

MEETING MINUTES

HOLLYCOMBE ESTATE COMMUNITY LIAISON GROUP

16/02/26

Attendees

SN Steve Neocleous- SMN Planning & Development Support

SC Sean Clemons- Cove Consulting

JB Jinny Blom- Jinny Blom Landscape Design

GC Gavin Cook- Jinny Blom Landscape Design

JE Joao Esteves- Purcell Architects

DM Dan Miller- RX Architects

LS Luke Smith- Whaleback

MM Molly McLean- Whaleback

LM Louise Myles - Milland Parish Council

SC Sally Cameron - Bramshott & Liphook Parish Council

AM Andrew Marchant - Linch Parish Council

ST Sylvia Tibbs - Lynchmere Parish Council

PF Paul Fox - Woolbeding with Redford Parish Council

BM Bill Mouland - Bramshott & Liphook Ward Councillor

AG Angela Glass - Bramshott & Liphook Ward Councillor

MM Mike McCart - The Lynchmere Society

GM Gay McCart - The Lynchmere Society

KJ Kevin Jacobs - Wheatsheaf Enclosure Residents Association

SI Simon Illiffe - Secretary, Liphook Golf Club

VC Vicki Colwell - South Downs National Park

MINUTES

Welcome and introductions

- SN welcomed attendees and round-table introductions were made between stakeholders and the Hollycombe project team.

- SN provided an overview of the Community Liaison Group (CLG)- an opportunity for stakeholders and the project team to meet every quarter to discuss ongoing and upcoming works across the site. All agreed to the terms of reference issued by SN in advance.

Vision for the Hollycombe Estate

- JB provided a comprehensive history of the estate, and the future Vision under Suneil's stewardship. The estate spans 360 acres in total, including agricultural land, Hatch Farm, Hollycombe House and its Grade II* registered park and garden, and The Old Stables. The estate has been in a state of decline in recent decades.
- Suneil purchased the estate in 2021 with a focus on nature, landscape and regenerative farming, in contrast to the previous estate which had a focus on equestrian use and hunting.
- At present, the area known as 'Top Fields' (the agricultural fields surrounding Hatch Farm) are being restored with low-impact grazing and grassland restoration. The long-term vision is for the estate to be self-sufficient, producing its own meat, eggs, vegetables, cut flowers, and heritage apple orchard with 150 apple trees already planted. This requires the redevelopment of Hatch Farm to create the 'heart of the estate'.
- In the short-term, landscape works are in progress. The chestnut coppice throughout the estate becoming is valuable again after period of low value, with a forester developing a woodland management plan. There is an ambitious programme to remove rhododendron ponticum from the former arboretum along Midhurst Road and elsewhere on the estate, which ecologists have confirmed is a dead zone for wildlife.
- Grassland restoration is underway to convert the haylage fields back to heathland, with successful mob graze in South Park two years ago showing rapid species recovery in one season.
- The estate is exploring heathland corridor connections with neighbouring landowners, and agreed to meet separately with the Lynchmere Society to discuss this in more detail.
- JE provided an overview of the history and ongoing works at Hollycombe House. The site was originally purchase by Sir Charles Taylor in the 18th century who commissioned renowned architect John Nash to construct a small 'cottage ornée' at the top of the combe. The estate at that time encompassed 800 acres and grew to 20,000 acres by 1866.
- In 1866 the estate was sold to Sir John Hawkshaw, who undertook a significant remodelling and extensions to the main house in a Tudoresque style, essentially entombing the previous building and adding wings that quadrupled its original size.

Around this time, the arboretum was established to the east of the estate in response to exotic planting trends.

- In the early 20th century, the walled garden and stone south terrace was built, further establishing the key relationship between the house and views towards the valley. The estate grew further to 40,000 acres.
- In 1936, Hollycombe was sold to Charles Reyer. Some of the wings were demolished to reduce taxation on wealthy estates, not always carried out to a high standard. Hollycombe House was listed Grade II in 1987, and the parkland listed as Grade II* in 1988.
- The last major internal refurbishment was undertaken in 1990, before Suneil purchased in 2021.
- In 2024 planning and listed building consent was granted for the complete refurbishment and extension of Hollycombe House, including the restoration of the lost west wing, east wing and north wing previously lost to demolition. The development includes a subterranean bathhouse beneath the south terrace. All external elements have been designed in Victorian style with dark-coloured gates and strap work to maintain period authenticity.

Plans for Hatch Farm

- Hatch Farm will serve as working heart of estate with four key functions: estate management, agriculture, renewable energy production, and a base for arts/culture.
- The Farm has been lying empty since Suneil bought estate and it is obvious location for estate operations headquarters, to house estate staff including gardeners, house managers, and farm workers who will all eat together on-site following traditional estate model.
- In addition, the intention is for Hatch Farm to host an arts residency programme with workspace and accommodation for up to 12 artists. This will be run by Glass Castle, a foundation established by Suneil as charitable wing to fill gap in UK arts funding to support emerging and mid-career artists. An arts residency program will provide funding, accommodation, and living space with artists having access to the National Park for inspiration, with opportunities to collaborate with established local arts communities in Liphook, Milland and beyond. The program aims for both international reach (through the Tate Modern and Serpentine connections) and strong local engagement and collaboration with colleges (e.g. West Dean).
- Landscaping works include the planting of a heritage apple orchard, stone fruit orchards, large vegetable garden, and cut flowers planned to feed the estate staff, Hatch

Farm, and the main house. Any surplus fruit, vegetables, and timber will be available to local community.

- The farm will also house the energy infrastructure to the estate- through a ground-mounted PV array providing 100% renewable energy across the estate and eliminate its carbon emissions.
- Buildings will maintain farm typology with pitched roofs, timber cladding, and metal roofs sympathetic to agricultural setting. DM emphasised a fabric-first approach, reusing existing buildings where possible and enhancing thermal efficiency and airtightness. All new buildings will achieve passive house standard (above building regulations) for very low running energy
- Access will be via Wheatsheaf enclosure, with traffic modelling underway to assess vehicle movements.

What has happened over the past 6 months?

- Construction remains underway at Hollycombe House: the bathhouse superstructure is almost complete, as well as the north and west wing, and re-roofing of the entire building. The bridge over Midhurst Road has been refurbished to address drainage and structural issues, as well as sympathetic tree and shrub clearances to improve visibility.
- Rhododendron ponticum removal is complete, with woodland restoration underway. The restoration of the ponds at South Park is complete.

What can stakeholders expect to see over the next 3-6 months?

- Pre-commencement conditions need to be discharged before any work at Hatch Farm starts, with construction expected April-May 2026.
- The team are in a Planning Performance Agreement with the South Downs National Park Authority, to discuss emerging plans for Hatch Farm set out above. The intention is for a full planning application to be submitted this year, with construction unlikely to commence until 2027. Further updates will be provided at future CLG meetings
- All spoil from the pond excavation is staying on-site to minimise truck movements.
- Landscaping contractor Gavin Jones working for next year and a half on estate restoration. Current focus is on top fields with tree laying, shrubland, and hedgerow planting during planting season. Large tree deliveries expected mid-March 2026, which needs further consideration due to month-long road closure at Milland Road.

Any Other Business

- Stakeholders raised ongoing concerns with the traffic light system still in place along Midhurst Road. It's unclear why they are still required as the bridge has now been repaired. **Action:** SN will request further information from the construction team and revert back.
- KJ is concerned about ongoing and increased construction traffic down Wheatsheaf Enclosure. SC confirmed a construction management plan is being developed and will be issued to stakeholders and the South Downs National Park for formal sign-off, before construction commences at Hatch Farm.
- There appears to be excessive security lighting at Hollycombe House, affecting Dark Night Skies. **Action:** SN will look into this.
- SN explained the team are committed to ongoing dialogue and engagement with stakeholders. Quarterly meetings will be held, in addition to a website and newsletters to maintain regular contact.