MINUTES OF THE FRIENDS OF MEADOW PARK COMMITTEE MEETING
17th May 2023

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

2) MINUTES OF THE FMPC MEETING OF MARCH 2023 WERE RATIFIED.

3) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES PLUS DEVELOPMENTS

i) Updates on Arboretum and Forest School (Andy)
ARBORETUM:
All the trees are doing well, along with the three new trees they have all taken advantage of the weather conditions.

FOREST SCHOOL:
The renewal of the log circle and the small 'table' grouping has been completed within the Easter break. As logs for the renewal were found to be too expensive, a new design was used incorporating smaller log 'posts' and sawn planks.
Costs for this renewal: 10 off log tables - £70, 19 off softwood bases - £135, 9 off softwood planks - £95, fixing screws - £23.62, 25 off fixing posts - £58.80, clear tough coat - £17.40. Overall cost-£399.62. 5 off Oak tables were sold to East Leake scouts for £35 and we are expecting a very generous donation from the Lantern Lane fundraising group of £100, so this brings the overall cost down to £264.62
Both the Forest School and Tree Babies are using the area with the latter on a more regular basis in June

ii) New Signs (Kev)
The new signs are now in place, replacing the previously unreadable and non-existing ones. They all now face people as they entering at Bateman Road, Burrows, Nixon walk, Stonebridge, and Sculpture entrances. The one meant for the Brookfields / Nixon way corner has instead been put up at the Tunnel entrance (Gibson's Field).

NEXT STEPS – Kev asked Paul if the missing sign could be installed. Paul stated that an additional sign was originally asked for, and he would chase it up, but it is not currently a priority and could take up to 6 months to be done.

We also discussed a poster passed to Kev by Sue Lewis, which was to inform people to control their dogs and not let them jump up people or pester other dogs.

It was generally thought that such a sign would be a good idea, but we might want to make the sign less "wordy". We could do this as a poster campaign, and perhaps do a laminated one that we could fix to the old Meadow park sign entrances that have not been taken away. It was suggested that we could discuss what could be possible with Sue and Ally.

We also discussed what could be done about problem dogs / owners. Paul stated that if we have problems we should contact the RBC Dog Wardens, as people who are not in control of their dogs are in breach of legislation, and ultimately dogs can be taken away.

NEXT STEPS – Kev to discuss sign options with Sue and Ally, first step would be to design a sign that we all agree on.

iii) <u>Involving more schools in the park (Mary)</u>
Mary and Diana have now distributed the butterfly identification leaflets to the 3 Primary Schools, the Library, Mel's shop, the Leisure Centre and Parish Office. Andy also said he would give some to the Forest School and Tree Babies. Mel also suggested we could give some to Manor Farm and the Village Nursery. We have around 200 leaflets left (from the original 500) and the plan is to give the rest out at the Village Carnival.

Mary and Diana are now planning to do some flower leaflets, based around our FOMP yearly flower records. This may require at least 2 leaflets, and is unlikely to be ready before 2024 as the whole process is quite time consuming. When the butterfly leaflet images were obtained, Mary and Diane obtained permission from Butterfly Conservation to use them. For the upcoming flower leaflets we could take our own photos, or could potentially ask the "plant life" charity. Paul mentioned that we should think carefully about including the orchids as these can sometimes be stolen, and we will also need to be very clear about what plants are potentially harmful / poisonous, and emphasise that plants and flowers shouldn't be picked.

NEXT STEPS – Conrad to ask the wildlife Trusts if we could potentially use their images.

iv) <u>Grass Cutting (Kev)</u>
ELPC have received 2 tenders from farmers with regards to the annual grass cut and are awaiting a third. Sue has asked if we can speak to all parties tendering in order to ensure that they fully understand the task they are committing to do in detail. After this has been done the tenders will be sent to Finance who will (it appears) make the decision on a financial basis

We also discussed with Paul the potential of using the new "in house" Streetwise facility to cut the arboretum this year (maybe as late as September or October if possible) and using their "pick up flail" facility to remove the grass arisings, or leave these in agreed areas as habitat piles. This work may require half a day to do, and at least a months notice.

Neil expressed concern with the general path cutting done by the ELPC mowing team, in particular path widths and new pathways. He argued that we should try to preserve more of the open grassland, particularly in Gibson's field which is a known ancient meadow including some uncommon species. Kev explained that path widths are driven by the widths and capability of the ELPC mowers, but he would speak to Steve to see what we can do.

NEXT STEPS – Kev to speak to Steve to arrange the cutting of the firebreak in Stonebridge Field asap and also discuss the general cutting (Kev to speak to Sue first). UPDATE : Kev discussed this with Sue and Steve today. I showed Steve a map which I had produced of Gibsons Field with existing path widths (some as wide as 3 metres) and explained the importance of this field. Steve stated that some of the wide paths were there because Streetwise drive down them to empty the bins, However Steve agreed to cut the paths at just the width of his mower (1.5 metres) going forwards, Kev and Steve to look at the firebreaks required in the Arboretum and Stonebridge on Thurs (08/06), and if we need to cut back some plants/ scrub to increase the firebreaks to 2.5 metres we can do this at the work party this Saturday (10/06).

– Kev to also ensure that the Oak Meadow strip is cut this year as part of the main cut.
– Paul to speak to Streetwise about the possibility of cutting the arboretum.

v) <u>Path Repair (Andy / Kev)</u>
Kev and Andy have worked with ELPC (Sue) with regards to obtaining funds for repairing the paths as outlined by Andy previously. Andy is still awaiting a reply from British Gypsum. We also agreed to pursue the UKSPF grant route. This proved problematic with Andy's previous independent quoter falling through,

and Streetwise being unable to quote. However Sue did obtain 2 other quotes and did a great job of getting the grant submission in on time. Now we just have to wait and see…..

vi) <u>Butterfly Bank (Kev)</u>
Kev explained the plans to top off the butterfly bank with Limestone chippings.
Update 30/05/22 – the Limestone chippings were delivered and have been put on the bank. Kev has bought some wildflower plants from Naturescape (Birs Foot Trefoil and Rock Rose) and has planted the bank.

vii) <u>Carnival (Kev)</u>
This years carnival is on the 24th of June. Kev and Brenda will attend on behalf of FOMP, but it would be great if other committee members can attend to help as well. We will need a table, display boards and potentially a gazebo if the weather is inclement. We plan to have a display to show what we are doing down the park, as well as handing out membership forms and the butterfly leaflets. Hopefully we may sign up new members. **We will set up on the field at 1.30pm.**

NEXT STEPS – Conrad hopes to be able to obtain 2 tables, and may be able to source some display boards
– If Conrad cannot obtain display boards we should be able to get from some Sue Lewis (Kev has checked with Sue and this should be no problem if we need them)
– Brenda to work on the display and check that we have enough membership forms to give out
– Kev to ask Andrew about borrowing his Gazebo. UPDATE: Andy no longer has access to the Gazebo from work, but asked Debs Slade if we could borrow hers. She has kindly agreed.

viii) <u>New sewage pipeline route (Neil)</u>
Neil was concerned that the pipeline was going through a sensitive part of Gibson's field. Paul explained that Severn Trent are doing this as a statutory undertaking, and RBC have no control over it. However, Severn Trent will have to also provide an ecological survey to Paul. Kev explained that the new pipe is being laid alongside the old pipe as the old pipe is being kept in situe as a reserve and for technical reasons. Any turf removed will be kept alive and replaced in its original position. It now appears that the work may not be done before 2025.

ix) <u>Continuing Education (Trevor)</u>
Trevor talked about the Geology draft that he had previously sent out. He explained that he had sent a daft out to a geologist but that he hadn't replied. Kev stated that whatever is finally put together needs to be very much pertinent to Meadow Park and not generalistic.

NEXT STEPS – Trevor will continue working through his ideas.

x) <u>Any Other Business</u>
-Neil mentioned that the retracting bollard on Nixon walk did not appear to be working

NEXT STEPS – Mel to query with ELPC

-Neil mentioned that he had been unable to strim the rest of Hall Field this spring. We agreed that this was not too much of a problem, and we will deal with this by utilising the "Green Climber" later in the year.

-Paul mentioned that he had heard that the IDB were hoping to progress their idea with regards to re-routing Sheepwash Brook

NEXT STEPS – Paul to let us know what is planned when he finds out more.

4) TREASURER'S REPORT (Andy)

ACCOUNTS:

We are still in a very healthy state with balance in the Bank as at May the 15th being:
£3208.26 – Total Balance
£2837.11 – General Funds
£371.15 – Arboretum
Amount spent - £11.64 - 2 off storage bins for depot, £53 – shelving kit for storing EGO kit in the Depot, Naturescape bluebells and snowdrops £159, fixing nails £8.06, Log circle renewal £399.62. Butterfly leaflets £80 -Total £711.32
Overall spend to date is £1520.86
Bank Charges to date: £43.64
Outstanding Debits:
East Leake Carnival – £20, Limestone gravel for Limestone Bank - £137.45 Total - £157.45
Membership Renewals to Date: £599
Donations to Date: £388
Expected expenditure: We are now looking at further replacement of the EGO kit stolen last year, the quote for the items is: Brush Cutter attachment £86.67, Standard Charger £49.17, 5.0 AH Battery £199.17 – Total £335.01 This all dependant on the meeting on 15/5/23 giving approval **(Note - The committee approved this expenditure)**

5) ACTIVITIES UPDATE (Andy)

Work party

A major thank you again to all our regular Volunteers.
Scheduled:
The work parties over the March to May period: all the brash from the hedge laying was cleared and added to various dead hedges in the immediate area. Bluebells and snowdrops were planted in 'Sculpture alley', various seats had extra gravel added and two more seats had ground grab tiles and gravel. The normal litter picks were carried out.
Hours worked to date: 450.5
Unscheduled activity has covered the following: Wild flower surveys, Remove 'log circle' and fit new version, work on Sculpture border, plant violets
Hours worked to date: 245
Total Hours to date: 450.5

Activities Planned

Work Parties June and July:
Work on the Limestone bank, look at the building of a willow seat in the willow bed, add ground grab tiles and gravel under further seats, general tidy up of paths etc.

Next Meeting Date - Weds, July 5th 2023 – 7.30pm.