FRIENDS OF MEADOW PARK COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY JULY 1st 2026 **PARISH OFFICE 7.30 P.M.**

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. RATIFICATION OF MAY 2026 MINUTES

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES PLUS DEVELOPMENTS

   - Updates on Arboretum and Forest School. Andy
   - Progress with Local Nature Reserve. Kev
   - GCR request for help at work parties Mary
   - Severn Trent pipeline latest. Kev
   - Brook maintenance plan 2026/ 2027 and progress. Kev
   - Cemex donation of 20 tonnes of aggregate. (update) Kev / Andy
   - Hay cut timing Kev

   - Any Other Business. All

4. TREASURERS REPORT Andy

5. ACTIVITIES UPDATE
   - Work Party updates. Andy
   - Next Activities planned…. Andy / All

Minutes from the meeting are on the next page

MINUTES OF THE FRIENDS OF MEADOW PARK COMMITTEE MEETING

1st July 2026

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

2) MINUTES OF THE FMPC MEETING OF MAY 2026 WERE RATIFIED

3) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES PLUS DEVELOPMENTS

i) Updates on Arboretum and Forest School (Andy)

ARBORETUM / STONEBRIDGE:
All the trees in the Arboretum and the remaining trees in the Stonebridge border have now had to cope with a heat wave, hopefully they will all come through this period healthy.

FOREST SCHOOL:
- Both Lantern Lane and Brookside have been using the area, although not on a regular basis i.e. they have been also staying within their school grounds for their activities.
- Unfortunately due to the fire in the area all the loose den building material has been removed with the only items left being the long branches for various uses. We are now coming up to the summer break and both schools will probably be using the area for a longer all day sessions.
- Of the other two interested parties, one has still not started and the other group has one more session on the 2nd of July, postponed from last week because of the high temperatures.
- Unfortunately a further support post has been felled and transferred to LL for use at the school. With health and safety concerns the remaining posts have been removed on Monday 29th and again transferred to LL.

ii) Progress with Local Nature Reserve application (Kevin)
- Kev informed the committee that LNR status had been formally approved by RBC. However the process is not yet complete until it is publicised in local newspapers (to see if there are any objections). If there are no objections to deal with, there is then a formal declaration and an official document is produced with an official seal. The document is kept by RBC, with a copy sent to Natural England. This whole process may take a couple of months.
- Paul has confirmed that being a LNR does not confer much additional work onto us, but we will need to include additional information into the 5 year plan.
- LNR status will be a great tribute to all of the people who have put in the hard work into the park since its inception. Thanks go to RBC, ELPC, F.O.M.P members, and of course the F.O.M.P Committee. Thanks also go to Paul Phillips who pulled all the data together and also to our local ecologist (Sarah Postlethwaite) whose work pulling all the data together for the Local Wildlife Site was instrumental in assisting this. We have all achieved a lot over the years, and we will continue to improve the park for the benefit of the people of the village in the coming years, and to also increase the parks bio-diversity.
- LNR status will give us better protection from the land being sold or developed. Ian mentioned that it should give us protection from any unnecessary IDB work, and that we can also create local bye-laws to protect the site from damage etc. The legal status that a LNR designation confers means that this sort of site can only be developed under “exceptional circumstances”.
- RBC will arrange and pay for a LNR sign for the park, which should also include mention of our lowland meadow, history and species. This will probably be done at the start of next year.

Next Steps- Kev to ask Paul if we will receive any funding for becoming a LNR.

iii) Great Central Railway request for help with work parties (Mary)

- The work party organiser (Chris Thompson) who organises their "Cutting Edge" team sent an e-mail through to us. Mary explained that he has requested whether any our our members would be interested in helping out at their autumn/winter work parties. He specifically mentioned that in particular they want to work around the bridges (including the Meadow Park tunnel) to clear hawthorn and scrub either side of them.
- We discussed this, and felt that we really wouldn't want to deflect our work parties away from our own work in the park, but did agree that we would mention their work parties on e-mails that we send out to our members in case anyone was interested. (we will supply Chris Thompson's contact details). Ian also mentioned that we have 1,100 followers on Facebook, and we could share any of their work party posts on our page.

Update – Mary will send a message back to Chris, and Kev also met up with Chris to explain that we wouldn't have enough resource to work with them on an on-going basis, but that we could work together on areas of the embankment which adjoin the park boundaries (such as the western edge of Gibson's Field).

Next Steps- We also talked about raising awareness for our own autumn/ winter work parties. We discussed using the Parish Council newsletter, and Mel also said she could put a reminder on Facebook before the work parties happen.

iv) Severn Trent pipeline latest (Kev)

- I have been in constant contact with Forkers, and it is clear that the timescales and deadlines for doing the pipeline work in our fields have been constantly changing, mainly due to the issues with Gotham Road and the railway tunnel. It did seem recently that timing with the hay cut would be compromised as they weren't going to do the pipeline work until late July / August, however I have been told (on the 1stof July) that they are starting the work in Gibson's Field tomorrow and should be finished laying the pipe across to the compound by the end of July. This will be done before the section under the tunnel, as this will be done at a later stage (due to issues with GCR requests which still need to be resolved).
- In terms of re-seeding the area, Rammsanderson are responsible for the success of the meadow restoration, and Paul informed me that it is part of their duty and ultimate liability for getting this right. They have been informed of our strong request that they utilise an appropriate seed mix for lowland meadow with UK provenance (such as Ermosgate seeds).
- we still feel that using the green hay cut to seed the easement area would be our preferred option, with Rammsanderson being our second option.
- I have also spoken today to Charles Burton about the hay cut. He is reasonably on top of his jobs due to the good weather and is happy to fit in with the hay cut (within reason) whenever we require it, hopefully to coincide with Forkers at least finishing their work in Gibson's Field around mid July. I explained to Charles about putting green hay over this area, and he suggested not strewing the hay around (as this would disperse the seeds onto the ground before moving it), but just baling it up straight away and moving it into the easement to unroll and spread it. He is happy to help us in any way he can. It's great to have a helpful farmer! If this could be done before Rammsanderson involvement this could be very helpful in regenerating the meadow, but I guess we will need to liaise with them if we do this.
- It was mentioned that we shouldn't wait too long this year to do the hay cut, as the season is running early, but at this time (July 1st), many plants are still in flower and have not set seed.

Severn Trent – pipeline very latest! (Kev)

- As at 22nd of July, the pipeline work that has started in Gibson's Field has been much slower than expected, so as we discussed at our meeting I've decided to get things moving on the hay cut regardless of the ST (Forkers) progress. I spoke with Charles yesterday and he is currently engaged in early harvesting work, but he hopes to be able to get to us by the end of the week, or next week. As Oak Meadow will not be accessible to his equipment, the plan is to leave this uncut over winter. We will therefore cut all of the other normal fields, but may leave a few areas of long grass around a few trees in the arboretum.

- The Greater Burnet, is just starting to set seed, so myself and Sarah (local ecologist) plan to collect some seed for spreading in the easement area when it is ready (along with pepper saxifrage seeds and other harvested from the fields). If anyone else wants to collect seeds, they are best collected into paper bags.

vi) Brook maintenance plan and progress

- The brook maintenance work continues, and a lot of Himalayan Balsam has been cleared. Andrew mentioned that he had seen Chub around Kingfisher bridge, and Ian mentioned that these had probably come from upstream near to Sarson's garage.

Update as at 22/07/26 – We had a very good work party on Saturday 11th of July cutting back overhangs etc around Kingfisher bridge, and clearing westwards along the northerly bank working towards Kestrel bridge, and we also removed an old bit of a metal fence just to the east of Kingfisher bridge (which has been an obstruction for a very long time).

- Also today (22/07/26) we had an ad-hoc work party, and continued the work along the northerly bank to Kestrel bridge and also cut back a considerable amount of Elder and Hawthorn adjacent to the western side of the bridge.

Next Steps -Kev to keep Cllr Jason Billin updated on progress. Further work to be done in the coming months.

vii) Cemex donation of 20 tonnes of aggregate

- We are still liaising with Cemex (and now are speaking to the new quarry manager) We are still hoping for the last 2 weeks of July.

Next Steps – Kev speaking to Matthew at Cemex about this, and we will co-ordinate this with Cemex and Kenway (Cemex and Kenway have asked for at least 1 weeks prior notice).

Any Other Business

Dropwort

It was mentioned that very little dropwort had been seen in the fields this year. Although dropwort is fairly tolerant it can struggle in clay soils, but like a lot of plants it has good years and bad years. It has been seen in Lagoon Field this year.

Duck Race (Conrad)

Conrad Mentioned that the brook needed to be cleared of weed prior to the event on the 19th of July, and this was planned for Tuesday 7th of July. Mary and Diana to sort out membership forms and perhaps advertising posters to try and generate some new FOMP members at the event.

Update – The removal of weed from the brook was carried out, but Diana and Conrad have informed us that the church duck race event scheduled for the 19th of July has been cancelled due to the poor flow of water in Sheepwash Brook. We had hoped to do a bit of a membership drive at this event, but hopefully it will get re-scheduled.

Fire risks (Andrew)

Andrew reported a small fire next to the butterfly bank. There have been a fair number of deliberate fires started in the park this year. FOMP members Deb and Tim Slade have expressed some concern with brambles and other trees near to their garden. It was also mentioned that the area between the main trees along the northern edge of Hall Field and Playfield and the houses had a fair amount of scrub and undergrowth that was a potential fire risk, and that this area had originally been just grass. Ian expressed some concern with regards to this also. Some people felt that this area should be cleared to create a fire break. This would be a considerable amount of work, and would involve a loss of biodiversity. We considered if we could purchase a wood chipper to help with such work, but we don't really have anywhere to store it.

Update – Kev has checked the plan and there is no mention of firebreaks, and noted that the area between the trees and houses tapers off sharply to the north west corner. We could do some extra work along the area adjacent to the houses with the Green Climber this year, and also perhaps get Helen

Burton to do some cutting in there again (which we can consider), but any major work in this area would need to be carried out by RBC, and Kev has referred this on to Paul. It was also suggested that we could see whether the ELPC groundsmen could help with this, but we noted that they are currently down on resource at the moment.

Next Steps – After discussing the idea of a wood-chipper and where to store it Mel offered to speak to ELPC to see if there was any space in the depot to keep it.

4) TREASURER'S REPORT (Andy)

ACCOUNTS:

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We are still in a very healthy state with balance in the Bank as at November 1st being:
£1558.33 – Total Balance
£1142.18– General Funds
£416.15 – Arboretum
Bank charges to date: £8.21
We have an addition of membership renewals/new members of £488 along with donations of £535, a total of £1023
Legacy from the estate of Trevor Jones of £1000.
Debits – None
The present balance as at 29/6/26 less the legacy::
£2110.62– Total Balance
£1694.47 – General Funds
£416.15 - Arboretum

AED 29/6/26

5) ACTIVITIES UPDATE (Andy)

WORK PARTY

A major thank you again to all our regular Volunteers, along with our friends from BG, who have all worked hard on our sessions carrying out various tasks.

Scheduled activity:

The work carried out in May & June was very contrasting in style and effort - spreading chippings in Bateman border and removing all possible fire material from the Forest school area and removing the mown grass from Gibson's in between the ST fence lines and removing bramble adjacent to the new trees in Stonebridge border along with a cut back of hedge on corner of path.
Hours worked to date: 269.5

Unscheduled activity:

Other than the Wild flower and Bird surveys, the work carried out over the last few months was varied and a high number of sessions carried by various members which covered the following: Planting and watering flowers and seeded areas in Bateman border, opening up various overgrown paths in Lagoon Field area, strim grass in Gibson's and Bateman in between ST fencing, liaise with forest school and provide timber, cut back various overhanging growth, raking and removing hay from Gibson's, remove remaining 3 posts from forest school area.
Hours worked to date: 425.5

Total Hours to date: 695
Upcoming Activities : Continue brook clearance at next work party.

Next Meeting Date – Weds Sept 2nd 2026, 7.30pm.