



# Friends of Horton Country Park

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## Minutes

For the meeting held on the 02/02/2010

### **Present**

Sarah Clift (Countryside Officer), Anne Cheshire, Alan Cheshire, Laurence Coley, Pat Lowe (Minutes), Robert Murray and Monika Roth, Terry Summerfield (Treasurer), Ian Tilbury.

### **Apologies**

Brendan Kilby (Chair), Rosemary and Ray Eyres, Stewart Cocker.

### **Matters arising**

#### **Woodland**

Rob Stringer is coppicing in Butcher's Grove. Sarah will remind him that it must be finished by end of Feb when the nesting season begins.

Jamie Simpson is interested in coppicing Sherwood Grove next winter. He has a firewood business so would also be interested in doing clearing in Hendon Grove. He could also be involved in the future for example clearing larger trees. As part of the Management Plan, The Countryside Team would like to see the Western boundary of the park as a complete area of coppiced woodland, linking the ancient woodlands of Butchers' Grove, 4 Acre Wood and Pond Wood. This would involve clearing and planting to give oaks an understorey of hazel.

#### **Streams**

There is a task on 24,25,31st March and 1<sup>st</sup> of April to do more work on stream bank management by the Balance Pond in the Orchard, where evidence of water-voles has been seen. Ian Tilbury recommended clearing one side of a stream for water-voles but managing the other side for other wild-life who might be deprived of their habitat in the total clearance for the water-voles.

#### **Ponds**

Sarah will talk to Stewart about a Grant Application for a Pond Project. But, as she will be on Maternity leave and there is a lot of work involved in writing up an application, that may have to be postponed until she gets back

#### **Hedgerows**

There is a Hedge-laying course in the Country Park on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2010, along the path from the Children's Farm crossroads. The Team's mid-week task for February is hedge-laying. The Friends Day for this is 21<sup>st</sup> Feb. Meet at the Farmhouse at 10 a.m.

## **Maintenance**

The Moles have agreed that we can use the Workshop for our April 18<sup>th</sup> task to make signs. Sarah asked if Alan and Ray would be on hand as the Router experts. Bob Eberhard from the Epsom Cycle group, has volunteered to do an audit of existing signs and suggest others which may be needed. We also hope to make signs for the western boundary footpath.

## **Forum**

The Forum is to be held on 18<sup>th</sup> February in the New Hall at 7.30 p.m. Brendan has written to Equus, The Golf Club, Children's Farm and David Lloyd Centre and invited them and the Police, Rangers, Lower Moles and Councillors to take part. He will follow up those who have not yet replied, particularly the Centres as it is important they are there. Pat was asked to take minutes.

## **Letter to Chief Executive**

Brendan has spoken to Frances Rutter and had hoped to report back to the meeting on what was said but was unable to make the meeting due to work deadlines.

## **Information Centre**

Tony Foxwell from the Council's Property Services has seen the floor and arranged for a contractor to repair it, probably during February. Sarah has put up OPEN and CLOSED signs because the door cannot be left open in bad weather.

## **Volunteers**

Sarah told Terry that we are owed £39 from the Council for Volunteer hours in the period 2008 -2009, with a further amount due for year 2009 -2010 still to be worked out. Terry said we needed to think about what to spend our money on. Brendan had already suggested Insurance and tools for carrying out independent tasks. Laurence asked where we could store any tools. Sarah said there was room in the tool store at the Farmhouse. We would also need to appoint someone who agreed to lead such tasks.

Lindsay will lead the Friends' Tasks on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of every second month during Sarah's absence.

Lindsay's mobile no. is 07736698860.

Stewart's is 07803831187.

Countryside Team's Office no. is 01372 745 224

## **Tasks**

Coppicing on 20<sup>th</sup> December went well and was all done, although it was very cold. They had also had to repair some of the deer fencing which had been burned by vandals! Two big trees have been felled and one more is to come down this quarter as there is a limit on how much can be felled in each quarter year.

## **Dates**

The dates for Friends Tasks are as follows:

Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> February	Hedge-laying
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> April	Workshop Day
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> June	Recruitment or Litter pick
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> August	Meadow management
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> October	Water voles
Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> December	Coppicing

The Herald of Spring festival at Bourne Hall is on 6-7<sup>th</sup> March.

## **A.O.B.**

Clarendon Park's Residents Association have donated £40, part of the donations from their Pimms tent at their Summer Picnic, to the Friends. This replaces the donation from the RA funds made in some previous years, as it was felt that this was a way of ensuring that members of the RA had more choice in what they gave.

Ian told us to watch out for a buzzard which has been seen near the Common and may be nesting at Rushett Farm, so could come over the Park.

Sarah has received the month-by-month records of birds in the Park, which a bird-watcher (Timothy Tompkins) had promised to provide. They include counts as well as species and will be very helpful in monitoring.

Terry reported that motor-bikes/quad bikes have been in the Park again. Terry has seen tracks at the Bridle Path entrance and Laurence has seen them on the track from Pond Wood to the Children's Farm.

A Jack Russell has been reported by several people as running loose in the Golf Club area. No-one knows who it belongs to. Ian had seen it but been unable to get near it.

Brendan had asked that Friends be reminded that it is 3 years since the last Election of Officers so would people be thinking about their roles ready for the AGM on 6<sup>th</sup> April.

**The AGM and combined next meeting of the Friends will be on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010 at 7.30 in the Farmhouse meeting room.**

Members are asked to use the Car Park and not block the area in front of the Rangers' Office.