

THIRD DRAFT MINUTES OF FRIENDS OF MEADOW PARK COMMITTEE MEETING 14TH OF MARCH 2012

Apologies for absence: Paul, Molly, Kevin, John

Present: Alan, Lorna, Neil, Deb, Andrew, Kevin Gibbons, Andy, Trevor (minutes).

Ian Morrissey, qualified and experienced in river ecology, attended as a guest.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 11 JANUARY 2012 had been circulated and were ratified.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES PLUS DEVELOPMENTS

Arboretum (Alan) the sessile oak appeared to have died. New trees were expected. They might be left off at the Bateman Road entrance and it was important that they be claimed rapidly. Andrew suggested that accumulated woodchip could be used as a mulch around trees in the arboretum. ACTION AWAIT CONTACT FROM ALEX

Dog fouling (Andrew) Nothing had been published in the East Leake Times. Meadow Park submissions might be taking up too much space. Trevor wondered if the publishers of the Parish Newsletter could be approached again. The subject was definitely topical.

ACTION ANDREW

Walks (Trevor) Max Watson (birds) Sunday, May 6. Dennis Fox (trees) Saturday May 12th. Ann Weekley and Kevin Gibbons (flowers and insects) Saturday May 19th. All at 10.30 a.m. Trevor suggested e-mail relevant publicity posters to all FMP Members to download and display. ACTION MOLLIE

Number of hay bales harvested in 2011 (Richard, not present). Trevor had written to Richard formally but had not received a reply. Numbers were needed as a long term measure of hoped for changes in soil fertility. The grass cutting contract was due for renewal this year and Trevor had proposed to Leslie (Parish Clerk) that the recording of number and standard dimension of bales harvested should be a condition in it.

Alan said that ELPC paid the contractor £1000 per grass cut, in addition to a free crop of hay and silage each year. No autumn (silage) cut had been taken in 2011. FMP had not been included in decision making, but would have agreed. Someone asked if the £1000 saved had been allocated to FMP.

Kevin suggested one field should be left uncut this year.

Notice boards, picnic benches (Alan) Picnic benches were in place. Notice boards not arrived yet. Trevor remarked the "The aim of the FMP is to preserve the character of the site

as a South Nottinghamshire Meadow....” appeared on the revised as well as the original board.

Village community plan (Lorna) She had recently resigned, due to being out of the village mid-week as a routine. Trevor suggested approaching all Members for a volunteer to replace her, as no Committee Member present volunteered. ACTION TREVOR

The recent Friday and Saturday events had been well attended. MP was very popular as judged by the number of green stickers pasted on it on the village map.

The main complaints were about dog droppings. Deb reported that someone had suggested planting trees in the balancing lagoon. Trevor pointed out that engineers were worried about root damage as it was.

Field margins (Neil) Help promised by Richard had not materialised. Steve would be available to help in the next 7 to 10 days. Might be able to cut a path through Lagoon Field. Trevor said that there did not appear to be any accountability for neglect of work which should be completed in defined periods (e.g. annually). ACTON NEIL

Liaison with schools (Lorna) Duke of Edinburgh volunteers would need to be working on a weekly basis. Supervisors would not be supplied. Kevin suggested I-spy books. Trevor thought that single simple A4 sheets showing e.g. six birds, six trees and six flowers commonly found in MP might be a start for young children. Molly might be able to produce these for the walks. ACTION MOLLIE

Bats and moths survey (Kevin) David Budworth had offered to set up a moth watch sometime during the summer. He would use mercury vapour lights. David Stock, of Hathern, would carry out a bat survey at about the same time. These would open to all FMP members.

Tree planting (John, not present) There had been extensive e-mail correspondence about the offer of free trees. It was decided to accept hawthorns for hedges if needed. Trevor pointed out that the trees were being offered as part of the Queen’s Jubilee Celebrations; perhaps we should plant a special tree. Alan pointed out the problem of watering. There was no general support ACTION JOHN

Wildflower sowing(Kevin). Completed along half Little Meadow north hedge last Saturday. Andrew suggested that it was important to fence the area off, in case it was cut during routine grass cutting. Considerable seed was left over, and it was arranged for interested members to attend at 10 a.m. on Sunday next, with spades. ACTION KEVIN G

Kingston Brook. Ian Morrissey was concerned that works had been undertaken with a lack of due care to the ecology and habitats of the Kingston Brook and were contrary to the scope of works outlined in the email sent to the FMP by Ron Hetherington dated 13th February 2012. Of particular concern is the extent of the dredging activities and bank re-profiling works (which were not scheduled) through Meadow Park, since they provide only very limited flood risk benefit due to the capacity of the channel upstream of the railway crossing i.e. the lower channel capacity at this location determines flooding frequency in the Park. Morrissey questioned the rationale behind the damage to the banks and river bed (including the removal of gravels along with fine sediments / silts) when balanced against the need for flood prevention in a natural floodplain area. He also stated that some of the working methods adopted by the operatives seemed to be in contradiction with the Internal Drainage Board's own guidance and environmental remit as well as other important guidance produced by the IDB in conjunction with Natural England. Morrissey also stated that the removal of bank-side trees including root balls was likely to create further problems for the brook as a result of localised bank erosion which will inevitably result in the ingress of more fine sediment to the system. Neil Hunter added that most of the native black poplar trees (very rare in the area) that had been planted alongside the brook had also been damaged / removed and that this was especially disappointing and detrimental to the ecology of the Park.

Morrissey pointed to the fact that the development of marginal berms on the true right hand bank downstream of Kingfisher Bridge is evidence that the stream was trying to develop a more appropriate cross-section for the predominant flow character prior the works. The IDBs removal of these berms combined with re-sectioning (widening) and over-deepening will only act to increase the rate of fine silt accumulation in the brook. He went on to state that the works, combined with the occurrence of natural high points in the channel bed (at the bridges), will reduce flow velocities through the Park during low flow periods and that Kingston Brook is likely to suffer more frequently from low oxygen conditions and algal problems (potential public health hazard) during the spring and summer. This he concluded would potentially be very damaging to the aquatic invertebrate and fish populations that inhabit the stream. In summary it was Morrissey's opinion that the works through Meadow Park had done more harm than good and he would provide the FMP with information of small measures that could be implemented by the members to improve the ecological and morphological condition of the brook. (Techniques currently adopted in this field can be seen on <http://www.therrc.co.uk>).

Alan was concerned that although there had been prior liaison the outcomes had been disappointing. Trevor observed that the matter had been mentioned in the minutes of our January 2012 meeting. Mollie had taken photographs of the damage. Ian said that logs in streams provided useful habitats. Sheepwash Brook is in danger of disappearing due to the effects of quarrying. Alan said that KBIDB apparently had a duty to prevent flooding and that trees would grow again.

Bonfires. (Alan) We were licensed to have bonfires. There had been complaints from Bateman Road residents about the recent fire. Ash had been removed. No children had been burnt.

Green flag application (Alan) Submitted an application but had not yet received a reply. If we were awarded the Green Flag, it might help to support applications for future grants.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Trevor remarked that there had been much e-mail correspondence regarding Kingston Brook, but Marie, who sat on KBIDB committee, had not been included until the end. E-mails to Marie and Richard could be sent care of the Parish Clerk. They were usually passed on within a week. ACTION ALL MEMBERS

He was worried that too very indistinct paths (desire lines) were appearing in the region of Frank Kirk Way, which was not defined. It seemed disrespectful to our major benefactor. The Way was an official *right of way* and could not be altered in the same way as "desire lines" could.

TREASURERS REPORT (Andy) John Adcock would be reimbursed for the money spent on wildflower seeds. There was £2162.97 in the kitty. £750 was expected from Alex; it represented the legacy of the £20,000 LIS Grant from Notts CC. In addition, a local benefactor had promised a four figure sum. There was the challenge of how best to spend this for the benefit of the community. Deb suggested a bench near Bateman Road. This would cost £800-£900. Agreed to go ahead. ACTION DEB/ANDY

CORRESPONDENCE.

Notts Biodiversity group (Kevin) Work planned 2012 – 13 on the adjacent railway site. Home of the rare grizzled skipper. Kevin would liaise ACTION KEVIN

Peregrine Cam (Alan) he had not seen the bird. Ian suggested 7:30 a.m. as the best time to watch. There was a female crying for a male.

RNCSIG AGM 17/4/12. Neil would presumably attend.

ARCH COMMUNICATIONS (Alan/Trevor/Lorna). This year Matt Youdale planned to donate 10% of profits from his public relations company to charity. He had approached FMP after reading in our minutes that ELPC could not find £5000 to match the £45,000 offered to fund the construction of a trim track. Lorna had discussed proposals with Matt. Alan was concerned about how money would be spent. No members present supported a trim track. It was agreed that Trevor and Andy should arrange a meeting with Matt before the end of this financial year ACTION TREVOR

Andrew said that it should be pointed out that FMP was not a registered charity. Neither was ELPC, who could not accept charitable donations. Alan was interested in making MP more attractive particularly with more wild flowers. He also suggested spending money on contractors to pick litter. If it was tidy people would be inclined to keep it tidy. It was also suggested by Alan and supported by others that some monies could be spent on path improvement to enable wider wheel chair access. Trevor pointed out that charitable donations were not normally channelled to work which should be done by the authorities, who received money from taxpayers. The general principle of raising standards in MP was accepted. Trevor thought that the chief enemy of flowers was abundant grass and soil fertility. Kevin suggested that proposals be hammered out at our May meeting. Trevor said that discussion was an on-going process in this e-mail age. ACTION ALL MEMBERS

British Gypsum offer of machinery(Alan, Lorna) The company has an environmental group. They cannot donate money but they can loan equipment This would have to be looked at with the Parish Clerk. ACTION ALAN

Hibernaculum (Alan) – it was proposed to use excess logs for this project in Little Meadow.

ACTION ALAN

ACTIVITIES

January – hedge laying.

February – coppicing

March – sowing wild flower seeds Little Meadow. Moving KBIDB logs. 19 volunteers.

April – annual clean up, including Brook. Move wood chip.

May – remove dogwood. Some weeding. Clear overgrown pathways.

Kevin Shaw had suggested that FMP should not be involved in the Carnival this year. Participation involved considerable work for a few people and the money was not needed. Debbie remarked that it had not proved an effective way of attracting new members.

Date of next meeting: 16th May 2012.

Trevor 02/04/2012