

Friends of Worts Meadow
Minutes of Meeting
Tuesday 18 October 2011 Landbeach Village Hall

1) Welcome, introductions, apologies & agreeing chairperson for meeting.

Present:

Frances Dipper FD, Melanie Hale MH, Robert Humphrey RH, John Macmillan (County Farms) JM, David Pell DP,
Guy Warren GW, Iain Webb (Wildlife Trusts) IW

Apologies: Dannie Gambell, Ray Gambell, Alan Wyatt, Robert Stripe, Phil Clark

Frances Dipper agreed to chair the meeting.

2) Re-location of fish from the moat

IW and GW reported that the major threat was now gone in that GW had removed the Pike and large Carp that had been present and re-located them. There were, however, a large number of small Carp present in the mud in the moat. There was also Rudd present in the original pond.

It was agreed that we would keep an eye on the position.

IW said that if water levels rise it may be possible to use Electro fishing to catch and re-locate the remaining fish which would be being beneficial to the Great Crested Newts.

FD asked how the fish got into the pond and moat. GW said a fisherman had put them there. MH thought we should publicise what we are trying to achieve and ask that the pond and moat are not stocked with fish.

3) Review of last meetings minutes and matters arising (Action points reviewed)

Item 2

Notice board for wildlife sightings. See Item 4 in these minutes.

Notice board on gate. New notice in place.

Item 3.

Group Constitution. See item 6 in these minutes.

Item 4

Insurance

MH reported that subject to Parish Council guidelines, Health and Safety requirements and a Risk Assessment being carried out, work that we perform in Worts Meadow would be covered under the Public Liability, Employer's Liability and Personal Accidents of the Parish Councils insurance policy. We do need, however, to inform the Parish Council what types of tools and machinery we will be using in order that they can check any work is fully covered.

Action RH check with Phil Clark then advise Parish Council.

Site Management Plan

This has been sent to members.

Item 5

Group training. See item 8 in these minutes.

Item 6.

Events and Activities. See item 9 in these minutes.

Item 7

Additional dog bins.

Second Poo bag dispenser. Carried over to next meeting.

Second dog waste bin. Carried over to next meeting.

Poo bags for use in dispensers. MH thought there would be no problem in the Parish Council paying for these. It was suggested that they should be a biodegradable type.

Item 8

Recording wildlife.

FD said she intends to be more pro-active and will prepare a spreadsheet for recording sightings. She said ultimately that our records could go to the National Biodiversity Network. **ACTION FD**

Records for site held by other bodies. Carried over to next meeting.

Item 9

- a) The Village Hall event was cancelled.
- d) An email was sent and reply received following which a work party removed Ragwort from the worst affected area.
- f) This was dealt with under 'Any other business'.
- g) A new sign has been put up.
- h) Iain Webb addressed this meeting (see item 2 in these minutes)

4 Notice Board for wildlife sightings

Carried forward to next meeting.

5 Adoption of Management Committee pending first AGM

RH said that the Management Committee was defined in paragraph 5 of the draft constitution and that the draft constitution once agreed needed to be signed by three members of the committee.

For the purposes of opening a bank account we need a Treasurer.

It was suggested that we hold a further meeting before the year-end for the purpose of agreeing a voluntary Management Committee to act until the first AGM next May.

ACTION RH

6 Group Constitution

Following proof reading by FD and amendments suggested by Robert Stripe (for both many thanks) the constitution was agreed and signed. FD will scan the document and forward to members by email.

ACTION FD

7 Memorandum of Understanding

This was agreed.

8 Group training/Equipment requirements

GW had attended a strimmer training weekend and was now qualified.

GW asked when a Risk Assessment course was planned as it was relevant that someone in the group was qualified in order to meet our insurance requirements.

Action RH check with Phil Clark.

DP suggested that we should make a list of tools/equipment owned by members that they would be prepared to lend to work parties. **ACTION RH**

9 Events & Activities

GW said he knew someone from the Lt. Downham group who would be prepared to bring a moth trap and bat detector to an event next year.

ACTION RH put on January agenda for date.

JM suggested that as a group we could: -

Coppice shrubs along footpaths in Bourne Wood.

Clear weeds around elm trees planted earlier this year and then put down mulch.

Cut back the bramble from the hedge that was layered a few years ago.

ACTION RH put on agenda for next meeting to set date(s).

10 Any other business

- a) FD said that 30 days before the AGM the Secretary should send to member's details of those standing for election and any proposed changes to the constitution.
- b) A discussion took place on the best way to control the Ragwort present. It was thought that spraying followed by pulling up was the best option. JM stated that for spraying, permission from Natural England would be required. It was agreed this topic would be put on a future agenda.
- c) IW explained that he had cleared brambles from the ditch that leads from the moat to the Cockfen Lane ditch and also pollarded trees around the Bourne Wood pond. This was to let more light get to the water.
- d) IW said that he had found Australian swamp stonecrop in the first new pond and the moat. This is an invasive alien pond plant. The good news is that it was found early and IW will deal with treatment. He handed out leaflets on the subject. IW was asked to let us know when he was doing this work. **ACTION IW**
- e) A discussion took place on the water quality in the original pond and moat. GW thought there was a high nutrient level caused by cattle having unrestricted access to these areas. He proposed that these areas were fenced. JM said they might be able to

fence using posts and barbed wire, however, as this was a Scheduled Ancient Monument site he would need to consult Quinton Carroll the County Council archaeologist. If approved the target would be for the fences to be in place before the cattle return next spring. **ACTION JM**

- f) GW asked if a fence could be put round the Bourne Wood pond to prevent dogs going into the water. JM said that sheep netting would be the best option. **ACTION JM**
- g) DP said that in view of the low water level in the moat could some of the mud be dredged out. JM said again this was something that he would need to consult the County Council archaeologist about. Contractors would be needed for this work but it may be possible to include in a grant application. **ACTION JM**
- h) JM said that a contractor may carry out selective thinning of the trees in Bourne Wood but again this would be subject to a successful grant application.

11 Dates for 2012 meetings

RH said that as the Village Hall was now booked every Monday he suggested that we meet on Thursday evenings in future. There were no objections to this. RH said he would make bookings for January, April, July and October 2012 plus the AGM in May and would notify members of the dates.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm