' newly opened museum in Kimmeridge. A second field trip led by AH will take place on Portland walking from the hotel around the northern part of the Isle of Portland.

7. Fossil acquisition strategy – any developments? No report from SS

8. Sites and conservation

(a) Report on Birds Quarry Todber. AH reported that there had been a successful session at Bird's Quarry on 14th March. Due to limited space

only 4 members were involved in removing some trees along the western rock face of the former quarry. Apart from the removal of some trees, talus was removed from the base of the rock face and overhanging ivy cleared. AH carried out some 'weeding' on the main rock face (which is in good condition) next to the Hanson office. The site has been mothballed by Hansons but access is not difficult.

- (b) Report on Crack Lane conservation 1st March. Despite very poor weather and very mucky conditions underfoot, the eastern rock face was cleared and it is planned to remove material at the top of the face to limit spread of vegetation down the rock face. Work was also carried out in the wooded area to the west. This was mainly removing moss. The work carried out in September 2014 has had a significant and beneficial impact.
- (c) Progress at Wanderwell. RS reported on progress made at Bothenhampton. Despite wet conditions in recent months he has carried out work on the site and hopes to carry out further work before the end of March (and the beginning of birds' nesting season). Little has been done by Dorset Countryside and the planned volunteer group has not materialised due to lack of funding. A seat is to be located by the parish council along the trail through the site and it is hoped this will not create any detrimental impact from anti-social activity. RS is hoping to remove ground ivy in due course when the site has dried out. Hopefully at the end of the summer some clearance of the talus below the rock face can occur to expose more of the geology.
- (d) Progress at Hardown Hill. RS reported that the information boards partly financed by DIGS have now been located at Hardown Hill. AH commented that it is a pity that DIGS had not been informed of this officially considering we contributed in terms of information and finance. PS commented on the fact that information provided was edited reducing the value of the geological content. Nick Tanner is the new NT warden for the area.
- (e) Future conservation activity. A session is planned at the Ridgeway Cutting and Bincombe starting at 10.30 on Saturday 9th April. Meet by the entrance to Bayard Dairy at the northern end of Dorchester Road where it meets the A354.

A second event is planned for the morning of Tuesday 3rd May at Vinney Cross, on A35 east of Bridport. Further details in due course.

9. Any other business:

- (a) Geology West Country Blog. AH reported that he had contact Elizabeth Devon and asked for DIGS and DGAG to be listed as local groups on this website.
- (b) Geological walks on Dorset Eye. AH reported that the walk along the Dorset coast has been completed on the Dorset Eye website and he has started local geological walks and so far Poxwell and Hardy Monuments walks have been added.
- (c) South Dorset Ridgeway Project report – GR reported on various

activities including clearance of scrub and dry stone walling. He has also been asked by the Jurassic Coast Trust to lead a walk in the West Bay and Eype area on 9th April.

(d) Mike Le Bas book Blandford building stones. John Scott had reported that this book has now gone to the printers and will be available soon.

(e) Purbeck CDs for events. AH has asked Charles Jackson to produce some more Purbeck Project CDs for sale at future events mentioned in (6) above.

(f) link to Volunteer Centre, Dorchester. AH reported that KH's suggestion to link in with the Volunteer Centre at Dorchester appears to have borne fruit already with two new volunteers.

(g) AH reported on damage to de la Beche site at Vallis Vale seen during a visit on 21st March with Sherborne U3A. He has contacted the principal of Frome Community College to see if there is a possibility of engaging students in 'owning' the site and looking after it if they know how important it is as a geological SSSI.

(h) KH reported that he has set up a DGAG site on Facebook which it is hoped will allow members to communicate more easily and report happenings of geological interest.

(i) RS reported that the DIGS brush cutter had had its annual service and is ready for further work!

10. Date of next meeting Tuesday 24th May. 7.00 pm DWT HQ Forston.