



Friends of Horton Country Park

Minutes

For the meeting held on the 06/10/2009

Present: Bob Murray, Monika Roth, Mo Pearcey, Pam Pearcey, Anne Cheshire, Alan Cheshire, Ray Eyres, Brenda Hammond-Gibbs, Ian Tilbury, Eileen Tomlin.

Apologies: Brendan Kilby, Rosemary Eyres, Tony Gibbs, Kate Cochrane, Valerie English.

Autumn Fair

All agreed the Autumn Fair went very well. £355 pounds was raised from the raffle which was an increase on last year. (At time of writing Terry has informed Sarah that we raised: £39-80 from face-painting £11-19 from cans £33 from 11 new members and a £3 donation was given. Plus a donation of £100 was given by the Equestrian Centre to the Friends as they were not able to raise any money on the day through the pony rides. Total raised on the day = £542.09)

It was suggested that next time we just give one raffle ticket for £1 as writing all the addresses on the backs of all the strips of tickets was very time consuming. More food was needed as well as unfortunately the hog roast ran out.

We have not heard if any donations were given by the Hog Roast organisers.

Woodland

We have been contacted by a contractor who is interested in thinning out our plantations for firewood. A site visit has been organised and Sarah will give feedback at the next meeting.

Rob Stringer will be coppicing an area of Butcher's Grove again this winter starting during November. It will be adjacent to the path leading in from Collier Close.

The volunteers (FoHCP, Countryside Team mid-week vols and the Lower Mole Countryside Management project) will be coppicing Four Acre wood this year. The area directly behind the first area to be coppiced will be tackled, along the boundary of HCP and the farm.

Streams

The Friends will be clearing vegetation along the stream between Field Pond and Pond Wood to improve the habitat for water voles. This will take place on Sunday 18th October.

WS Atkins are also going to be helping to clear a section of stream leading from the Orchard towards Meadow Pond. They will be sending 12 members of staff to join the Countryside Team and their volunteers on Wednesday 4th November.

Meadows

The Countryside Team and volunteers have started to cut some of the meadows in HCP rotationally. This means we try and cut an area of a meadow, perhaps a third or quarter of it, and leave the rest. The next year a different portion will be cut and so on until after 3-5 yrs, all of the meadow will have been cut.

This is to improve the meadows for their invertebrate interest. By leaving large sections un-cut, the invertebrates have plenty of room to move to from the cut area.

Doing this with brushcutters and volunteers has been successful but relatively slow going. Luckily our colleagues at Elmbridge Borough Council have agreed to hire out a member of their team with one of their tractors and flail to cut and clear some of the larger areas in the larger meadows. This will be taking place at the end of October.

Ponds

A SITA grant is available at the moment to improve ponds which Sarah is going to look in to. Sarah will feedback at the next meeting.

Hedgerows

Again, the Lower Mole Countryside Trust will be organising a Hedge Laying course in January/February 2010. This will carry on along the hedge which the Friends and the mid-week vols have started, near the Children's Farm footpath. Our volunteers will be carrying on with this hedge as well so hopefully with our efforts combined with those taking part on the course, we should be able to complete this section of hedgerow.

Orchard

Unfortunately the repairs to the Orchard trees have not lasted as the tree guards have been taken again. If we plant more trees, it has been suggested to use three stakes to surround the tree to protect them from deer rubbing rather than using the guards, which seem to be desirable. It could be possible to paint the stakes with anti-climb paint to dissuade anyone

vandalising them again as this paint rubs off on your hands. Sarah will ask Sue (Graffiti team coordinator) about this paint.

Tasks

Dates for you diaries:

- **Sunday 18th October** – Stream Management for water voles – Meet at the information centre at 10 am.
- Wed and Thurs 9th, 10th December – Coppicing in Four Acre Wood – Meet at the information centre at 10 am
- Wed and Thurs 16th and 17th December – Coppicing in Four Acre Wood – Meet at the information centre at 10 am
- **Sunday 20th December** – Coppicing in Four Acre Wood and Christmas BBQ - Meet at the information centre at 10 am

All Friends of Horton Country Park tasks will take place on the 3rd Sunday of every other month, so dates for 2010 are:

February 21st

April 18th

June 20th

August 15th

October 17th

December 19th

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 1st Dec 2009 7.30 pm in the Farmhouse meeting room.

Meetings are always the first Tuesday of every other month so dates for 2010 are:

February 2nd

April 6th

June 1st

August 3rd

October 5th

December 7th

Please fill up your 2010 diaries now!!