

Friends of Worts Meadow
Minutes of Committee Meeting
Thursday 10 January 2013 Landbeach Village Hall

1) Welcome, introductions and apologies

Present: Frances Dipper (Chairman), Melanie Hale, David Pell (Treasurer), Dannie Gambell, Ray Gambell, Guy Warren, Sarah Shepherd (County Farms), Graeme Bilton, Anna Bilton, Ruth McArthur, Robert Humphrey (Secretary), Robert Stripe, Phil Clark (Cams. CC)

Apologies: None

Before the listed agenda items FD invited Sarah Shepherd to give a report of the management work recently undertaken in Bourne Wood.

Sarah said that the coppicing and felling undertaken last November was designed to create a natural woodland with some understorey. In addition the paths had been opened up further to allow them to dry out quicker. She said that County Farms had received no complaints about the work.

Sarah said a new notice board was nearly ready to be put up.

As for the meadows Sarah said that Natural England had granted a Higher Level Stewardship with effect from 1 January 2013. The new plan covers the removal of thistles and ragwort. PC said that he could borrow an auto ragwort puller and perhaps the tenant farmer could be persuaded to pull this behind a tractor. The operation needs to take place at the right time, just before flowering. PC to liaise with Sarah on this.

ACTION PC

FD asked whether we could sell some of the logs to raise funds. A discussion followed and it was agreed not to proceed at the present time given that the log piles were spread out and the land waterlogged so access for vehicles would currently be difficult.

Natural England also wants County Farms to dig another pond in the 'half moon' area.

2) Agreeing minutes of previous minutes (18 October 2013) as circulated.

The minutes as circulated were agreed.

Matters arising:

a. Notice Board. RG said he thought the board that Clive Brown had hoped to fix did not fit. PC said he has a suitable board and will bring it next time he visits the site to look at the wood. **Action PC**

b. Bags for dog waste dispenser. The bags currently in the dispenser had been provided by villagers. MH said the local council were supposed to top up the dispenser when they emptied the waste bin. She will check with them if they are doing this. **Action MH**

c. Record Sheets. FD said that on the record website was now an FOWM record sheet. To gain access we need to register. FD said she would send RH details for him to circulate to members. **Action FD & RH**

The record can be linked to our website when we have one.

d. Requirements for fencing half moon pond. GW said it would require 30 wooden posts plus a length of sheep netting. Agreed he could acquire and obtain reimbursement from the Treasurer. **Action GW**

A discussion followed as to whether work should be delayed until new pond was dug. PC said he thought best time for new pond was late summer/early autumn and suggested fencing proceed and a section be removed later for digger access. This was agreed.

PC to provide SS with details of pond digging contractor he can recommend.

Action PC

e. I.D. Charts. Dealt with under item 5.

f. I.D. Courses. Dealt with under item 5.

3) Correspondence

RH said the only item since our last meeting was an email from Jane Andrews-Gauvain from Cambs. & Peterborough Environmental Records Centre following the bird survey she led in the village on 21 November last. In addition to a spreadsheet showing the species recorded she gave provisional details of the surveys she hoped to undertake this year. She said she was also prepared to lead a couple more local events if there was a need.

PC said Jane had emailed him for dates of our events in 2013 and he would let her have details of those decided under item 6b. **Action PC**

4) Treasurer's Report

DP said that the grant of £2400 from Cambs. CC was now in our account. The only amount paid out so far was £13.80 for the hire of the Village Hall for our meeting last October.

5) Group training/Equipment

- Bat detectors. Decided to buy 3 Magenta 4 detectors, DP to purchase. RH to seek permission to keep them in locked 4-drawer press in Village Hall office with book to record out and in. **Action DP & RH**
- I.D. charts. FD had obtained a list of basic field identification foldout charts produced by Field Studies Council and from this the committee decided which ones to purchase. These to be kept in the village hall office but no need to lock them in cabinet **Action FD**
PC said if we were holding an event we could borrow extra charts from him. GW suggested we could attach charts to the Worts Meadow Notice Board when it goes up, chosen according to season and slipped between a double Perspex board

Note: FD thought after meeting – alternative is to laminate and hang on board with string.

- I.D. courses. A number of courses are run by Beds. Cambs. and Northants. Wildlife Trust. Anyone interested should consult:
www.wildlifebcn.org/trainingworkshops.
PC said he is going to try to run a Risk Assessment workshop as soon as possible. He will send out details to all groups and ask for volunteers. **ACTION PC**

6) Events & Activities

- a. RH gave a brief report on the bird survey walk led by Jane Andrews- Gauvain on 21 November last. Three FOWM members plus 2 others attended this. The walk passed through Worts Meadow followed by Akeman Street and Cockfen Lane. The main aim was to record thrushes as part of the British Trust for Ornithology winter survey. RH holds a copy of the results.
- b. The following dates were fixed for our events and activities this year.

- Hole filling. Carry forward to next meeting.
- Bluebell planting. GW said the original intention was to plant these ‘in the green’ but these were too expensive so he had purchased and planted 150 bulbs. The meeting thanked him for this.
- Evening newt walk. 27 March starting 7pm. Publicity by FD and PC.

Action FD & PC

- Detailed newt survey. FD to contact Malcolm Busby to arrange a date.

Action FD

- Management walk. To be held prior to AGM on 9 May starting 6.30 pm
- AGM 9 May starting 8pm (Refreshments before or after)
- Bat walk. To be held after the AGM on 9 May starting 9pm
- Ragwort clearance. Hand pulling no longer needed if auto puller can be used.
- Children’s competition for logo. It was suggested entries could be invited in Beach News and Landbeach ‘What’s On’ sheet.
MH said we needed to get parents interested, as children wouldn’t see these publications.
FD said some guidelines needed to be given about what sort of logo we were looking for. FD will discuss further with Maggie Robertson of Village Garden Party organising committee. Entries to be judged and prize given for winner at Village Garden Party on 6 July. PC suggested a prize of a young naturalist’s kit and the meeting thought this was a good idea.

ACTION FD

- Pond dipping led by FD. 31 August starting 2.30pm
- Moth trapping. Carry forward to next meeting
- Fungus foray. 12 October starting 10am. PC said he could organise an expert to attend. **Action PC**

7) Group logo and Website

See 6b re logo.

8) Risk Assessments

See 5 re training for Risk Assessor.

9) Ash dieback disease and replanting

FD asked whether we should be telling people to look out for signs of Ash dieback and whether there were things we could do to reduce risks as outlined by Woodland Trust guidance e.g. cleaning footwear before leaving woodland.

SS said the Forestry Commission has excellent factsheets on their website which members can be made aware of. Go to <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara>

PC said we shouldn't worry too much about precautions, since the disease has airborne transmission if we are going to get it in Bourne Wood we will get it.

PC went on to say that we would check for signs when we undertake our Management Walk on 9 May.

GW asked if we should consider planting some different native tree varieties now.

SS to consult Anita Stone at Forestry Commission for her views on this. **Action SS**

10) Proposed increase in Village Hall hire charge

RH said a proposal to increase the hire charges by 3% From 1 May 2013 would be voted on at the committee meeting next week. For us the charge would rise from £8.80 to £9.00 per hour.

11) Health & Safety in Village Hall

RH said that all hirers of the Village Hall have a 'Duty of Care' towards their members/invitees. We were requested by the Village Hall committee to risk assess our activities. RH said that we needed to be careful in moving furniture before and after our meetings and also in using the Zip Water Heater. We also needed to note the fire exits.

FD said she would remind us at future meetings.

RH to report back to Village Hall committee on assessments carried out.

Action RH

12) Any other business

There was a discussion on spreading the wood chippings in Bourne Wood onto the muddy pathways. It was agreed to do this on Saturday 16 February starting 10am.

PC to try to organise some additional help.

Action PC

RH to ask for volunteers in February 'What's on'.

Action RH

GW asked if permission could be obtained again for him to collect aconite seeds at

Wandlebury. PC said he would contact the Ranger. *(permission now received)*

13) Date of next meeting

This is on Thursday 18 April commencing 7.30pm