

**Friends of Worts Meadow
Minutes of Committee Meeting
Thursday 15 October 2015**

1. Welcome, introductions & apologies.

Present: Frances Dipper (Chairman), David Pell (Treasurer), Robert Humphrey (Secretary),
Dannie Gambell, Ray Gambell, Robert Stripe, Ruth McArthur, Larry Bly,
Edward Tabner (County Farms).

Apologies: Richard Taylor, Anna Bilton, Graeme Bilton.

Frances opened the meeting by welcoming Edward Tabner to his first meeting with us and drawing his attention to the fire exits.

2. Agreeing the minutes of the previous meeting (9 July) as circulated.

The minutes were agreed.

3 Matters arising where not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

3a. Dog waste posters. FD said that following our last meeting she had emailed the draft wording to Phil Clark but had heard nothing since, she will send him a reminder. **Action FD**

3b. Adjusting the gate latch between the first and second meadows. FD said this had been done, many thanks to Lorna Thomsen.

4. Management issues:

4a. Topping vegetation in meadows. No news, FD to remind Phil Clark about this. **Action FD**

4b. Additional elm saplings. No news, FD to remind Phil Clark about this. **Action FD**

4c. Wood chippings for pathways. RH said that he had asked the tree surgeon who had previously delivered a free load if he had any more he could let us have. He said he could only let us have a free load when he was working close to our site. RH had therefore purchased a load costing £63 and this had been spread on the pathways in August. RH said he hoped to get some more chippings free and had spoken to another tree surgeon today who will do what he can.

The meeting agreed to reimburse the £63 to RH from our funds.

4d. Depth of the new pond. The problem was explained to ET who said he would investigate. **Action ET**

5. Correspondence.

None.

6. Treasurer's Report.

DP handed out a spreadsheet showing our present position, the only expenditure since our last meeting being the hire of the Village Hall.

7. Group training/Equipment.

FD said nothing had been heard from Phil Clark about Brushcutter or First Aid courses, she will send him a reminder. **Action FD**

8. Events and Activities.

8a. Report on events since our last meeting.

- Swift watch at Landbeach Church.

RH said that he met with LB and Dick Newell one evening in late July to assess how many swifts were entering the nest boxes in the Church belfry. There was a good show of 'screaming' birds with up to 30 around the spire. 3 birds were observed entering nest boxes at dusk and the fact that 3 pairs had bred this summer was subsequently confirmed by Dick.

- Bat walk July 6th 2015

Iain Webb from the Wildlife Trust had again kindly led us in a search for bats using our eyes and ears, the latter through the medium of bat detectors. Ten people attended the event meeting up in the car park at 9pm. Iain gave a short introduction to bats in general and the species that might be expected. The first port of call was to the churchyard where, as the light gradually faded we started to see and hear bats all round us as they hunted through and around the trees. Melanie proved to be 'bat lady' picking up numerous signals on her detector. The most common was Common Pipistrelle (45kHz, and a rather wet/juicy sound). There were also Soprano Pipistrelle (55kHz) and another species, probably Long-eared Brown. Within the church, the detectors picked up at least one bat flying around. This was a much better showing than last year, when the weather was cold and windy in contrast to warm and fairly still on this occasion.

At about 10.30 pm the group made its way along to the Black Bull garden where we also had some success with several bats flying around, but not as many as there usually are earlier in the evening. With refreshments provided, the talk flowed and the evening ended at about 11.30 hrs.

As an added bonus to the evening, when we arrived at the church yard (around 21.30hrs) at least 6 swifts were circling overhead.

- Pond dipping Saturday 15th August.

Led by Frances Dipper

As usual participants gathered at the main pond for an introduction and demonstration before the children rushed enthusiastically into the mud at the pond's edge. A total of 9 adults and 5 children turned up, with two new families resulting from our advert in Fen Edge News but fewer of our regulars. This was probably the result of the change to an earlier date as several families who usually come were on holiday. Several small common newts were found, large numbers of greater and lesser water boatmen, several species of small water beetles and beetle larvae, pond skaters, mayfly larvae, damselfly larvae (and adults flying around) and dragonfly larvae (two), plus pond snails and orb cockles, a lovely leech and several moorhens. In other words the invertebrate life was abundant and whilst the pond is extremely muddy, the edges were clear water (before the children got in!) and plant growth (hornwort, water lilies, Ranunculus) good.

- Moth trapping and identification 15th/16th August 2015

Led by Peter Holt.

Three traps were set up on the evening of 15th by Peter Holt assisted by FD, one in the clearing in Bourne wood near the bird feeding station, one at the far corner of the wood (SW corner) and one in the SW corner of the second field next to the gate into the wood . Some time was also spent in moth hunting. The traps were left overnight and collected early next day by Peter. Identification in the village hall was attended by 7 adults (plus Peter). The catch was very interesting with several species not recorded in previous years. There was one species rarely recorded in Cambridgeshire. The Common rustic was the most common and a large poplar hawk moth the most flamboyant. Peter has kindly produced a species list for comparison which FD will make available to anyone interested.

8b. Future events.

- Fungus foray. Nothing has been heard about a leader for this event, so we will not be holding one this year.
- Cleaning out nest boxes. A reminder that this is taking place on 24 October commencing at 10am.
- Removing reed mace from Bourne Wood pond. This is also taking place on 24 October commencing at 10am.

9. Any other business.

- DP asked when we are going to start feeding the birds again and whether there is any chance of receiving free food again via Richard Taylor. FD to check with Guy Warren. **Action FD**
- Thanks are recorded to Lorna Thomsen for reimbursing Guy for the cost of weed killer.
- FD asked members to think about whether we should organise an indoor talk over the winter to try to encourage greater participation. **Action all**
- RG asked if there was any news on the dredging of the moat. FD said she would ask Phil Clark for an update. **Action FD**
- DP asked if anything was happening about the dead tree on the southern edge of the second meadow. ET said he would look into this. **Action ET**
- FD said she intended doing a proper survey of invertebrates in Worts Meadow Reserve next year. **Action FD**
- RG said he had come across a Cambridge TV channel and thought this might be an opportunity for publicity in the future.

10. Fix dates for 2016 meetings.

These were arranged as follows and RH to book the Village Hall.

Action RH

14 January.

7 April.

12 May Annual General Meeting.

14 July.

13 October.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm