

Friends of Horton Country Park

Minutes 7th February 2012

Present: Terry Summerfield, Ian Tilbury, Alan Cheshire, Anne Cheshire, Brendan Kilby, Sarah Clift.

1. Springtime talk

It has been decided to have a talk to try and revitalise the Friends of HCP and encourage new members. It is to be held on **1st May 2012**. BK has drafted a newsletter and will aim to circulate it ready to advertise the talk. **ACTION- Newsletter to be distributed 2-3 weeks before the talk, BK to complete.**

Posters will be produced to go up around the park and will ask people to email/phone to let us know if they are interested in coming along so we get an idea of numbers. It was suggested that flyers could also be produced and distributed around the developments. **ACTION- SC to bring draft posters/flyers to AGM.**

BK is also thinking about contacting Radio Jackie to advertise further afield.

2. Update to display in the Information Centre

The display in the information centre is very out of date. SC made some suggestions to update it, which were agreed. The idea is to keep it simple and similar in format to the membership leaflet

- Who are the Friends
- Activities people can get involved in
- How to join. **ACTION – SC to update.**

3. Matters Arising from meeting held 6th Dec 2011

BK will keep up to date with developments to the Children's Farm. The new lease has been taken over and Stewart and Brendan Smith (EEBC's legal and estates officer) are due to have walk around to check progress.

ACTION – SC to chase up the repair of the little footbridge near meadow pond.

It was decided to buy some new trees from Brogdale and to improve their chances of establishment, members agreed to look after them for a couple of years before planting out in to the orchard. Once they are ready to be planted in the orchard, better guards will be used that won't completely enclose the trees. **ACTION – BK to buy trees.**

It was agreed that lack of presence on the site has had a detrimental effect and some visitors are not respecting the site or other users for example; large scale events are being held without the Council's knowledge and many dogs are not being kept under control well enough. BK mentioned that whilst out walking with his Friends of HCP badge on, it had the effect of making a dog walker call her dog and put it on a lead. It was discussed that perhaps a role the Friends could take on is whilst out walking could be to educate visitors politely! Of course, only if they felt confident to do so. **ACTION – SC to investigate the cost of fleeces/jumpers on which the**

Friends logo could be embroidered to make members more identifiable. Just the effect of walking around with a uniform and not necessarily talking to anyone, could still have the effect of moderating someone's behaviour.

4. Woodland Management

BK would like to see more informative notices but with less text and more pictures. He is concerned that people will not take the time to read text heavy ones.

The thinning of Hollymore Grove has been completed and it is planned to put up deer fencing around the cleared area. BK was concerned that there would be too much fencing which SC will pass on to Stewart.

The clearance of a section of Pond Wood is nearly complete and will then be planted up with hazel to try and restore the coppice woodland.

5. Orchard Management

Jamie Simpson will be asked to assess the trees this spring/summer with a view to start restorative pruning in September. As mentioned earlier BK will be buying new trees from Brogdale which the Friends will look after before planting out in to the orchard.

6. Grassland Management

No news to report but all members were please with last summer's work and commented on how good the grassland was looking.

7. Hedgerow Management

The relaying of the hedge opposite Four Acre wood was started and will carry on next winter. It was a combination of work carried out by The Countryside Team Volunteers and a training day organised for the apprentices who have been working with the Lower Mole Project and the other Surrey volunteer projects.

8. Pond Management

We are looking in to getting costs for fencing off Field Pond and repairing the dipping platform, with a view to facilitating volunteer students from NESCOL to carry out the project. **ACTION – SC to contact maintenance ranger and follow up with NESCOL.**

9. Site Interpretation

Signs are to go up in suitable locations particularly designed to try and encourage more responsible dog walking. The impact of dogs on eroding the bank of Field Pond and trampling bluebells in Pond Wood is quite obvious now and we need to start addressing the issue.

It was suggested that the Friends woodpecker logo should go on the signs. **ACTION SC to amend site notices.** It was asked if one could go up near the entrance in from Clarendon Park near the playground, as someone is always letting their Alsatian run loose around here. **ACTION – SC to organise.**

10. West Park Development news

New plans have been submitted taking in to account the concerns to the trees along the boundary. BK wants Stewart to check on the ground what has been happening is in line with those plans. **ACTION – SC to inform Stewart.**

BK is still concerned over the railings and the fact that there is still a tree fallen across FP26.

ACTION – SC to inform the tree officer.

11. Children's Farm development news

See matters arising.

12. Species sightings

BK mentioned that Bullfinches had been seen by the diagonal track alongside the holding field. A and AC have noticed an increase in parakeets and have seen a wren and a robin in their garden regularly.

13. Actions from the minutes written by Stewart

BK will talk to /write to the Golf Club about our concerns over the amount of litter which seems to be coming in to the Country Park from the greens.

Michael Sinclair (Ranger) should be asked if he or another Ranger could attend the meetings on a regular basis. **ACTION – SC to invite Rangers.**

14. Any other business

SC asked if anyone would be interested in attending the Herald of Spring, to which there was not much interest.

ACTION- BK to contact TS re payment for the Friends display banner.

15. Date of next meetings

Tues April 3rd – AGM

**Please contact Sarah (sclift@epsom-ewell.gov.uk 01372 745224)
if you would like to put forward anyone/yourself for any of the roles within the Friends of
Horton Country Park Committee. We are still looking for a secretary!! Thank you.**

Tues June 12th (as 5th is the jubilee bank holiday)