



Friends of Horton Country Park

Minutes

For the meeting held on the 02/10/2007

Present:

Brendan Kilby (Chair), Laurence Coley (Membership Secretary), Bill Facer, Sarah Hallums, Pat Lowe (Minutes Sec.), Pam Pearcey, Terry Summerfield (Treasurer), Ian Tilbury.

Apologies:

Anne and Alan Cheshire, Rosemary and Ray Eyres, Mo Pearcey.

Matters Arising:

Information Centre

There is a large crack in the structure which is noticeably widening. Brendan believes that this is caused by the roots of the large Turkey Oak. He has asked Stewart if this can be felled. If it is, The Friends will pay for a replacement with a native British species. The council has paid for the materials used in the refurbishing of the Centre.

Deer fencing

There was a hole in the fencing but this has been repaired by Nick. There was no damage to the new growth. Members were asked to keep an eye on it when passing and to report any gaps to Sarah.

Orienteering Posts

All six posts have now been placed.

Litter and Vandalism

Brendan expressed concern about the increasing amount of litter on the periphery of the Park. He had noticed disposable barbecues, beer cans, etc. He has also noticed vandalism including spray painting on paths and benches. He feels this is in some part due to a "lack of presence." If Rangers are patrolling then litter should be being cleared and damage reported. He has also had to talk to youngsters on motorised bikes who have been racing on the tracks, on more than one occasion. Sarah will look into this. She told us that unfortunately two Rangers are leaving in November. We hope they can be replaced quickly.

Fishing is still a problem at the Golf Club pond. We would like to see the Golf Club staff making more of an effort to stop this.

Paths

Brendan has notified the Ramblers Association that the new footpath linking Pond Wood and the Southern boundary footpath 26 is now completely open. He hopes it will be used for organised walks such as the Health Walks. He asked members to walk the path to trample the ground and keep it clear. Laurence remarked that he had done but it is very muddy.

Foot and Mouth

This has caused a lot of extra work for the team. The cattle on the common have to be checked twice daily, mats at entrances have to be disinfected and the cattle have to be taken feed every day while they cannot be moved. This means that the team have to be spending more of their time at the common at present.

Haymaking

This has been completed now in spite of the bad weather.

Funding

Sarah told us that they have put in a Capital Bid (for money from the Council) for managing the newer woods, i.e. those planted since 1970 such as Sherwood Grove and Hollymoor Grove, and for repairing tracks. The grounds are for Health and Safety and Improving and Maintaining Bio-diversity.

Display

Sarah is very pleased that the Team have a new, improved display about the Country Park which they can take to shows etc. This has been paid for out of the Council's Publicity budget.

Trees

A large oak tree in the Events field is unfortunately now completely dead, it has been ailing for some time. Jeremy wants to cut off some of the branches but leave the trunk and others in the hope that at some time in the future it can be turned into a feature by a chain-saw sculptor.

Tasks

Sarah said that before Christmas most of the Team's tasks would be Hogsmill based. The Hedge-laying in the country Park will now take place after Christmas. She will confirm Tasks for January onwards at the next meeting.

Dates

Meet at Rangers office 10 a.m. or at site.

Sunday 14 Oct	Clear vegetation on West Park path at bottom, left off Footpath 2
17/18 Oct (midweek)	Thinning out Godbolds Copse
Sunday 18 Nov	Tree planting at the Bat Roost. Meet as above.
11/12/13 Dec (midweek)	Coppicing at Butchers Grove
Sunday 16 Dec	Coppicing with the Moles at Four Acre Wood.
Sunday 20 Jan	Water vole stream clearing jointly with Ecovoies and Moles(to be confirmed)

A.O.B.

Laurence reported the joining of a new member.

Terry has noticed that one of the gates at the Colliers Close Entrance is missing. Sarah will look into it.

Bill Facer told us that due to ill-health he is no longer able to be as active for the Friends as in the past, but he will remain a member. Brendan thanked him for all his help and support over the years, which all members seconded, and promised that we would keep in touch.

Next Meeting

Tuesday 4th December at 7.30 in the New Hall.

Members are asked not to use the Rangers Car Park for meetings. Please use the public Car Park and Sarah promises to make sure no-one is locked in.