

# The Friends of Bracken Hall Countryside Centre

## GENERAL MEETING

7pm Monday 26<sup>st</sup> January 2015, Baildon Children's Centre, BD17 5DH

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### Item 1: Welcome

The meeting opened at 7.10PM. There were 15 members present. Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### Item 2: Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from 8 members.

### Item 3: Previous minutes

Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

### Item 4: Matters arising

Matters arising not dealt with on the agenda – Richard confirmed World Heritage Site events in Roberts Park on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April. The Friends will support this.

### Item 5: BH progress

Report on progress to date for transfer of the Centre – as reported in the T&A, Sally and Stuart Illingworth have bought Bracken Hall and leased part of the building and gardens to BTC for nil rent for 20 years for use as a Countryside Centre and have a business proposal for hospitality use for the main building.

They have begun groundworks on site, separation of electricity supply and preparations for a boundary fence cutting through the wall to the left of the entrance to create an opening and path to the Countryside Centre at the former shop entrance door. The Friends have an access key to the back door which will be replaced when access will be by that door.

A new boundary, 4' back, will be made at the back of the classroom at the former sheep dip access. The toolshed (recently broken into, but nothing taken) will be moved. Wild Wednesday resources have been moved into the classroom.

Some equipment and retail stock is still available. We should obtain a list of items removed from Bracken Hall. Some items were removed for safe storage and we should contact the Collections Manager of the Museums Services to discuss return to Bracken Hall. Some items were skipped during closure on the instructions of Estate Management.

BTC will take decisions for the Countryside Centre, due to open in September 2015, putting in funding for two years. The Bracken Hall committee (Councillors) will take proposals from the Bracken Hall Advisory Group (councillors and FOBHCC officers). Currently, BHAG have two working groups – Operations, chaired by Joe Ashton, and Education and Activities, chaired by Joy Smith.

BTC have given additional hours until March to a current employer for duties connected to Bracken Hall. A job spec is being prepared for a post from March while the Countryside Centre is being prepared for full opening. A Bracken Hall Countryside Centre Manager will be appointed for September 2015. We do not know the specifics of the role as yet.

The centre will need to work towards self-funding and it would be useful to have an estimate annual running costs. The shop sales were previously about £7,000 p.a. We will need to consider ideas for fundraising.

Once we have a logo we can produce items such as hats. e3rd will take ideas on [wsm@friendsofbrackenhall.org.uk](mailto:wsm@friendsofbrackenhall.org.uk).

Pete Foster (Monster Adventure) has suggested running CPD training courses for teachers at Bracken Hall, with a bank of downloadable resources to encourage schools to use Bracken Hall for pupil visits. He can deliver a range of cross-curricular activities including orienteering and bushcraft.

It was agreed that training would be a good use Bracken Hall. There is money in schools for training. Although secondary schools have their own specialists, most primary schools do not. Bracken Hall could be a useful venue for current group leadership training run by Bradford Education providers (including the Adventurous Activity Development Unit) to upskill staff.

Early Years Providers could also find this a useful training venue. This could bring in a guaranteed income during the school day. Some schools may then wish to lead their own curricular visits, some may prefer external delivery. It would be important to have an easy booking system. Previously calls went to an answerphone.

An on-line calendar was suggested. Arrangements for access, cleaning and lock up and a scale of charges will be needed.

Bracken Hall should work alongside other provisions such as Cliffe Castle, Nell Bank and Denso to offer different strengths for Natural History education.

Ideas were suggested for funding including seeking sponsorship from companies, for instance having a sponsors' board as in galleries.

#### **Item 6: Chairman's report**

Chairman's report – Well done, we are getting closer.

#### **Item 7: Financial issues**

Treasurer's report - We have £310.73, including a donation of £50 from John Friend.

#### **Item 8: Correspondence**

Correspondence received:

- Bingley Walkers are Welcome Launch on 11<sup>th</sup> April. It was agreed to have a Friends' table with information and activities and offer to lead a walk to Bracken Hall.
- Friends of Roberts Park, World Heritage Day 19<sup>th</sup> April. It was agreed that we will provide activities.

#### **Item 9: Membership issues**

Membership report – around 40.

**Item 10: Planned activities**

**Reports on recent activities if not dealt with in previous reports:**

- Walks, recent walk to St Ives. The café agreed to put up a poster.
- Community Day – John and Jules attended with information and activities. Good links with groups, but few members of the public attended.

**Upcoming activities**

- Walks programme – Now on the website. John is offering walks, others could lead also if they wish.
- Wild Wednesday – half term, 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2 – 4pm. We will ask for donations. We enquired at the Tearooms on the Christmas Walk. We have a gazebo (and pegs!).
- Bingley Walkers are Welcome Launch - we will have a table for information and activities and offer to lead a walk to Bracken Hall.
- Saltaire Heritage Weekend – 19<sup>th</sup> April, already have Stone Carvers, Saltaire History Society Social Stories, Canal and River Trust Boaters’ Games, Alpacas and Angoras, Croquet, Music on the bandstand. We will offer activities.

**Item 11: BH future plans**

The future for Bracken Hall – Email or write any suggestions. We have lost some of the garden habitats, but 9 are still left. BEAT / BEES will help with restoration and management. Some work has been done by the Illingworths to improve access, safety and traffic management, also separation of electricity supplies.

The pace of progress will be determined by BTC. Joe Ashton is chairing the Operations Working Group. Visits to the site are by permission of Stuart and Sally Illingworth until separation has been completed, access to the Countryside Centre part of the building by permission from BTC.

**Item 12: Any other business**

AOB Send suggestions to Joy ([secretary@friendsofbrackenhall.org.uk](mailto:secretary@friendsofbrackenhall.org.uk)) so that they can be coordinated and passed on.

We expect BTC to aim for opening in September 2015. There is not a great deal of necessary work to be done on site, tidying and management could be done in a few hours with a group of people.

Decisions such as retention of apple trees will be made by BTC, fruit trees are not subject to TPO despite their age.

**Item 13: Next meeting**

Date and time of next meeting – 7PM on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February, venue to be confirmed.

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