MINUTES OF THE FRIENDS OF MEADOW PARK COMMITTEE MEETING

13th sept 2023

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

2) MINUTES OF THE FMPC MEETING OF JULY 2023 WERE RATIFIED

3) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES PLUS DEVELOPMENTS

i) Updates on Arboretum and Forest School (Andy)

ARBORETUM:

Despite the weather alternating between hot spells and rain all the trees are doing well, The one downside is that the Alder planted outside of the area near to Sheepwash is still showing signs of stress, it may be worth introducing trace elements for these sort of plantings, and it may be in the wrong location as Alders need their roots near running water, and soil aeration could also help. A cut back of lower growth/crown raising maybe required prior to the Arboretum hay cut in October.

FOREST SCHOOL:

The Forest School has now resumed after the summer break and were in attendance for a full day on Monday [11/9/23]. A small harvest of willow was provided for the day.

ii) Flower Leaflet update (Diana/Mary)

Diana and Mary discussed the current approach for this, it will be of a similar layout to the butterflies leaflet, and will consist of 2 leaflets covering 48 flowers in total. There will also be a simple anatomical diagram of a flower instead of a word search. One of the leaflets will probably be early flowerers and the other for later flowerers.

Diana and Mary showed us the flower list again and we discussed the flowers included, and it was felt that the list was good, but perhaps we could add Dock in there if possible, but we are happy to go with the current list.

Alan suggested that we could perhaps make reference to flower / plant identification apps that could be useful to people, maybe suggesting apps generally rather than specific apps.

NEXT STEPS – Mary and Diana would still like some photo images for the flowers on the list if anyone has any.

- Mary to also send the flower list to Conrad, so that he can obtain images from the Leicestershire Wildlife Trust.

iii) Control Your Dogs Sign (Kev)

We all looked at the sign produced by the Parish Office, and we were impressed by the design and the succinctness of the wording.

NEXT STEPS – The signs will be put up on the existing posts at the entrance points to the park. This will be done as an ad-hoc work party activity, once we are clear of the mowing / Green Climber activity

iv) Hay cut, Arboretum cut and Green Climber update (Kev)

Hay cut

This year has been difficult for farmers due to the wet weather, and most cuts have been late, hence the main hay cut was done on the 7th of September this year. It was done by Charles Burton and his team, who

did an amazingly efficient job of cutting, baling, plastic wrapping, and removing the bales in 1 day. The grass will therefore be used by the farmer for Silage.
This late cut will have given plants a chance to set seeds more effectively, and will have allowed many insect species the time to complete their life cycles. Along with leaving Stonebridge field uncut this year it will be very interesting to observe and notice any impact on plant and insect species etc, in the meadows during the winter (such as birds) and any changes next year. Trevor mentioned that It is important that monthly flower identification is carried out. This exercise could yield useful information.

Arboretum

Update – The Arboretum was cut on Tuesday 26th Sept. Andy and myself were present to supervise and assist. The Streetwise team (Deano and Carl) did a great job, despite the rainy conditions. Unfortunately the tractor that was planned to remove the arisings on the same day broke down on its way to us, but this has now been re-scheduled for Wednesday the 4th of October.

Green Climber

This is booked for Tuesday the 3rd of October. We have a whole days use of this machine and we are due to do the western margins, but there other areas that we will do and we will review and discuss these during the day.

v) Path repairs update (Andy)

The 3 quotes required by ELPC have now been reviewed and the Finance Committee have agreed on a quote that will go to the full council meeting on the 26th of September. Going forwards Mel will push to get this included in the ELPC budget on a yearly basis.

vi) Severn Trent sewage pipeline

We are still not sure about the exact route for the new pipeline through the park, but Severn Trent are going to the full survey work next year. Cllr Jason Billin will keep us in the loop with regards to developments.

vii) Trevor's History Leaflet (Trevor)

Trevor discussed his "history of the park" leaflet. Kevin suggested that some of it was not specific enough to the park, but Trevor felt it was still worth including. Kevin also stated his concern that Trevor should ensure that wording included was PC (politically correct). Trevor also said that he would like to generate a charitable donation for FMP from his leaflets. Alan suggested that the information could include references to the existence and mining of gypsum and gravel pits in the area but Trevor felt that it was not specifically relevant to Meadow Park. Conrad suggested that Trevor could run some limited copies off initially, to gauge what response the leaflet receives.

NEXT STEPS – The conclusion was that Trevor should complete his leaflet and run some copies off (say 50 initially) to distribute to the Library and other areas. He will also include his e-mail address, so that he can assess the effectiveness of the leaflet.

viii) Any Other Business

- Brenda discussed the photo book she wants to do for Molly, but she is finding it difficult to find photos. Mel suggested that she could do one for Ann as well at the same time.

4) TREASURER'S REPORT (Andy)

ACCOUNTS:

We are still in a very healthy state with balance in the Bank as at September 12th being:
£2695.39 – Total Balance
£2279.24 – General Funds
£416.15 – Arboretum
Amount spent: £157.45 on Limestone gravel plus £4.80 for printing
Overall spend to date is £2369.37

Bank Charges to date: £71.13
Outstanding Debits:
Nil
Membership Renewals/New members to Date: £710, Donations to Date: £524

5) ACTIVITIES UPDATE (Andy)

I know this a repeat message but a major thank you is again required to all our regular Volunteers, particularly on Saturday -another very hot session.

Scheduled:

The August work party consisted of moving the supply of Limestone chippings from the Burrows to the limestone bank, a cut back of growth on the willow structure and removal of docks from Gibson's field. A meet up with a path contractor and a litter pick.

The September work party was again on a very hot day so the time was cut back to approx 1 hour. A tidy up of the sculpture border and a trim of growth in the adjacent path borders in Oak Meadow and the Arboretum. A tidy up of the Forest School area, plus a small harvest of willow split between the School and repair of the willow structure.

Hours worked to date: 335

Unscheduled:

The work in August and September consisted of pre work on the limestone bank before adding more chippings. Liaising with the hay cut team during cutting/baling etc and also with Streetwise prior to the Arboretum cut. A survey of future work and areas for the Green Climber visit in October.

Hours worked to date: 293.5

Overall Total Hours to date: 628.5

Activities Planned

We plan to walk the brook in October to clear it of litter and any Himalayan Balsam that has been missed. We also plan to concentrate on the willow area, with a view to ultimately willow weaving a chair.

Mel also suggested that we should try and clean up / litter pick the section of Kingston Brook that runs adjacent to the Recreation / Play park, and she may do a call out to Tidy Team members.

Next Meeting Date (AGM) - Weds ,Nov 1st 2023, 7.30pm.