Friends of Worts Meadow
Minutes of Committee Meeting
Thursday 14 January 2016

1. Welcome, introductions & apologies.
Present: Frances Dipper (Chairman), David Pell (Treasurer), Robert Humphrey (Secretary), Dannie Gambell, Guy Warren, Robert Stripe, Robert Timmins (County Farms), Anna Hicks (County Farms), Larry Bly, Phil Clark (Cambridgeshire County Council Greenspaces Officer), Anna Bilton, Graeme Bilton.
Apologies: Ray Gambell, Richard Taylor.

Frances opened the meeting by welcoming Anna Hicks and Robert Timmins to their first meeting with us and drawing attention to the fire exits.

2. Agreeing minutes of previous meeting (15 October 2015) as circulated.
The minutes were agreed.

3. Matters arising where not covered elsewhere in the agenda.
a. Dog waste posters. PC reported that these were on order and should be delivered in about 3 weeks.
b. Dredging moat. PC reported that there was some question about what can be done within the new Higher Level Stewardship scheme. AH to see PC with a copy of the agreement and if it looks as if work dredging the pond is permitted he will apply for grants. **Action AH & PC**

4. Management issues:
a. Topping vegetation in meadows. PC reported that he needs to consult with County Farms about what is allowed under the Stewardship scheme. Ideally the vegetation should be topped 3 or 4 weeks before the cattle are put out and again once they have left in the autumn.
RH pointed out that last year the cattle were grazed into November by which time the ground was too wet to take any equipment.
The meeting appreciated that it was a long way for the tenant farmer to bring his equipment to top the vegetation and therefore FD said she would make enquiries to see if a local farmer could undertake the work and if so how much it would cost. **Action PC then if topping is permitted, FD**

b. Additional elm saplings. PC reported that he had no luck in sourcing any for us.
GW said that 2 out of 8 saplings previously planted now had Dutch elm disease.

c. Wood chippings for pathways. RH reported that another free load had been delivered in November thanks to Ged Hinkins and these had been spread on the pathways by himself and Steve Anderson. There were still muddy footpaths and more chippings were needed. RH asked whether the group would purchase another load (if the tree surgeon could not donate a load) and if so whether this could be left outside the gate to avoid the vehicle getting bogged down inside. The meeting agreed with both proposals. **Action RH**

d. Depth of new pond. The situation was explained to RT in that the new pond organised and funded by County Farms was not deep enough and dried out in the summer. RT said he would investigate. **Action RT**

5. Correspondence.
None received.

6. Treasurer's report.
DP handed out a copy showing our current financial position with £1604.73 in the bank. FD said that we still had sufficient funds and did not need to think about fund raising yet.

7. Group training/equipment.
a. Brushcutter & First Aid courses.
PC said that there had been a serious accident at the Isleham site involving a pedestrian mower. Following this he was hoping to obtain funds to run courses in Brushcutter, First Aid and Pedestrian Mowers. These maybe before the end of this financial year in March.
There was a discussion about our insurance whilst undertaking management work and RH said he needed to tell the Parish Clerk of all events that required cover under the Parish Councils policy.
DP said he was interested in Brushcutter and First Aid courses and FD in First Aid.
PC to email RH with dates in due course with volunteer names to be passed back to PC.
A**ction PC & RH**

b. Any requirements.
None.

8. Events & Activities.
a. Report on events since our last meeting.
Cleaning out nest boxes.
RH reported that on 24 November all the nest boxes in Bourne Wood were checked and cleaned out by himself, GW, FD & DP. No nesting material was in any of the 5 open fronted boxes but of the 11 tit boxes there were 9 nests.
A number of the boxes were damaged by woodpeckers and of these GW has since repaired 4, however since then all the remaining tit boxes have been damaged. GW to fix a date with RH, FD & DP for these to be taken down, repaired and put back up before the breeding season. **Action GW**

b. Future events.
The following dates were fixed:-
1 April Newt walk 20.30 led by FD *
15 April Management walk 19.00 led by PC
22 May Dawn chorus walk 04.30 led by PC followed by breakfast. *
3 September Pond dipping 14.30 led by FD *
* Public events, RH to advertise & notify Parish Council for insurance. **Action RH**
The following are still in the planning stage:
Bat walk. PC to check with Iain Webb if he can lead this again on a convenient date. **Action PC**
Moth trapping and identification. FD to check if Peter Holt can lead this again on 2/3 July. **Action FD**
Fungus foray. PC to see if Lucy Evans can lead this on a convenient date. **Action PC**
Botanical survey. PC to put feelers out to see if an expert can come along. **Action PC**
RT suggested we think about running a photography course.

9. Bird feeding stations, update and any requirements.
GW reported that he was only putting out food in mesh feeders once a week and not daily as last winter. FD asked him to let us know if he ever needed help with this.

10. Any other business.

- FD asked to be informed if any current committee members wished to step down at the next AGM.
- RH said that two items had been reported to County Farms still needed attention.
  Firstly the central kissing gate between the two meadows was broken.
  Secondly the water trough in the second meadow, adjacent to Bourne Wood, was overflowing leading to a waste of water but also making entrance to Bourne Wood on that side unusable.
  GW said the overflow had been fixed temporarily with a stick but it needed a new ball-cock.
  RT asked for an email report to be sent to him. **Action RH**
- FD said she was continuing to log records from the book on the gate and could send an excel spreadsheet to anyone interested. PC asked for a copy. **Action FD**

11. Volunteer to provide refreshments at the next meeting.

AB and GB said they would do this. **Action AB & GB**

12. Date of next meeting.

This will take place on Thursday 7 April.