MINUTES OF THE FRIENDS OF MEADOW PARK COMMITTEE MEETING
11th January 2023

1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Trevor, Ian, Mel.
Present: Andy, Andrew, Kev, Brenda, Alan, Neil, Diana, Carol, Conrad, Mary, Paul.

2) MINUTES OF THE FMPC MEETING OF OCTOBER 2022 WERE RATIFIED.

3) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES PLUS DEVELOPMENTS

i) Grass cutting update - Kev
Our agreed grass cutting plan has been included in the management plan, and the queries raised on this by ELPC have been addressed. This has now been put out to tender, and responses will be reviewed by the ELPC Amenities Committee. Kev stated that it would be very useful if one or two of us could be allowed to attend this review, so that we can help address any issues or questions raised. Conrad stated that members of the general public are allowed to attend the meeting.
Next Steps – Kev to find out what date the Amenities Committee will be meeting to review this.

ii) Hedgelaying update - Andy
Due to adverse weather conditions we have not done this yet, and as it will be raining and wet this weekend it is too dangerous. It will therefore be necessary to arrange a couple of separate sessions to get this done by the end of February ideally. Rather than working as one group, we could work as 2 groups at the same time on the same hedgerow, where there are sparse gaps, or we could work on opposite sides.

iii) Updates on Arboretum and Forest School - Andy
Arboretum:
Due to weather conditions we were unable to plant the 3 replacement trees before the new year. Hopefully this is now planned for the January work party on January 14th (Update - this will be now done later in the month).

Forest School:
Having contacted Lisa, the Forest School lead teacher last week the Forest School will start again on the 16th of January. I will join her in the morning to see if they require any more materials.
The requirements for the log circle have been measured and it will require a total of 26metres, split into 10off logs at 2.6 metre lengths. Consultation with the teacher raised the point that the children are getting bigger so the diameter will need to be increased to 40cm.
I am still at the stage of obtaining a cost for these new logs as unfortunately the previous supply from the wild life trust is no longer available.

iv) New tree areas - Kev / Paul
The new tree area will not be planted until next winter, and needs to be discussed between RBC and the County Council.
Trevor has done some good work on the desired list of trees, but in essence this will be decided / taken from the RBC species list (Paul uses a modified list). Hornbeam has been added to this as it is a good replacement for Ash and is hardy with regards to climate change. We also talked about Beech, which was seen as not as good as it doesn't deal well with drought.
Next Steps - Paul to let us know the scheme of planting before the summer.

v) Management Plan – Kev/Paul
The plan has been reviewed and slightly modified by RBC (Paul), and FOMP (Kev, Trevor and Neil).
NEXT STEPS – Paul to arrange a meeting with ELPC to agree and sign off the new plan.

vi) Meadow Park signage – Kev

Kev has passed a review of the current signage to Paul, who has asked his estate team to review it. The new signs should be done this year (taken out of the budget that starts in April 2023).

vii) Litter and fire under the railway arch – Alan / Kev

a) Alan and Kev discussed this with the new Great Central Railway (GCR) Chairman (David Rae) and his team. David explained that they would try and fence it off, and would take it to their next meeting. Alan mentioned to them at the time about the broken fluorescent tubes and the potential health danger these are. We also talked about the work they have done to mitigate the damage that Badger sets have done to the line, The GCR continue to deal with this problem (humanely) and have even built replacement badger sets, we discussed that it might be interesting to know where they were.

Post meeting update

We have since had an e-mail update from David Rae as follows (11/01/23): **the EMRT Board considered this work (it is actually Bridge 309) and thanks you for bringing it to our attention and for your clearance work. It will be scheduled for an external contractor to erect palisade fencing and a gate as we discussed. I cannot give a timescale for this as it will probably be planned alongside other fencing work required in the near future.**

Alan mentioned that it would be good to have a key to this gate so that we can remove any rubbish that gets thrown in.

NEXT STEPS – Kev to speak to David to ensure we have a key.

b) The GCR team also asked us about the possibility of having access to their line via the embankment on the south-west corner of Gibson's Field. This would be foot traffic only and would have a lockable gate. This would make it easier for them to get to this part of the track for essential maintenance work. We told them that this would require agreement with RBC. Paul stated that in principle this shouldn't be a problem, but he would need to check this.

Post meeting update

Paul sent the GCR an e-mail on 16/01/23 asking a number of further questions that he requires clarification on.

viii) Involving More Schools In The Park - All

Various ideas were discussed including:

- Having 3 Forest Schools on different days.
- Finding a way to get kids to enjoy and discover the park (involving the teachers).
- Maybe having worksheets about trees etc.
- Having family days.

In terms of the new Millside School it was felt that it may be too far away from Meadow Park to get them involved, but perhaps they might be able to learn about and enjoy the park via ad-hoc things such as worksheets or one-off educational walks in the park with their teachers.

In conclusion we felt it would be good to get students and their families to understand more about Meadow Park, perhaps by producing information sheets and guides about what you can see in the park. Brenda suggested these could be printed out by Thistlebank Printing. Andrew suggested we could hand them out at the carnival or other village events.

NEXT STEPS – Diana and Mary kindly volunteered to investigate some ideas and options such as informational leaflets, identification guides etc.

ix) Russian Vine problem at Bateman Road entrance -All

We agreed that the Russian Vine needed to be cut back as much as possible to stop it continuing to spread into the park

NEXT STEPS – To be tackled in the March work party or earlier.

Post meeting update

The Russian Vine received a major bashing at the work party today (21/01/23). Great work done by the work party!

x) Path Repair – Andy

The diagonal path across Bateman Field (Kevin's boulevard) and has taken flood damage, washing away the top limestone chipping surface in many areas. Andy is looking into the cost of repairing 200 metres of this via a local contractor. In terms of funding this we may get a small amount of funding from British Gypsum. Paul stated that we would need to justify the work with a firm solution before RBC could consider funding it, he also stated that he had objected to the original paths due to concern with regards to the deterioration issues.

It was questioned as to why Rushcliffe Country Park has a number of permanent paths, and it was stated that was because the paths were originally done by the County Council.

Alan highlighted that increased footfall in the park has added considerably to the problem, and that we needed good paths to enable the park to be accessed by all people, including people with disabilities, and this was one of the key reasons that Alan received funding for the original paths. He also received a verbal agreement that ELPC would ring-fence some monies for future path work.

As per the Management plan, ELPC is responsible for "surveying the stone surfaced footpaths and maintaining as required". Andy said that he would speak to Sue and ELPC to see what they can do, for example could they get a grant or funds for path materials, Ideally we need binding limestone. The alternative would be just to let the paths grass over, but it was generally felt that this would not be a good thing to do. Andrew pointed out that the Limestone topping on the path tends to get stuck to peoples' boots, particularly in the winter, so we need to ensure the topping gets bound correctly.

Paul told us about a possible source for funding, which is the "Community Infrastructure Levy" (CIL), which could be worth investigating.

xi) Other Issues

Path Widths

The width of paths mown in the park will be discussed with ELPC when the management plan is reviewed.

Orchard

We discussed the possibility of including an orchard or orchard trees within the park. Paul mentioned a small orchard that had been put in next to Rushcliffe Arena. We felt it would be good to add some fruit trees into the park, such as old varieties of apples, pears or plums etc. Paul mentioned that fruit trees cost more. Kevin talked about the good work that Wild Things group in Keyworth do in harvesting their local fruit and distributing to local worthwhile causes. We agreed to continue considering this idea.

xii) Any Other Business -All

Andrew mentioned that part of Kestrel bridge is rotting.

NEXT STEPS – Andrew to e-mail Paul with details.

Andrew mentioned that the north to south path under the trees in Oak Meadow (along the western edge) should be checked for any rotting trees or branches.

NEXT STEPS – Assess this at one of the next work parties.

Paul mentioned an issue raised by another group (Friends Of Sharphill Wood) who asked for a redacted copy of a planning report from RBC. RBC were not able to do this due to concerns about it being shared **NEXT STEPS – Paul to produce a document with regards to this.**

Neil talked about some illegal chainsaw work in Hall Field where a dead Birch tree was felled, and also mentioned the person seen carrying part of a tree branch In Meadow Park. Kevin said he knew this person and had spoken to him. He had taken this branch from the train embankment (following cutting work by GCR) and said he wouldn't take any wood from Meadow Park. In terms of the chainshaw activity, we all agreed to be vigilant when in the park to watch out for any unauthorised activity.

4) TREASURERS REPORT –Andy

We are still in a very healthy state with balance in the Bank as at November 1st being:
£3750.76 – Total Balance
£3347.61 – General Funds
£403.15 – Arboretum
Outstanding Debits - £175.79 carried forward from the 2021 – 2022 accounts, hedge flail - [Brian L Burton farms] £360, Split purchase of new equipment with ELPC £273.75
Note: The above debits have now been cleared
Overall spend to date is £809.54
Bank charges to date:£11.22
We have a small addition of membership renewals/new members of £51
The present balance is:
£2981.00 – Total Balance
£2577.85 – General Funds
£403.15 - Arboretum
Although HSBC are now charging for operating the account, changing banks at this time has been put on hold.

5) ACTIVITIES UPDATE

Work Party

A major thankyou to all our regular Volunteers.
Scheduled:
The work over November and December has been varied and consisted of: Litter picks, adding Goat Willow to the willow bed and Sculpture plus a cut back of growth.
As we were unable to start hedge laying due to weather conditions, we removed all the bramble and dog rose to prevent delays when we start in January.
Hours worked to date: 56
Unscheduled activity has covered the following: Wild flower surveys, guarding paths during the hedge flail, removing elder from the hedge to be laid, coppicing and pollarding LHS Stonebridge copse, work on the limestone bank. Nest box survey.
Hours worked to date: 49.75
Total Hours to date: 105.75
Work Party – January 14th:

Activities Planned

With weather permitting we hope to start the hedge laying along with the planting of the replacement trees in the Arboretum along with work on the limestone bank plus a litter pick.
Update on the purchase of replacement power tools: The agreed purchase of the EGO power head, Hedge cutter and battery has now been completed and collected from the supplier. These items will be stored in the main depot when suitable positions have been sorted.

Next Meeting date: 8th March 2023, 7.30pm.