

Apologies for absence: Marie, Lorna, Paul, John, Andrew.

Present: Alan, Deb, Mollie, Neil, Kevin Gibbons, Andy, Kevin Shaw, Trevor (minutes).

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 18<sup>TH</sup> July 2012 had been circulated and were ratified.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES PLUS DEVELOPMENTS:

Kingston Brook: Alan said that a meeting had been arranged for Monday 17<sup>th</sup> September at the Parish Office, between representatives of South Trent IDB, Lesley, himself and any FMPC Members who wished to attend. It would not discuss field drainage as far as he knows.

Path renovation. Trevor reported that RBC had ruled that ingress of grass from the sides of the recently upgraded paths should be allowed. No routine management was needed. It was queried if the resulting surface would be suitable for wheelchairs at all times of the year. Alan remarked that year round access to wheel chairs had been publicised in the application to Green Flag but had never been a part of the Management Plan.

Arboretum ( John not present) Andy and Neil had planted a silver birch. The larch needs restaking. A replacement beech had been paid for. The flower squares had done well but had been mowed too early. Neil suggested that Steve cut the grass in the arboretum in future, possibly with a flail.

Hay. Alan said that Richard would be able to supply him with the number of bales harvested , with the weights of three typical bales, but had heard nothing. Both round and square bales had been made this year.

ACTION: ALAN

Notice boards. The spare green lectern had not yet been erected at the The Burrows entrance.

ACTION: ALAN

Deb reported that the grass was not being strimmed around the base of notice boards etc. She had done some strimming, but Kevin counselled against FMPC Members taking this on. It was ELPC's job.

ACTION:KEVIN SHAW

Alan said that the base of the litter bin in Play Field had been kicked in, but Kevin said that these bins emptied from the bottom and the door had not been clipped back after emptying. The dog bin in Play Field had disappeared. Dog droppings could be deposited in litter bins if in a sealed bag.

Field margins/scrub rota. Neil and Kevin Gs proposal that a 5m strip should be left uncut around one or two fields each year and trimmed on a three year rota was agreed. Neil said that even the current 3m margin specified in the Management Plan was not always being left when hay was cut. John had counselled against extending the margins to 5m because it presented an untidy appearance. Kevin said that it was not possible to view the brook because of uncut grass. He had seen a heron, but only from a bridge. Trevor said that the Management Plan specified not cutting the grass only on the S side of Kingston Brook. Viewing areas might be a solution.

Neil suggested part of Play Field N of the top path be cut once every three years, not 9x a year as currently. Agreed. Trevor to inform Lesley of the proposals.

ACTION: TREVOR

Liaison with schools ( Lorna not present). Alan had written to headmasters about the Green Flag award, but had not received any replies. Kevin G had contact with Brookside school and would approach them regarding a butterfly walk.

Bat and moth survey. Kevin G reported that the bat survey was poorly attended, but it had only been publicised to FMPC Members. The notice of the meeting date was very short. It had proved interesting and could be repeated. The butterfly/moth exercise had not transpired. Suggested he might approach South Notts Wildlife Trust for help.

BMX track Kevin S reported that RBC has ruled that Meadow Park is not a suitable site for the Skate Park or BMX track. Skate Park will now be sited on the Recreation Ground, subject to consultation currently underway , and the BMX track is very much something for the future.

Sculpture –corrosion? Alan said that it had been decided not to bore a hole in the stone to allow water to escape. Trevor wondered if the depression surrounding the rusting metal could be filled or painted with anti rust paint periodically. ELPC's problem? ACTION: ALAN

Wildflower establishment in Oak Meadow. The sub-committee report had been circulated (Appendix 1). Trevor asked if the various species were native to South Nottinghamshire and G8 grassland, as per Management Plan. Neil confirmed the the species chosen are all believed to be native to this part of the East Midlands and similar to those in other local meadows e.g. Loughborough Big Meadow SSSI.

Trevor observed that the list of grass species to be sown included Meadow Foxtail, already the best established grass in Oak Meadow. Neil said that it was important to include grasses in the mix. Trevor wondered if this was not a recommendation for reseeding a completely turf stripped field, not for a strip in a grassy field. Kevin G said that it was planned to remove the top two inches of the area. Trevor asked if this would actually remove all grass and weed roots.

Kevin G had approached contractors, but only one had replied. It was possible to hire a small turf removing machine. Alan pointed out the danger to paths from heavy machinery. British Gypsum machines were too heavy. He asked if massive sowing of hay rattle would effectively clear grass. It had been done at Coton Manor. Kevin G thought that it would take too long. Alan thought that we should seek the advice of Roger Belton, from East Leake. Mollie thought that the exercise should be accurately costed at this stage. The Town Lands Trust might have money available. Andy said that Marie had money for seed. It was agreed that the Sub-committee could proceed.

ACTION: SUBCOMMITTEE

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Monthly activities plan. Agreed to plan next year whilst this years experience was still fresh in our minds. Plan e.g. next September this September. People supervising each activity to inform Trevor of changes indicated.

ACTION: ALL MEMBERS

Management Plan. The agreed suggested changes are listed in Appendix 2. Kevin asked why it was needed to record numbers of bales harvested. Trevor replied that it had been included in the Management Plan by ELPC and RBC after considerable discussion. It was to provide a long term measure of the decline in fertility in the fields constituting Meadow Park. Any contractor baling for a farmer would routinely supply him/her with the number of bales harvested, recorded on the bale counter on all pick-up balers. Kevin and Mollie said that ELPC do not enforce their own plans on occasion.

AGM. Trevor reminded all of the various statistics needed for our annual report for the AGM.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

£7974.69 in bank, but bills were anticipated. £800 would remain when these had been paid. Neil reported that Rushcliffe Borough Council also has a 'Biodiversity Management Grant' available (£1000 or more) in addition to the 'Nature Conservation Support Grant' (up to £200). A good case had to be presented well in advance. £193 was needed for hay rattle seed, but it could not be purchased until permission was received from NatureScape. Alan pointed out that Rushcliffe Borough Council provided start up money for the first three years only. This year was our last opportunity. Andy said that Marie had money available from RBC.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Ian Morrissey would carry out a biological/chemical assessment of Kingston Brook on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> September

## ACTIVITIES

September (15 <sup>th</sup> ) – Dogwood	ALAN
October (13 <sup>th</sup> ) – Cut back willows etc SW Lagoon Field and Hall Field	NEIL
November activity (10 <sup>th</sup> ) Lay Little Meadow Hedge	KEVIN G
December (8 <sup>th</sup> ) Hedge laying	ANDY
January 2013 (12 <sup>th</sup> ) Clear "Electric Avenue"	

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mollie had been offered young oak and walnut trees. Agreed to decline with thanks.

Kevin S drew attention to the gap created by removal of trees opposite Bateman Road by the electricity authorities. Agreed that Trevor write to the Parish Clerk and Paul Phillips as a matter of urgency.

ACTION:TREVOR

The whole boundary needs re-fencing along here by the Borough Council (Neil) .

Deb said that some old people had difficulty in rising from the bench on the Oak Meadow side of Kestrel Bridge. Turf needed building up.

ACTION: KEVIN G

Alan announced that he would be retiring at the AGM, after three years as Chairman.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING AGM 21<sup>st</sup> November 2012.

Wednesday January 16<sup>th</sup> 2013.

Trevor 24/09/2012

## APPENDIX 1

Friends of Meadow Park, East Leake

10th September 2012

Project Sub-group: Kevin Gibbons, Andy Denker, Neil Hunter

### REPORT ON PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIVE FLOWER MEADOW IN OAK MEADOW

LOCATION: Northern end of Oak Meadow near to the Kingston Brook.

SIZE AND SHAPE OF AREA: A slightly curved strip running east – west, approximately 70 – 75 metres long by 10 – 15 metres wide, making the total area about 750 to 1000 square metres.

TERRAIN AND SOIL TYPE: Generally level, annually-cut grassland on clay of neutral pH (?), possibly some alluvial deposits, occasionally prone to flooding.

LAND USE HISTORY: Formerly lowland meadow cut for hay and used for grazing, but apparently ploughed and re-seeded with grass (for silage) some decades ago – also apparently once used as the village cricket pitch.

EXISTING VEGETATION: Species-poor grassland with very few if any flowering herbs, other than occasional docks, thistles and white clover, though several different species of grass present.

REASONS FOR CHOICE OF LOCATION: Unlike several of the other fields in the Park, Oak Meadow appears to have had more disturbance to its original vegetation in the recent past, with very few if any 'relict' species (e.g. Great Burnet) surviving. The size, shape and location of the area to be re-sown is designed to naturally blend in with the existing landscape and enable newly established plants to colonise adjacent areas over time.

METHOD OF ESTABLISHMENT: This will follow a strictly 'Organic' approach, beginning with stripping of turf from this area by contractors (to a depth of around 2 – 4 inches (5 – 10cm)), followed by light scarification to create a clear seed-bed. Seeds purchased from a supplier specialising in this sort of project will then be hand-sown (and treaded-in) by volunteers.

RE-USE OF TURF? : There are two options for the removed turf :

It can be taken away off-site to landfill or for other use elsewhere

- Some or all of it could be used (upturned?) elsewhere in the Park to create new small, dry, grassy/flowery banks as another sort of habitat for butterflies and other insects
- (Suggested locations for these would be in/near the Arboretum area or alongside the hedgeline dividing Gibson's/Bateman Field (plus other locations?))

AMOUNT OF SEED REQUIRED: The generally accepted sowing rates for meadow mixtures composed of both grasses and flowers are about 4 – 5 grams per square metre. Most companies also recommend an 80% - 20%, grass – flower mix (by weight of seed), though in this project it may be possible to increase the proportion of flowering herbs to nearer 30% or more.

For the area of ground concerned, the total amount needed would therefore be around 4000 – 5000 grams (4 – 5kg).

SPECIES: See list below at the end of the report.

SOURCE OF SEED: After doing a lot of online and other research into this subject and suppliers of seed, it is recommended that 'Emorsgate Seeds' of Kings Lynn should be the supplier – they specialise in a wholly ecological approach, sourcing all their seed from native, wild populations in the UK, and provide tried and tested mixtures to produce long-term habitat stability.

Many other suppliers of 'native' plants and seeds cannot guarantee that all of these come from truly 'wild' sources, or even from within the UK, providing similar-looking but 'Continental' forms of species instead. Some of their 'meadow mixtures' also contain species that may not naturally occur or survive long-term in this sort of habitat.

TIMING OF ACTIVITY: Turf to be stripped off in early autumn followed by seed-sowing soon after, hopefully by the end of October. Alternatively, sowing can be done in the early spring, or done part in autumn, part in spring.

AFTERCARE: The newly-sown area may need 'topping' at some stage as it develops, either by strimming or flailing, followed by raking up (by Volunteers and/or Parish Council?) to help cut back any growth of competitive 'weeds' until the sward is more established.

FUTURE MANAGEMENT: It is intended that this newly-sown area will eventually return to become part of the area annually cut for hay – this may take at least a couple of years after sowing.

Alternatively, it may be desirable to use any 'green' hay cut from this area to help spread seeds into neighbouring areas via 'strewing', following further turf-stripping or harrowing, or to leave the area un-cut in some years to allow seeds to be spread naturally to other parts of the Park.

All of this might affect the working of the contract currently in place for cutting hay in the Park, though this narrow strip could be considered as a sort of grassy 'headland', and not scheduled as an area to be cut by the contractors each year, thereby complying with the existing arrangement.

#### COSTS:

TURF STRIPPING (AND SCARIFICATION?) - currently unknown but awaiting estimates/quotes from several local landscaping contractors.

#### PURCHASE OF SEEDS:

There are several options based on the sort of mixture per unit area required – generally 5kg for 1000 square metres:

- a simple combination of ready-made mixtures for clay (2kg), loam (2kg) and wetland (1kg) soils (80%:20% grass: flowers by weight-of-seed) = £242.
- a combination of ready-made mixtures for clay (2.5kg) and loam (2kg) plus 0.5kg of additional/extra amounts of 20 flowering herb species (25grams each), making the grass:flower seed ratio nearer to 70%:30% = £423.75
- a combination of separate 100% grass/flower mixtures for clay/loam soils (plus the 20 additional 25 gram flower amounts) to give a 60%:40% grass:flower seed ratio (i.e. 3kg:2kg) = £503.75
- a similar combination of grass/flowers to produce a 50%:50% ratio, 2.5kg of each (including the 0.5kg of the 20 other species) = £572.75

These prices include VAT and post-and-packing – they can obviously all be less if the area of ground involved is reduced e.g. they'd be 20% lower if the area was 800 rather than 1000 square metres.

## SPECIES LIST

It is intended that the following species should be included in any mixture (in appropriate proportions by weight of seed) – Common English names have been used.

### Flowering Herbs: (26 species)

Yarrow  
Common Knapweed  
Lady's Bedstraw  
Oxeye Daisy  
Bird's-foot Trefoil  
Ribwort Plantain  
Cowslip  
Self-heal  
Meadow Buttercup  
Yellow Rattle  
Common Sorrel  
Pepper Saxifrage  
Ragged Robin  
Red Clover  
Tufted Vetch  
Meadow Crane's-bill  
Field Scabious  
Meadow Vetchling

Rough Hawkbit  
Musk Mallow  
Bladder Campion  
Betony  
Greater Bird's-foot Trefoil  
Common Meadow Rue  
Common Fleabane  
Goat's Beard  
Grasses: (8 species)  
Common Bent  
Meadow Foxtail  
Sweet Vernal Grass  
Crested Dogstail  
Red Fescue  
Smaller Catstail (Timothy)  
Sheep's Fescue  
Yellow Oat-grass

## APPENDIX 2

FMP Annual review of Management Plan.

P1. Replace "Kingston Brook" with "South Trent " at two points.

(also replace KBIDB with STIDB where it occurs in the Plan).

P2. Andrew to alter map if he thinks it is necessary.

P2. 5. Replace "Kingston Brook"....(as P1)

P3. 5. review Plan annually.

P5. 3e ii) alter to " Remove arisings (as hay/silage crop), the number and type of bales (including dimensions or weights of typical bales) to be recorded for each field (ELPC/Contractor). (Records over many years will provide a measure of soil fertility reduction).

P5. 3h ii) Add. " 5m uncut strips to be left on one or two chosen fields each year and cut on a three year rotation

P5. 3i. v) Replace with "Maintain hazel coppices in SW Gibson's Field and NE Hall Field (FMP)".

P9. Appendix 1 Add "5m uncut strips to be left on one or two chosen fields each year and cut on a three year rotation"