MINUTES OF THE FRIENDS OF MEADOW PARK COMMITTEE MEETING

21st May 2025

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

2) MINUTES OF THE FMPC MEETING OF MARCH 2025 WERE RATIFIED

3) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES PLUS DEVELOPMENTS

i) Updates on Arboretum and Forest School (Andy)

ARBORETUM:

The trees have been inspected on 19th of May to check for any obvious effects of the dry weather and all are ok.
The Stonebridge border trees are still alive but unfortunately we are unable to water them during this dry spell so they will have to cope as best they can.

FOREST SCHOOL:

The Lantern Lane School are still enjoying themselves and are very appreciative of their new' carpet' in the log circle. Brookside have now started their all day Tuesday sessions.
Den building material is being provided as necessary.
Unfortunately the recently replaced support post has fallen over again, the remaining three will be now inspected regularly.
The post will be offered to Brookside / Lantern Lane to see if they can use it in their school grounds.
Also just adjacent to the Forest School area a tree has lost a very large branch which has straddled the Bateman Rd path – [Note: this as now been removed.]
I have suggested to ELPC that the RBC tree surgeon should be brought in to survey the Ash trees in the area for any sign of Ash dieback (please see update about this in "any other business").
As of today [Monday 19th] two dead trees have been 'pushed over' in the Forest School area, I have moved one today and sawn the other so it is safe for the children – further work is required. Another post has been also loosened.

ii) New FOMP Leaflet (Mary)

Mary had already sent her latest version of the leaflet out to the committee and we discussed this.
- It was decided to delete the word "Stonebridge" on the map.
- Mel mentioned that the font size for "Kingston Brook" seemed too large, but we decided on balance to keep this as it was.
- Ian stated that the word "acres" should replaced by "hectares" as this is more modern and part of the decimal system. It was agreed that we should change "acres" to "hectares".
- Ian stated that the wording of "In 2024 Meadow Park was awarded the status of Local Wildlife Site for it's contribution to nature conservation and breadth of biodiversity" should be changed to "In 2024 Meadow Park was designated as a Local Wildlife Site for its nature conservation value and breadth of diversity". We agreed to change this.
- We discussed side 4, and agreed that the area of the form to be cut off should include a scissor icon to denote where to cut. Ian showed Mary where to access this icon on word.
- Kevin stated that he believed that you could avoid using the account number on the BACS information as long as you had the bank name, company name (FOMP) and sort code However, this was discussed further and it was discovered that we don't need to use the bank name, but just the account name (FOMP in bold print), sort code and account number. We decided to use this.

- It was also noticed that an end bracket was missing after “name”. This is to be corrected.
- It was decided that on the bank transfer section it should be stated “Please do not forget to complete and hand in the form below” as otherwise we would not have the new members contact details, in particular the e-mail address.
- Mary stated that she had spoken to the local estate agents to see if they might help us with printing costs, we felt that we could offer some sort of thank you for this in our publicity, but we felt that this should not encompass using their logo’s.
- We agreed that once the changes were made and we will print 500 off, but do this in conjunction with printing our other informational leaflets in order to get a better discount from the printers.

NEXT STEPS - Mary to update points above to the leaflet and e-mail it to the committee. Update – Mary sent this out again on the 25th of May for feedback.

iii) Publicity Officer role (upcoming vacancy) (Kev)

- Unfortunately the person who we hoped might pick up some of Brenda’s publicity role has decide that due to ill health that she is unable to do this. The following parts of Brenda’s role therefore will need to be picked up. These could be done as separate parts by different people to make it more manageable. Brenda is continuing to look for someone to do this.

The areas are:
- A monthly report sent to the free papers, the East Leake Times and East Leake Local News.
- Monthly work party notification sent to members.
- Village web pages updated if needed.
- Newsletter (January and July).
- Notice board information (ad-hoc).
- Maintenance of membership details.

NEXT STEPS - We need to decide how we can do this work going forwards, if no-one comes forward we may have to simplify or cut out some of the processes above.

iv) Severn Trent Pipeline latest (Kev)

- We discussed what information was forthcoming with regards to the pumping station project and laying the new pipes through Meadow Park, and agreed that we know very little. Mel also confirmed that the Parish Council doesn’t know how and when Severn Trent are doing the work either. We agreed that our main concern will be the working area around the new pipeline and the impact this will have on the grassland, hedges and trees.

NEXT STEPS - Kev to try and found out more information via James Naish MP or other sources.
Update – Kev has contacted Georgina Robinson (Fisher German Surveyor), who has said that she will liaise with the project team and let us know when and what is happening.

- Although it wasn’t directly relevant to Meadow Park we also discussed the material (mainly soil and turf) that was moved from the creation of the new road on the Recreation Ground and placed near to Costock Pavillion
- **NEXT STEPS - Mel to find out the logic of placing it there.**

v) Deer damage in the park – can we control this

- Kev explained that he was concerned about the increase in deer populations (as these are now seen more regularly in the park -particularly Muntjac deer) which are notorious browsers of undergrowth and can damage trees. He suggested that we could either put in fencing or dead hedging at the bottom of the train embankment. However, Neil stated that he didn’t think this was an issue currently. It was argued that deer could still find their way into the park via the tunnel, and would generally be put off by dog walking in the park. We agreed to monitor this as a potential issue going forwards.

vi) Fire hazards in the park – can we minimise this?

- We agreed that given the very dry spring that the park is increasingly at risk of fire. We did recently remove some of the wood piles in the north of playfield as these could potentially used as bonfires. We did feel that we are in a more fortunate position than some places as we have a fire station in the village. We felt that it will be important at the moment to ensure the firebreaks are kept as wide as possible.
- **NEXT STEPS – Kev to speak to ELPC with regards to ensuring that the firebreaks are in place and are maintained.**

vii) Leaflets to be printed (Kev)

- Diana has provided the following information with regards to current leaflet stocks, which are proving to be very popular as we initially printed 500 of each leaflet :
- Butterflies - 65
- Wild flowers 1 - 82
- Wildflowers 2 – 86

The costs of printing are:
200 of one design = £109 zero vat

300 of one design = £118 zero vat

400 of one design = £120 zero vat

500 of one design = £121 zero vat

Diana e-mailed me to say that she thinks we should have some more printed, they're good to handout at events or talks. Mel hands quite a few out. Interestingly they seem to go well at the Leisure Centre.

It would make sense given the price differentials to print out 500 of each leaflet above. Along with this we will order 500 of Mary's new leaflet once it is completed (as we will also get a 10% bulk discount on the order).

- **NEXT STEPS – New leaflet order is to be placed once Mary has completed the new FOMP leaflet.**

viii) Forest School Talk (Kev)

- Kev stated that this went very well. Kev talked about a few things in the park such as rabbits, bees, muntjac deer and brimstone butterflies, and that the children particularly liked seeing the practical things such as the caterpillars and the moths. Ian also mentioned that he does brook sampling with a group from Lantern Lane School on a yearly basis as well.

viii) Any Other Business

Orchids

It was mentioned that it was wonderful to see the rare green winged orchid again this year in hall field, with luck this will spread in the coming years. The marsh and spotted orchids are only just starting to show. Update – We counted 52 Marsh and spotted orchids in Hall field yesterday (04/06/25), which is as many as I have ever seen down there!

Ash die back

- RBC Have contacted us to discuss about an RBC tree officer checking up on ash dieback in the park. Neil is an expert on this area and sent us all a detailed e-mail on the 21st of May indicating his thoughts and findings so far. We did discuss whether RBC are obliged to do an annual inspection on this from a public liability viewpoint.
- **NEXT STEPS – Kev to speak to Paul to ask if we can be present when RBC do this check in the park, and that it would be very helpful if Neil could attend this.** Update – myself and Neil are currently arranging a date to do this with Tom Petit in June.

Electric bikes in the park

- We have had a few instances recently where electric bikes are been driven through the park in a dangerous manner. In particular the area in the south west corner of gibsons field has been used (near to Forest School) and kerbing has been used to make a ramp. We need to monitor this situation going forwards and any issues should be phoned through to the Police.

Poplar catkins / seeds (Neil)

- Neil commented on how many fluffy seed heads he had seen blowing in the park. We all commented what a strange late spring (warm and dry) we have had. Kev mentioned he had seen ermine moth caterpillar webs in the park for the first time in many years.

Facebook followers (Ian)

- Ian mentioned that we now have over 1,000 followers on Facebook. Kev stated that we should post a bit more on there about the park if we can.

Village Website (Mary)

- Mary asked if we could put our flower, butterflies and bird leaflets on the FOMP section of the website.
- **NEXT STEPS – Mary to speak to Brenda about this.**

Cemex response – aggregate (Kev)

- Kev has chased up Cemex twice, but currently no response.
- **NEXT STEPS – Kev to chase them up again…..**

Hours worked by volunteers

- Andy stated that he thinks we will break the record for hours worked this year.

Himalayan Balsam (Mary)

- Mary asked about when we should remove this along the edges of Kinston Brook. Andy stated that we will remove it when we see it, and when it is a good time to pull it.

NEXT STEPS- Andy to co-ordinate this.

David Wilson Homes offer of a donation (Andy)

- Andy reminded Kev that an offer of help had been made. I had forgotten about this. Update Kev has contacted them about supplying us with some new limestone chippings for the butterfly bank, or helping us move the Cemex aggregate (if and when this is agreed).

4) TREASURER'S REPORT (Andy)

ACCOUNTS:

We are still in a very healthy state with balance in the Bank as at May 18th:
£1990.11 – Total Balance
£1573.96 – General Funds
£416.15 – Arboretum
Bank charges to date: £49.19
Income for the year to date:
Membership renewals/new members - £661, Donations - £563
Total: - £1214
Debits paid:
Purchase of a further batch of bow saws from B&Q for £217.20
Items still outstanding:
Purchase of various safety gloves – Mens and Ladies - £105.96
Purchase of 3 off small bypass loppers - £39
Total - £144.96

AED 19/5/25

5) ACTIVITIES UPDATE (Andy)

WORK PARTY

A major thank you again to all our regular Volunteers plus the additional help from small groups of volunteers from British Gypsum, who are now helping us on a regular monthly basis

Scheduled:

The work in April and May consisted of a tidy up of various flailed hedgerows and a full litter pick of the park with the addition in May of walking down both brooks. Plant remaining foxgloves.

UPDATE: Tawny Owl nest box – cost £44, still to find a suitable tree

Hours worked to date: 199.5

Unscheduled activity: Over the last 2 months covered Wild flower survey and Bird survey. Continued tidying up work in the north copses by FOMP and with assistance from BG volunteers. Planting of wild flowers in the cleared areas and other areas of the park. Light trimming of various paths with assistance from BG volunteers

Laying of wood chippings in Forest School area and sections of the Bateman road path.

Unfortunately due to fire risk the hibernacula created in the north border have been dismantled

Hours worked to date: 329.75

Total Hours to date: 529.2

Next Meeting Date - Weds July 16th 2025, 7.30pm.