MINUTES OF THE FRIENDS OF MEADOW PARK COMMITTEE MEETING

12th July 2023

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

2) MINUTES OF THE FMPC MEETING OF MAY 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. The one downside is that the Alder planted outside of the area near to Sheepwash is showing signs of stress.

FOREST SCHOOL:

The Tree Babies are at present not using the area.
The Forest school will again be using the area and the park in general for 3 full days in July – next Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. They will be den building again during these sessions so part of the work party on Sat 8th July was to collect some material, also required will be some reasonably young Elder shoots which the children use for bead making, these were delivered on Monday morning.
The generous donation of £100 from the Lantern Lane Fundraising Group to assist in the new log circle has now been received.

ii) Wildlife Trust Images for our leaflets (Conrad)

Conrad has spoken to the Leicestershire Wildlife Trust.

NEXT STEPS – LWT have confirmed that they will supply us with images once we have our list of flowers. We plan to work on these leaflets next spring.

iii) Path Repair (Andy)

This is now ongoing – Both the attempts to obtain grants from British Gypsum and the UKSPF have failed. ELPC have after a recent meeting agreed in principal to move forward with the path repair . I will be having a meeting with Cllr Chris Jennison on Tuesday 18th of July to review the work required and the way to move forward. This will require a further request for a grant from ELPC along with obtaining new quotes from contractors.

iv) Control Your Dogs Sign (Kev)

We discussed how we might develop this idea as the sign we had looked at appeared over wordy. We felt after discussing it further, it was somewhat out of our remit, as the sign could be used in other areas of the village, and as it in essence would be subject to local bye laws.

NEXT STEPS – Kev to refer it back to the Parish Office to see if they want to pick this up.

v) Grass Cutting (Kev)

The grass cutting tender has been awarded to Charles Burton, who hopes to cut for hay by the end of July (weather dependent). Andy said that we should pull the Ragwort first.
Update – Andy has now picked the Ragwort.

The western margins and arboretum are due to be cut later in the year, and we will need to find out from Paul if this can be done using the Streetwise flail and pick up facility or the Green Climber.

Kev spoke to the PC mower (Steve), about cutting the general paths narrower around the park, and also cutting the new firebreak in Stonebridge field. Alan commented that the paths were looking better, as Steve is now cutting them to a lesser width.
Update – Steve has also now cut the Stonebridge field firebreak.

NEXT STEPS – Kev to speak to Paul about the Streetwise flail and Green Climber (for the margin and Arboretum cut).

vi) Carnival (Kev)
This years carnival was on the 24th of June and Kev and Brenda attended on behalf of FOMP, with help also from Conrad. The weather was good and we engaged with a lot of people and signed up several new members, and handed out a lot of application forms. The display boards put up by Brenda looked great, and I was able to show people some Brimstone caterpillars and chrysalis. Many thanks also go to Debs Slade for lending us her gazebo.

vii) Management Plan update (Kev)
The Management Plan was signed off on June 26th, and Sue has promised to send me the final copy.

NEXT STEPS (Kev) to send out to the committee (when received) and also ask Brenda to upload it onto the village website.

viii) New tree planting (Kev)
Following our May meeting where we discussed the proposed additional tree planting in Meadow Park, Paul had sent out a planting plan which had been distributed to the committee. This created a significant amount of debate at our meeting with many points raised which are listed below:
- The shape of the proposed planting would need to be changed to a more sculptured shape.
- The chosen trees were not diverse enough.
- It appeared that too much of Playfield would be encroached upon, and hence insufficient recreation space would be left.
- Trevor had numerous questions about the best trees for carbon capture and how they should be planted.
- The required density of planting would create a situation whereby visibility for people walking around this field, and using the gym would be adversely impacted.
- How would the trees be protected from vandalism? would they need to be fenced off?
- Who will maintain the trees and water them?

However the largest concern that arose, was with regards to people who only use Playfield for walking their dogs and personal exercise etc (as they are concerned for their own personal safety). This was something that we had not talked about previously, but the consensus was that this required serious consideration.

In conclusion, the committee felt that it would be a better idea to plant the trees elsewhere in the park and village. These areas include:
- The western edge of Stonebridge field (parallel to Gotham road).
- A scalloped edging of trees could be considered adjacent to the brook (on the southern edge of Playfield), provided that the southern (east to west path) could be moved at least 4 or 5 metres north of its current position.
- Bley Avenue.
- The centre of the village.

This would all be best discussed between RBC and the PC.

ix) Trevor's History Leaflet (Trevor)

Trevor is developing his "history of the park" idea, and already has some interesting information. He is trying to obtain more information from David Anderson at the East Leake History Society. It was also suggested that he should contact Peter Foden if possible as he has quite a lot of historic data. At the moment it is felt that this information may be best produced as leaflets initially, but could be developed later into an information board etc. Alan mentioned the information boards at Beacon hill, as these could be a good template to use. Kev also mentioned similar display boards at Nunkley Hill Trail at Mountsorrel, that might be worth looking at.

NEXT STEPS – Alan to send some example photos taken at Beacon Hill to Trevor.

x) Any Other Business

New Severn Trent pipeline location

Ian showed us his LIDAR maps which clearly show the current location of the pipeline (which basically runs through the centre of the park). When myself and Alan spoke with the consultants for the new pipeline, they clearly stated that they planned (for various reasons) to run the new pipeline adjacent to the old one. However the map for the new pipeline held in the PC meeting room, shows a route that runs next to the brook and then diagonally across Gibson's Field to the tunnel.

NEXT STEPS – Kev to raise this with Sue, in an attempt to clarify this.

Willow Structure

Alan mentioned that the willow structure requires a cut.
NEXT STEPS – Andy to arrange for this to be done on an ad-hoc work party.

Nesting Birds

Neil raised the issue of people generally cutting back trees and shrubs during the bird nesting season. We all agree that this is not a good thing to do, and we will continue to ensure that this doesn't happen in the park.

4) TREASURER'S REPORT (Andy)

ACCOUNTS:

We are still in a very healthy state with balance in the Bank as at June 28th being:
£2891.28 – Total Balance
£2520.13 – General Funds
£371.15 – Arboretum
Amount spent: £335.01 on the replacement EGO kit, plus there was also the opportunity to obtain the Strimmer attatchment for £86.67
All these new items are now stored in the main depot
Overall spend to date is £2034.48
Bank Charges to date: £55.94
Outstanding Debits:
East Leake Carnival – £20, Limestone gravel for Limestone Bank - £137.45 Total - £157.45
Membership Renewals/New members to Date: £627 [does not include any joining at the Carnival]
Donations to Date: £513
Expected expenditure: A further purchase of Limestone gravel for the limestone bank - £137.45

5) ACTIVITIES UPDATE (Andy)

Work party

A major thank you again to all our regular Volunteers.

Scheduled:

The June work party consisted of a great deal of hard work under the very hot sunshine and comprised of working on the scrub along the top path in the Arboretum, the willow sculpture receiving a light trim and various cut back of overhanging growth along paths in Playfield, Hall Field circuit, the top path by the estate and Lagoon Field. Plus the normal litter pick.

The July work party consisted of obtaining material for the Forest school whilst at the same time cutting back on overhanging branches on various paths. The entrance to the railway tunnel was also cleared of vegetation. Plus the normal litter pick.

Hours worked to date: 278

Unscheduled:

Activity towards the end of May and June has covered the following: Wild flower surveys, removal of soil/turf and sand donations from FOMP members and village resident – this was used to fill holes in 'Frank Kirk Way' adj the Bateman Rd gate with the sand used along the Bateman Rd path adj to the gate. Moving a bag of limestone chippings from 'The Burrows' to the limestone bank. Shelving fitted in the depot for the EGO kit. Forest School liaise and repair to Kestrel Bridge.

Hours worked to date: 282.25

Overall Total Hours to date: 560.25

Activities Planned

Extra Work Parties July:

Ragwort and Himalayan Balsam removal as necessary plus the addition of more limestone to the bank

Good News on the volunteer front - Ben Neath from the Leisure centre has been in touch and members of their workforce will be available during the week days to assist us – Ben will let me know what days between 10th to 31st of July some of his team will be available and we will have a meeting to discuss the arrangements.

Next Meeting Date - Weds ,Sept 6th 2023.