MINUTES OF THE FRIENDS OF MEADOW PARK COMMITTEE MEETING

6th March 2024

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

2) MINUTES OF THE FMPC MEETING OF JAN 2024 WERE RATIFIED

3) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES PLUS DEVELOPMENTS

i) Updates on Arboretum and Forest School (Andy)

ARBORETUM:

An inspection has now been carried out[4/3/24] and all trees are showing signs of new buds
This check also includes trees planted in the forest school area.

FOREST SCHOOL:

- The Forest School have started their sessions which have not been helped by the very wet weather. Further supplies of cut bamboo and den building material have been provided.
- We have now been approached by the Forest School teacher from Brookside primary who wishes to use the area on a regular basis on Tuesday from the 12th of March with years 5 and 6.

They have an area in the school grounds but this is now deemed to be too small for the older age group. Kev and myself have met with the teacher concerned and visited the forest school area, and she will now liaise with the Parish council to finalise permission.

NEXT STEPS – Andy asked if anyone would be prepared to liaise with Brookside Forest School on Tuesday. Diana and Mary offered to do this going forwards. Kev stated that this need not be overly onerous.

ii) Flower Leaflet update (Diana/Mary)

Diana stated that leaflets have gone out to the Leisure Centre, Lantern Lane School, Library, Parish Council, Brownies, Guides and Mel's. In all 250 leaflets have gone out. Andy said that £80 for 500 leaflets is a great price and he has thanked and paid the printers.

NEXT STEPS – Mel suggested that some should be given to East Leake Village Nursery. Also Mel requires some more leaflets.

iii) Severn Trent meeting / update (Alan)

Alan has sent out a couple of updates after attending a meeting on the 16th of February. Everyone accepted that there are still a lot of loose ends and unanswered questions at this stage.

Alan mentioned that today (6th March) he had seen 2 men doing some pre-surveying work, the other side of the tunnel. Alan has also spoken to Sue to find out whether she has any new information, and Sue thinks that some surveyors from Fisher German will be coming soon to dig exploratory holes (bore holes). Overall, it appears that the work is still planned to be towards the end of the year. It was felt that this could be an issue if the park floods as much as last year and the start of this. We wondered if the process would be a mixture of cut and fill, and how they plan to deal with Sheepwash brook and the hedgerows (will they bore under them?).

NEXT STEPS – Alan to speak to Paul Phillips to see if we can have regular updates to understand what is happening, We felt that we need to be able to speak with the contractors, in order to convey which areas are the most sensitive and need to be protected. Kevin also mentioned that Severn Trent should (he believed) be supplying Paul with a biodiversity report and plan with regards to biodiversity net gain for this project.

NEXT STEPS – Mary stated that it would be a good idea if the people of the village were made aware at a fairly top level (via the newsletters or posters etc.) with regards to what is happening.

iv) Meet Your Village (Village Hall, February 17th)- Kev

- Kev updated the Committee that he and Diana had signed up 8 new memberships, and taken £38 (including donations). Kev, felt that the event had not been very well publicised, and even on the day there was no board or banner outside. Mel mentioned that it had been well publicised in her shop. It was felt that awareness could be built next year via Schools, the Parish Council Newsletter and East Leake Times.
- Brenda mentioned that she had a picture of Diana at the event, and Diana said it was ok for this to be used if required.

v) Tree planting update (Kev)

After the February work party, myself, Andy, Conrad and Alan looked at the Stonebridge field area adjacent to Gotham Road. We felt that there was plenty of space to plant some small growing trees without encroaching into the field. We may however need to clear some invasive bramble adjacent to the hedgerow in the short term. Wendy Thompson obtained a quote for us via Coles Nurseries for 2 Alders, 3 Hollies, 3 Rowans, 3 Apples and 3 Plum trees (of various varieties). The total cost of these was £190.75 (excluding delivery), but we felt that container grown trees would be best, which would take the cost up to around £290. We all agreed to proceed with this and aim to get them planted asap. Neil also suggested that we should use biodegradable mulch mats.

NEXT STEPS – Kevin to place the order via the Parish Council account (VAT free).

vi) Flower planting with Lantern Lane (Kev)

On Friday 23rd of February, in conjunction with a Lantern Lane "kindness day" Kev supervised the planting of wildflowers and honeysuckle plants with Lantern Lane schoolchildren. We had originally planned to plant some wildflowers in a copse of trees in Stonebridge Field that we had recently thinned out (to allow more light into the area) however, the recent rain had flooded the area, and we decided to utilise a semi wooded area on higher ground, adjacent to the north east entrance to the park (Nixon Walk).

A group of year 5 and 6 pupils attended with 2 teachers. All the children planted the plants themselves, and did a wonderful job!

Kev chatted to the children about the primrose plants, which we planted in 2 groups of 3 under trees, explaining that primrose flowers were a great source of nectar at the end of the winter, particularly for bees and also butterflies that were coming out of hibernation, in particular the Brimstone and Small Tortoiseshell. Kev gave all of the children a Meadow Park butterfly identification leaflet to keep and use.

We talked about wild honeysuckle which the children planted at the base of 6 suitable trees, This is a lovely climbing plant with beautiful flowers, which are particularly fragrant at night, (when they are often pollinated by moths), and hence later in the year the plant develops red berries which are a great energy source for birds.

We also planted a few dog violet plants, as these are the foodplant of some fritillary butterflies which occur in the nearby West Leake woods.

It was a lovely morning, the children did a great job. The Teachers and pupils also gave the Friends Of Meadow Park a beautiful "thank you" card.

All in all a great morning.

vii) Any Other Business

Fisheries Request

Ian Welby of the Institute of Fisheries Management has asked the PC for permission to carry out training sessions on Kingston Brook again this year (either 27th or 28th of April).

NEXT STEPS – Kev to contact Ian Welby to find out which day they will be doing this and then co-ordinate with the Committee to see who could pop down to see what is happening and findings.

Orchids in Hall Field

Carol asked if the common spotted orchids in Hall Field will re-appear this year. Neil explained that as the area had been cut, it was likely that the orchids will be seen again this year, and possibly the southern marsh orchids could also appear. Neil also stated that we would probably not use the Green Climber in the Hall Field area where the orchids are this year, but Neil will instead strim the area in the following spring. Kev also mentioned that a bee orchid had been seen near the Lantern Lane roundabout last year and one appears to be currently growing on the roundabout itself.

The outside path around Hall Field

Andrew stated that this area of path could benefit from some cutting back. As it is still currently muddy, it was felt that this may be best done later in the year

NEXT STEPS – Andy to add this to a work party task for later in the year (say November-ish).

Path funding update

Mel stated that although no set amount for doing yearly path repairs had been put in the PC budget, that the PC had acknowledged that they would do a set area of path repairs each year.

NEXT STEPS – Andy to speak to Sue about which areas of paths could be done next. As the paths are the responsibility of the PC, and Andy is very busy with other work, it was agreed that going forwards that Andy should only provide top level advisory support on this going forwards.

Hedge Trimming Invoice

NEXT STEPS – Andy mentioned that he had not received an invoice yet from Helen, and Kev said he would text Helen to chase this up (done).

Tree cutting adjacent to garden fence in Hall Field

Neil mentioned that this job had not been completed, but he hoped to do it soon (possibly a mid week activity). It was felt that good progress had been made in this area and the remaining work was not urgent.

4) TREASURER'S REPORT (Andy)

ACCOUNTS:

We are still in a very healthy state with balance in the Bank as at March 4th:
£2817.81 – Total Balance

£2396.66 – General Funds
£416.15 – Arboretum

Bank charges to date:£27.12

We have an addition of membership renewals/new members/donations of £1011

Items purchased and paid for:
Wild flower seeds: £58.16
Wild flower plants: £86.99
Wild flower leaflets: £80

Outstanding debits: Purchase of two stage ladder for use by FOMP £200, purchase of second tree popper £350.40, cost of hedge flail £220 [estimate]

AED 4/3/24

5) ACTIVITIES UPDATE (Andy)

A major thank you again to all our regular Volunteers.

Scheduled:

Both the work parties in January and February concentrated on the Stonebridge Copses where further clearance[coppicing and pollarding] with dead hedging completed in both north and south copses.
Plus the usual litter pick.
Hours worked to date:109

Unscheduled

Unscheduled activity has covered the following: Wild flower surveys, work in Stonebridge copses, inspect for flood damage + tidy up of any damage, cut back of overhanging branches along north path, guard paths during hedge flail, assist with Lantern Lane pupils planting wild flowers during their 'acts of kindness' day, walk around with Brookside Primary Forest School teacher, tidy up forest school area.
Hours worked to date: 88.75

Total Hours to date: 197.75

Activities Planned

Work Party – March 9th:

With the week ahead due to be dry, we will aim to complete the work in Stonebridge copses along with opening up the access into Playfield from Little Meadow. Also work on producing another bee world plus seed sowing.

Next Meeting Date - 8th of May 2024, 7.30pm.