



Friends of Horton Country Park

Minutes

For the meeting held on the 05/08/2008

Present

Anne Cheshire, Alan Cheshire, Kate Cochrane, Valerie English, Rosemary Eyres, Ray Eyres, Bill Facer, Tony Gibbs, Brenda Hammond-Gibbs, Sarah Hallums (Countryside Officer) in Chair, Pat Lowe (Minutes Secretary), Ian Tilbury, Eileen Tomlin, Daniel Tomlin.

Apologies

Brendan Kilby (Chair).

Sarah opened by welcoming back Bill Facer and later Eileen and Dan Tomlin.

Matters arising from previous minutes

Autumn Fair 2009

Planning is under way for the Autumn Fair to be held in the Park on 27th September 2009. Letters to possible stall holders have been done and will be sent out this week. Anne will get the address of Surrey Gardens Trust. Brendan is to contact Roland of "Head's Fine Foods" regarding a Barbecue stall so we will hold back on contacting Eve's Butchers about this. Chappel Foods, who make chutneys etc. will be invited, not Deerview Products. Ray agreed to contact the local Scout group also about a Barbecue. Ray and Rosemary said Bourne Hall were interested in having a stall, they will contact Paul, the Manager about it.

Bill Facer suggested putting an article about the Country Park and the Friends in "Chessington Chat" as one can walk through from Chessington Woodlands into the Country Park. He will give Sarah the address to send it.

Sarah was asked what the netting in Butchers Grove was for and explained about the Deer Fencing. Ray and Rosemary said there was a hole in the fencing in 4 Acre Wood. Sarah asked members to report any holes to the Rangers as soon as possible after seeing them.

Task List

Sarah gave out copies of the Team's Task list for those who had not downloaded it from the internet.

Newsletter

Sarah appealed for articles for the next Newsletter. Tony agreed to write about the birds in the Park. Pat agreed to write about the Flora walk on 26th June.

Membership Drive

Members were reminded about the Recruitment Day on Sunday 10th August. Brendan and Laurence will be there.

New Business

Epsom Common Living Woodlands Day

This had been very successful. Brendan and Laurence had been there with a stall about the Friends and had signed up some new members.

Information Centre

Brendan and Stuart have asked Sarah to say an Official “Thank You” for all the marvellous work Friends have done on the Information Centre.

Coppicing

Rob Stringer has given to the Countryside Team his proposal of a 14 year plan for coppicing woodland in the Park. He will need paying to begin with until there is enough material being produced to make the coppicing profitable for him. He will need to take on help and this may encourage other coppicers to join in. The finer details still need to be sorted out. Tony asked about Great Wood. Sarah said it needs thinning but reassured him that it would not affect the boundary trees holding the Heronry. The undergrowth had been damaged in the past by either cattle or pigs and so needs work on it, which will be done before January when the herons start nesting.

Tony and Terry Summerfield will count the herons and send copies of their records to Sarah in the future.

Meadow management

The Countryside Team and volunteers have been strimming grass and clearing scrub and thatch away to make sure they remain as meadows and make it easier for wild flowers to grow. They are working one area at a time and hope to get round all the meadows in rotation over a 4 year period as the rougher grassland produced in this way is good for birds and invertebrates. It is too much for 2 people to do without help.

Mr Anderson of Equus has organised a farmer to be cutting hay in the meadows when the weather improves.

Brenda asked if members could have a map of the Country park with fields and paths labelled clearly so that we can consult it at meetings and know where Sarah is referring to. Sarah will e-mail copies of the existing map to Brenda and other members who do not already have one. She will also try to get a clearer one made.

Fishing

The Ranger Service with the Environment Agency and police have been trying to catch night fishers at the ponds. There has been one “Crafty Carp” night already and another is planned shortly.

Funding

The Countryside Team are meeting next week with representatives from The Forestry Commission and Natural England about putting some of our woodlands into the Woodlands Grant Scheme, to try to get some funding, possibly to help towards paying Rob Stringer for coppicing.

Dates for Tasks

Sun 21st Sept. Haymaking, 10am-4pm (“Watch out for Harvest mice,” says Tony)

Sun 19th Oct Cut back trees along stream in Pond Wood to let in more light.

Sun 16th Nov Plant hazel shoots in 4 Acre Wood to fill coppiced gaps.

Sun 21st Dec Coppicing in Butchers Grove and barbecue

9/10/11 Dec Lower Mole Volunteers will be coppicing there and on

16/17/18 Dec

A.O.B

Members gave Congratulations and Good Wishes to Sarah for her marriage on 16th October 2008. She will then be Sarah Clift.

Tony Gibbs told us about the British Trust for Ornithology and his work in counting birds for their new Bird Atlas, one of which is produced every 10 to 20 years.

Next Meeting 7th October in the New Hall at 7.30p.m.

Members are asked not to park outside the hall but to use the public car park. Sarah will make sure we are not locked in!