

The Friends of Bracken Hall Countryside Centre

GENERAL MEETING

7pm Monday 8th December 2014, Baildon Children's Centre, BD17 5DH

Note: Access to the Children's Centre could not be arranged so the meeting was moved to the Old Glen House pub on Shipley Glen.

Item 1: Welcome

The meeting opened at 7.25PM. There were 6 members present plus 1 who arrived later. John Dallas opened the meeting.

Item 2: Apologies

Apologies for absence: 7 people

Item 3: Previous minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on 31st July were available. In view of the time past, members requested an update on the transfer of Bracken Hall Countryside Centre:

- Baildon Town Councillors have agreed a lease to be signed with the purchasers. We do not have the final details and have not had confirmation that it has been signed.
- We understand that the lease will allow use of the toilet block, separate classroom, former shop room and part of the garden as a Countryside Centre, with possible occasional agreed use of other parts of the building.
- We assume that a sale is being agreed between the purchasers and Bradford Council, with the Countryside Centre lease as part of the agreement, but have heard nothing.
- Officers of FoBHCC will no longer sit as non-voting members on the Bracken Hall Committee, which will comprise 3 councillors.
- The 3 officers plus 2 councillors will instead form a further committee – the Bracken Hall Advisory Group to take ideas from working groups and put forward proposals to the Bracken Hall Committee.
- Working groups will be set up to formulate proposals for the Countryside Centre. (Details can be found in the minutes on BTC website.) Councillors and members of FoBHCC can become part of these groups. The Bracken Hall Advisory Group will appoint Chairpersons for these groups.

Education and Activities:

Operations: (and ensure adequate resourcing for marketing and publicising Bracken Hall as a visitor destination and volunteering opportunity, using channels including print, website and social media.)

Collections:

Outdoor Environment

- Initially additional hours will be offered to a current BTC employee to carry out any jobs required.
- A job spec will be drawn up to advertise a paid post of Project Manager.
- The core facility at Bracken Hall will initially be a few hours opening to the public on Saturdays and Sundays. Friends of Bracken Hall will provide volunteers to enable a Countryside Centre to operate in this way.

- Other users and providers will be encouraged to bring the Countryside Centre into further use for education, outdoor activities and courses for schools, groups and members of the public and to bring income into the Countryside Centre.
- BTC are accepting a financial commitment to Bracken Hall in the initial phase, but hope that it will become financially independent.
- The Museums Service holds the collections which relate to the Shipley Glen area in safe storage and have agreed to return them to Bracken Hall.
- The garden will be managed as ‘habitats for an outdoor environment for learning’. Bradford Environmental Education Services may support this.
- A target date of September 2015 for opening has been suggested.

Item 4: Progress on activities

Monthly walks have been led by John Dallas, the most recent being the Fairtrade Walk linking Baildon and Burley in Wharfedale.

There were 4 Wild Wednesdays in the summer holiday which were well-attended. Unfortunately, a planned fifth activity had to be cancelled due to members’ other commitments. The October Fossil Walk and afternoon activity were popular.

The next walk will be on 19th December, around enclosed land. There will also be a walk on Boxing Day starting at the later time of 11am.

We have a website. Jules gave a few details. He has registered our domain name, \$10 a year, and is paying a small monthly fee. He has set up various accounts in our name – YouTube, Flickr, Google Maps - to enable efficient use of low spec storage and bandwidth. We need to provide him with further content for the site.

He can set up a webmail facility for membership and payment facility for membership or future shop. He will finalise a simple logo as discussed at our website discussion meeting on 10th November – a bracken frond was agreed. This will be easily reproduced for general identification use, and possibly on a membership card.

Pete Foster (Monster Adventure) has arranged for us to have links on our website to the films shown at the Media Museum made with John and himself.

Richard gave details of World Heritage Weekend (18th and 19th April) abased in Roberts Park in Saltaire and it was agreed that we should provide some kind of activity, possibly similar to our Wild Wednesdays.

Item 5: Other issues

Baildon Town Council will make final decisions on the use of the Countryside Centre. We believe it will be open to use by schools through education services and providers, including Outdoor Learning and Forest Schools. We believe that a strong school provision is essential to a successful Countryside Centre.

Outdoor courses, such as training courses for adults leading outdoor activities could run from Bracken Hall. We anticipate that a scale of charges will apply for voluntary groups, education uses and commercial uses. The aim will be to have Bracken Hall self-funding.

Volunteer support from the FoBHCC will be essential to set up and run a viable facility, beginning with weekend opening to the public. We do not anticipate that the owners or BTC will block or hinder the uses of the facility as discussed above. Good marketing of the centre will be essential. Marketing links with all outdoor education centres (e.g. Nell Bank, Doe Park) should be used to make opportunities known to all.

We have been running activities for more than a year and should continue to plan for use. Limited use as a base for activities may be possible if we can have some use of the toilet block and classroom before the full opening date.

We should consider the possibility of obtaining permission to set up activities in advance of full opening – for instance an orienteering course. There are many members of FoBHCC who already lead walks and may be willing in the future to be part of the provision of a programme of walks from Bracken Hall – currently all led by John Dallas.

The decision making structure for Bracken Hall seems complex and a diagram showing how final decisions on the running of Bracken Hall would be useful. We have members who have knowledge and skills important to the project. Officers will take this information to the Bracken Hall Advisory Group.

Item 6: Financial issues

Treasurer's report: The treasurer reported that we have funds of £310.73.

Item 7: Membership issues

Our paid-up membership is 22. We have about 20 more who support FoBHCC and others who are part of separate groups who support in various ways. Email distribution is over 70.

Item 8: Next meeting

This will be held on Monday 26th January (following meetings of BH Advisory Group and BH Committee). The venue is to be arranged.

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