



Friends of Horton Country Park

Minutes **For the Annual General Meeting and meeting held on the 05/06/2007**

Present:

Brendan Kilby (Chair), Anne and Alan Cheshire, Laurence Coley (Membership Secretary), Rosemary and Ray Eyres, Bill Facer, Tony Gibbs, Pat Lowe (Minutes Sec.), Terry Summerfield (Treasurer).

Apologies:

Sarah Hallums, Brenda Hammond-Gibbs, Ian Tilbury.

Matters Arising:

Runners

Lawrence had checked that the David Lloyd centre had been given permission to use the Country park for an organised run. Epsom and Ewell Council had been informed. It was pointed out that any moneys paid for the use of the park would go into the Council's general funds and that a way should be found to have that money paid to the Country park direct to contribute to maintenance of the tracks used.

Orienteering Posts

The posts were made by the Friends and will be put in by the Countryside team and the Orienteering Club will be invoiced for the costs.

Deer fencing

This was put up with the Lower Moles in a day and a half. Six to eight foot posts interspersed with withies were erected and a mesh fence attached around a coppiced area about the size of half a football pitch, in Butchers Grove. An unfenced area was left as a control sample. If the fencing is effective we should have straight growth, suitable for making fencing, in 2 to 3 years.

Newsletter

The newsletters have been sent out. Anyone who has not paid their membership fee by the next meeting will no longer be a member. This should then give us a definitive number for membership. Thanks to Annette for getting the newsletters printed quickly. Some members were not sent newsletters because they had elected to have them by e-mail.

Information Centre

Thanks to Alan for doing a fantastic paint job on the Information Centre. He has spent a lot of time on it and it looks great. He will finish the back on his return from holiday. An information board is to be put over the blank window on the front of the second room. This will make the Centre more visible from the notice board in the park.

It will have a blackboard for up-dating notices. The aerial photograph of the park is now ready to be displayed. Thanks were expressed to Ray for his work on the log. The inside of the second room will hopefully be finished in the June task.

Ragwort

Brendan has written to the equestrian Centres who use the park to ask for volunteers to help with the Ragwort pulling task. They have complained in the past about there being too much ragwort in the park so they should be prepared to help us reduce it in those areas where it could be a danger to horses.

Rangers

The Countryside and Community Development Team now come under the Council's Planning Department. Their new title is simply The Countryside team. They will be based at the Town Hall for 6 months while the new boss is carrying out a review of the service – their roles, activities etc. The Rangers will be in the Office in the Park as usual.

Suspicious characters

There have been reports of a number of occasions when a man (once on a bike) has followed walkers in the park but made off when other people approached. The police have been made aware. Members should report any suspicious behaviour to the police.

Fishing

This is still a problem. It was pointed out that the lack of Ranger presence is a contributing factor. When the projected review is carried out Brendan will point out the need for a visible presence. The Golf Club has offered to pay for a warden but for some reason this has not even been acknowledged or followed up by the Council.

Benches

Six new benches for the park are being made by the lower Mole Volunteers. Three will be paid for from the Council's maintenance budget. Brendan asked for suggested sites. A replacement for the one at Meadow pond and one on the track past the Bat Roost were mentioned. Other suggestions can be sent to Brendan or posted on the web-site.

Tracks

The edges of tracks have been cut back to improve security of walkers and hedges trimmed with "vistas" cut in places to improve views.

Grazing

There will be discussions soon with Mr Woodall, the local farmer about grazing cattle again on the some of the meadows in the Park.

Emergency Services Map

Sarah is working on a map for the Emergency Services. It will show access points and routes they can take should someone be taken ill in the park, etc.

Entomology

Sarah has been out around the park with Ian Menzies. They found caterpillars of the White letter hairstreak butterfly in elm trees near Butchers Grove. These butterflies have been quite rare recently. Tony said they are hard to see because they are high up in the trees. Bill had also brought along samples of the Harlequin Ladybird and its larvae for members to see following the discussion at the previous meeting. These eat other ladybirds and are spreading rapidly.

Birds

A cuckoo has been heard in the park.

A Little Owl has been seen near pond Wood.

Whitethroats have been seen on the track past the Events Field.

A.O.B.

- Terry pointed out that the path in the Orchard near the Apple picnic seat is flooded, probably because the culvert for the stream from the Orchard Pond, which goes under the main track at that point, is blocked.
- Bill Facer suggested that the fish need to be cleared again from Meadow Pond to discourage fishing.
- Anne asked if we were going to have a rota for manning the Information Centre. Brendan is going to organise the selling of bottled water. We need to liaise with the Rangers about unlocking.
- Via Tony, Brenda Hammond-Gibbs offered 6 crab-apple seedlings for planting in the park.

Tasks

Sat 9 th June	Information Centre, finishing inside.
19/20/21 st June	Lower Mole Workshop, Friends can join them for their tasks.
Sun 1 st July	Ragwort pulling followed by a barbecue for volunteers; bring your own food and drink.

There may need to be some changes in the way tasks are organised in the future so planning of future dates was left to the next meeting, by which time Sarah will have a clearer idea of how we can fit in our volunteer tasks with the Team's planning.

Next Meeting

Tuesday 7th August 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.