

## The Friends of Worts Meadow

### Minutes of Committee Meeting held on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2013 in The Village Hall at 7.30pm

1. The Chairman welcomed those present: Frances Dipper (Chairman - FD); Richard Taylor (RT – new FOWM member); Ray Gambell (RG); Dannie Gambell (DG); David Pell (Treasurer - DP); Guy Warren (GW); Graeme Bilton (GB); Melanie Hale (MH); Robert Stripe (Acting Minute Secretary - RS).

Apologies: Robert Humphrey (Secretary). [FOWM Members Judy Stevens and Andrew Stevens.]

2. The previously circulated Minutes of the last Meeting held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2013 were agreed as a correct description.
3. Matters arising from those Minutes and not covered elsewhere in the Agenda:
  - a) Notice Board: FD will test various paint finishes to see what will write on them that can also be erased, with a view to erecting it after the winter.
  - b) Dog Waste; Posters for lamination and display: as Phil Clark (PC) was absent this item was deferred.
  - c) FD brought the Log she had prepared to record borrowing of the I.D. charts. This was placed in a box file provided by her, with the charts, on top of the filing cabinet in the Village Hall Office.
  - d) Barley straw bales for the ponds: RT would ask his son to make them for next year and report on what he says at our next (January) meeting. Whether the straw would be needed would depend on the weather conditions during the year so a survey of the state of the ponds' waters would be made through the 2014 season.
  - e) The Friends' Logo: RG submitted an idea which was passed round and discussed. The rough outline was approved and FD would ask her daughter, who has graphic design experience, if she would produce a draft version.
  - f) Ragwort Clearance: In an email to RH and FD (22 August) from Sarah Shepherd (SS) she explains that she has been in touch with Natural England and that we DO NOT need derogation to spot spray weeds. She has applied for derogation for boom spraying and will let us know if this is successful. Any spraying (including spot) should be done in autumn/winter. In a second email (17 Sept.) she says she has also been in touch with Richard Holland (farm tenant) and he plans to top the ragwort/thistles as soon as the cattle are removed in October (spraying cannot be done whilst cattle are present as they will eat dead ragwort).

In discussion over what FOWM might do, GW explained that spraying the weed in a macro-stile might be one way of controlling it, though it could also be 'spot' sprayed. The weed could be cut and then sprayed, before the cows are put back in the field next year. FD will contact SS to check which chemicals we should use, get the key to the

gate (if possible, to allow in a car with the equipment) and find out who would pay for the chemical.

g) Facebook page (deferred, PC absent)

4. Correspondence.

In the email covering ragwort (see above) SS said they had until December 2014 to complete the new pond and she has not had time to organise this yet. She also said that replacement of a culvert near the moat would be done this winter to retain more water and so aid conservation of the archaeology on the site. *(Note: this has actually now been done).*

Discussion of removing the silt from the pond and moat in the Meadow was deferred in the absence of PC.

5. Treasurer's Report.

DP Passed round an updated financial Report. It was noted that as at 10<sup>th</sup> October 2013, the account stood at £2,401.90 which is £1.90 more than when it was first opened. However FD costs of buying pond dipping equipment have yet to come out.

6. Group Training/Equipment.

a) Risk Assessment Workshop: this item was deferred owing to the absence of PC.

b) and c) First Aid Kit: We have not yet got this from PC but it was agreed that FD will be in charge of it but it will be kept in the village hall cabinet along with the bat detectors. Because few keys to the Office are available (RS and RH are the only two on this Committee to have a key at present), RG and MH will ask the Parish Council if another key may be cut. *(Note: RH has since suggested that we should not keep it in the cabinet because only he is permitted a key as the VHC has private documents in there. He will ask if we can keep it on top. The VHC is also reluctant to have any more office keys in circulation).*

d) Any other Training/Equipment requirements? It is probable many on the Committee will wish to go on a Basic Life Support Course. It was agreed that FD would ask PC for a list of this and other training courses available. It was agreed that it would be good to purchase one or more trimmers for our use. DP would be willing to be trained to use one (GW is trained already). FD would also check to see from where portable moth traps could be purchased.

e) Events and Activities.

a. Reports on Events since our last Meeting:

i) Pond Dipping

‘Our pond dipping event, arranged by Frances Dipper, took place on a sunny and windy Saturday afternoon on August 31<sup>st</sup> 2013. FOWM now had 8 pond nets and 6 white trays (stored by Frances, if wanted) which were put to good use. Eleven adults (plus Frances) and 13 children aged two to ten years old came to see what they could find, identify and record in the main field pond. One father

and his two children out picking blackberries who did not know about the event, asked to join in. We set up a table complete with plastic aquarium and plenty of small clear plastic boxes so that everyone could see what we caught. After an initial introduction and safety briefing from Frances the new nets were put to the test (cleaning them up afterwards was interesting!). The pond level was lower than at this time last year and had a thick growth of submerged weed. Amongst the weed was the best place to search as the mud in the pond is very thick and sticky. There was at least one Wellington-full! Several young newts were caught but these were not Great Crested Newts (unlike last year when many of these were found). Other finds included Backswimmers (and Water Boatmen), water beetles, pond skaters, pond snails, beetle larvae, and of course to everyone's delight, a leech! Dragonfly and damselfly larvae from Frances's own pond were also on display (and returned to her pond afterwards). The cows were safely in the other field.'

ii) Moth Trapping and Identification

'On the evening of Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2013 at 8pm, three moth traps were set up in Wort's Meadow and Bourne Wood. Louise Bacon from CPERC brought a mains powered UV trap which was set up on the edge of the field with a cable to Melanie Hale's barn (thank you Melanie). This was left on until the end of the evening at 10pm and then taken home. She also provided a battery powered trap, set up near the far gate between the two fields and left overnight. Phil Clark brought a similar trap which was set up at the far end of Bourne Wood and again left overnight. As many moths as possible were identified (by Louise Bacon) on site as they came to the traps. Thanks to Louise for giving up her Saturday evening for us. The next day at 8am, we collected the two traps left overnight and took them to the Village Hall to photograph and identify whatever was in them. We were able to identify those that Louise had shown us the previous evening, plus several other new species which were found, photographed and our identifications confirmed by e-mail, our photos being sent to Louise. Bacon butties ably cooked by DP made up for the early start! The Sunday event was attended by thirteen people including four children who enjoyed chasing those (sleepy) moths that had escaped. They then helped to release them afterwards. Thirty-five people were recorded as having attended in total (list is with FD).'

b. Future Events:

- i) This Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October at 10 am. A Fungus Foray around both the Meadow and the Wood. To meet at the Car Park.
- ii) Bird Nesting Boxes. Emmaus need dates at which to have these made. It was suggested this should be by mid-December. DP will liaise with Emmaus. (*Update: DP has been in touch with Emmaus; they will prepare the boxes for mid-December and will paint them as well*)
- iii) Consolidating the Log Piles. This should be done when the soil is wet, to enable posts to be driven into the ground, probably by the end of January: a date will be agreed at the next Meeting.

- iv) As we do not know when/if silt will be available from the moat, FD said she would fill them in with soil she has spare from digging soakaways in her garden (*agreed at Fungus foray on the Saturday after the meeting*).
- v) Planting Daffodil Bulbs. GW would look to see what varieties are available and would buy 500 each of wild daffodils and bluebells and plant them towards the end of November or beginning of December if the cost is not too high.
- vi) Litter Clearance. It was agreed that rather than have a fixed date, everyone might do this as and when they walk the areas and spot litter.
- vii) New Events: these would be named and dates fixed at our next Committee Meeting. FD would make a list of possible future events after she had liaised with PC. Other Members of the Committee might also liaise amongst themselves. It was suggested there might be two moth trapping events; a visit to the Tithe Barn and Parish Church with bat detectors; another pond dipping event; a plant exploration trip; and a 'bio-blitz' (to record everything seen within 24 hours - to include all birds and 'bugs'.

f) Website

GB and FD will fix a date to work on this and let the Committee know when this would take place.

g) AOB

- a. Toads. Gary Ellwood had let it be known earlier in the year, that toads were being squashed on the road once more. He suggested a 'toad sign' be erected by the road-side in Cock Fen Lane. This would also draw road-users' attention to possible migrating newts crossing the road which they might do in January.

h) Dates of next Meetings.

These were fixed for: Thursdays in 2014 - 9<sup>th</sup> January, 10<sup>th</sup>

April (*RS checked*), 8<sup>th</sup> May (the AGM), 10<sup>th</sup>

July, and 9<sup>th</sup> October. The Village Hall Lounge would be booked by RH.

The Meeting closed at 9pm.