

MINUTES OF THE FRIENDS OF MEADOW PARK COMMITTEE MEETING 10<sup>th</sup> JULY 2013 (7.30-9.20 P.M.)

Apologies for absence: Paul, Lorna, Andrew.

Present: Richard (from during "arboretum"), Alan, Deb, Neil, Kevin, Andy, Mollie (until "path renovation"), Trevor (minutes).

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 15<sup>th</sup> May 2013 had been circulated and were ratified. They included Trevor's report on perusal of the RBC/ELPC Meadow Park Agreement of 2008. In response to Neil, Trevor said that he had requested sight of the ELPC grass cutting contract, on behalf of the Committee, on more than one occasion, but without success. Nor had the tender document been made available. Lorna was thanked for preparing the minutes.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES PLUS DEVELOPMENTS:

Arboretum Neil reported that the beech had died. It had been planted in the wrong place, as had the sweet and horse chestnuts. He had warned on this previously. Andy reported that a tree had recently been delivered with a dry root. Mollie had emailed the draft arboretum leaflet on the afternoon previously. Members to suggest any changes before the end of July. She would approach the Woodland Trust and others in search of funding. The National Forest authority was suggested as a possible source.

ACTION: ALL MEMBERS

Hay/silage. Members will have read the recent extensive email correspondence on this topic. Kevin said that many plants had been mown earlier in the week, some not having flowered and many not seeded. Flowers provided nectar for insects and sown yellow rattle plants would not be able to reproduce via ripe seeds. The season was two weeks late this year and grass had been mown two weeks early. Neil said that there had been a huge decline in insect populations, including bees, in recent years and there were signs of recovery this year. This mowing had been particularly unfortunate. Richard pointed out that he was following standard agricultural procedure. Hay can be made in May. Good hay is made in June. By July stem is starting to increase relative to leaf, but quantity is up on previous months. By August, the woody stems are too coarse for efficient digestion by modern livestock. Neil said that Richard's contract presumably referred to grass cutting. It did not have to be disposed of as hay. Richard said that it was the most cost effective method of disposal. He said that the grass cutting contract was available for perusal by members of the public. Trevor asked what quality of hay was produced from grass cut once every two years: it could contain one years dead grass. Richard said the quality could be bad, although some die back of grass could occur. He agreed to follow FMPC advice on where to leave uncut. He said that these patches should best be in convenient areas and not widespread. Plastic wrapped silage was more expensive to produce than hay. He had not taken the autumn cut in 2011 and not charged ELPC £800. Grass in the arboretum would be cut when FMPC decided, but each trip added to his costs.

Alan had met with Richard and Lesley the previous morning. Lesley had suggested that a representative of FMPC be invited to attend Amenities Committee Meetings and contribute to discussions on MP. This was welcomed by FMPC. It was agreed that Kevin and Neil produce a short position paper on grass cutting and hopefully produce a compromise plan acceptable to all parties. The topic would be put on the agenda of the August Amenities Committee Meeting. Alan suggested that Members should attend these monthly meetings on a rota.

Richard said that the total number of bales produced would be recorded from his machine's bale counter. Trevor observed that there were now obvious differences in yield between fields: Richard said that recording bale numbers per field was impracticable. ACTION: NEIL, KEVIN

Liaison with schools (Mollie) Lantern Lane appeared enthusiastic and already used the park. Because of the need for CRB checks, for instance, it was not possible for the school to join in FMP activities in an organised way, but the head teacher had agreed to display material and contact parents. Brookside seemed to be less enthusiastic, but the head teacher was happy to display FMP posters etc. from time to time. Kevin had noted that children tended to head for the Play Park in preference to MP.

Path renovation. Trevor had queried RBC policy of allowing grass ingress at the sides of recently laid paths. Although there was solid laid stone underneath, this became buried deeper and deeper in soil. Archaeologists are aware of this process. He had asked Paul if this was considered to be optimal economical management country wide, but had received no reply. (The use of herbicides is out). Deb said that most dog walkers did not use the paths. ACTION: PAUL

Kingston Brook survey. (Alan) Still no report from Ian Morrissey. ACTION: ALAN.

Kingston Brook pollution. Lorna had established liaison with Severn Trent. Lesley had visited the EL plant, which appeared to have been especially cleaned. The screens appear to be prone to blockage. Problems occur after heavy rain.

Den. Trevor reported that Lorna had told him that there was currently no activity, but to beware school holidays.

Railway bridge Alan described the work of the Rushcliffe Anti-Social Behaviour Team\*. Criminal damage should be reported to the police, but less serious damage to that body. Kevin reported that serious damage was being done to the railway embankment by vandals. Railway signs had been removed and incorporated into a den. Richard said that 100m had been undermined by badgers, which had had to be moved. A grass fire had been started by a scooter. Alan said to record scooter number (if visible!). Richard warned of the danger of fire if hay cutting was delayed until August. Trevor said it was important to photograph damage.

Bee World (Kevin) Sowing had been late because of bad weather. Cornflowers had appeared. Flax had been offered. Richard stated that his 10 ft wide mower could be difficult to manoeuvre. Kevin agreed to clearly mark crucial areas.

Notice boards. Richard's son had reversed into one some years ago. It had been refurbished and would be delivered in the next few days. Glass etc was needed. ACTION: RICHARD

Format of meetings. (Trevor) It was stated in the Constitution that issues should be decided by majority vote. Whilst he agreed with meetings being run informally, there was a case for formality on matters such as membership, with definition of precisely what had been agreed.

Lagoon Field (Trevor) There is no plan for this field. A simple plan could be drawn up, with a map, if only to prevent further encroachment of scrub onto remaining open areas. Neil agreed to look into it. ACTION: NEIL

Green Flag (Alan) Ken Whittaker had inspected and liked what he saw. Last years flag was too large.

Insurance. Under 16s covered by ELPC policy if accompanied by an adult. Neil to show his insurance documents to Lesley. Alan had completed a risk assessment. Trevor wondered if members could see it.

ACTION: ALAN

#### SECRETARY'S REPORT\_(Trevor)

2013 Monthly activities plan. Trevor felt that the amount of work involved was not reflected in the minutes. Neil agreed that it should be planned further ahead. A detailed record was made for the Annual Report: Trevor thought last years could be a template. Alan said that each person in charge must report on number attending and hours worked to Mollie. Neil said that this was particularly important because RBC rewarded like for like to match FMP effort.

Deb pointed out that lopped branches tended to be deposited in long grass. They could be unsightly when grass receded in the winter. Neil suggested a chipper and Kevin a herbernaculum.

RBC/ELPC Agreement on Meadow Park. See 2 above.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT. (Andy)

£2733.91 in the kitty. £2630.46 had to be paid out soon, which would leave a balance of £103.45.

FUNDING APPLICATIONS (Alan) Nothing to report.

#### ACTIVITIES

July - Trim hanging branches. Litter.

August – no activity

September – Trim American Dogwood. Possibly brambles .

October – Bird boxes.

Debriefing on Summer Walks (Mollie)

CARRIED OVER.

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Lorna Pilbin had been promoted to British Gypsum East Leake Works Environmental Manager, replacing Kirsty Greggs, who had left the business.

It was agreed to accept Geoff Gamble's offer of red and white *Fritillaria meleagris* seed.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2013.