



Friends of Horton Country Park

Minutes

For the meeting held on the 07/08/2007

Present:

Brendan Kilby (Chair), Shirley Baxter, Anne and Alan Cheshire, Laurence Coley (Membership Secretary), Bill Facer, Tony Gibbs, Sarah Hallums, Brenda Hammond-Gibbs, Anne Hill, Pat Lowe (Minutes Sec.), Mo Pearcey, Pam Pearcey, Terry Summerfield (Treasurer), Ian Tilbury, Eileen Tomlin.

Apologies:

Rosemary and Ray Eyres, Peter Tomlin.

Matters Arising:

Benches

The new benches have been put in, one on the path near the Bat Roost.

Orienteering Posts

Three posts have been placed and three more are waiting to be put in.

Grazing

This has yet not been discussed with the farmer, because of difficulties in organising a meeting.

Tracks

The edges of tracks have been cut back to improve security of walkers but the “vistas” mentioned at the last meeting have not been cut in the hedges. Members pointed out that the existing gaps, which gave views across the park, have grown over.

Information Centre

Thanks to Alan and Ray for carrying on with the good work. Ray is going to mount the aerial photograph. Brendan explained that the poor weather had made sales of bottled water unnecessary, as was a rota for manning the Centre at weekends until the weather improved.

Deer fencing

This is still intact and “everything seems to be growing nicely.”

Ragwort Pulling

This task did not take place because of bad weather/poor turn-out. This will not be attempted as a task again as “Members had voted with their feet.” Brendan had approached the Equestrian Centres to ask for volunteers as they had asked for the Ragwort to be removed, but no-one showed any interest in helping.

Tony was pleased that this meant more habitats for the Cinnabar Moth. He noted that few of the caterpillars had been seen this year.

Further Issues

Paths

A fence at the Southern boundary of the Park has been moved back so that we now have a clear pathway. Brendan asked members to walk the path from Pond Wood to Footpath 26 to trample the path and keep it clear.

Footpath 26 is in a poor state, railings at the edge of the hospital site are down which could be dangerous, there is a lot of litter from the hospital site and mud from recent bad weather. Fallen trees have been cut up. It is a Public Footpath and needs tidying up. Sarah told us she is on a management Course and is putting in a Capital bid for Funding in September for upgrading tracks in the Park and on the Common. If successful she will concentrate on Footpath 26.

Terry asked if the Developers of the West Park site should be looking after the fencing. Sarah replied that it had not yet reached the stage where Developers were on site. Stewart is involved in meetings about West Park regarding the green space on the border with the Country Park.

Tents

Laurence was concerned that there had been tents by Meadow pond over the previous weekend.

New Entrances

The resident of Primrose Cottage is not happy with the new arrangements.

Bill mentioned that the gate from the Events field was not being kept locked. He had seen lads on quad bikes in the events field. Sarah said she would follow this up and lock the gate herself if necessary.

Signs on the Main road for the Children's Farm were confusing. We had even had a coach driver trying to get to the Farm through the Country Park. Sarah will contact Surrey County Council to try to get them improved.

Haymaking

This has been delayed by the bad weather. It has now started on Meadow Pond Field but may be slow until the weather improves.

Foot and Mouth Disease

The Rangers are following guidance from DEFRA. We are not in the surveillance zone so will remain open unless they say otherwise because we cannot close off Public Footpaths without their instructions. The cattle on the Common are being checked daily and are all OK at present.

The Countryside Team

Mark Berry, Head of Planning and new boss for Stewart, Sarah and Annette is keen on keeping on the Practical Days with the main focus on implementing the Management

Plan. The Rangers will still be in the Country Park Office, which will be Sarah's main base also, although she and Annette will be spending some time at the Town Hall. If she is not in the Office Sarah can be contacted by members on her mobile – 07736630649.

Tasks

Tree planting near the Bat Roost
Continuing to clear the path to West Park
Tidying the path on the western boundary
Water vole stream clearing and burning dead hedging

Dates

Sunday 14 Oct	Clear vegetation on West Park path at bottom, left off Footpath 26 Meet at Rangers office 10 a.m. or at site.
Sunday 18 Nov	Tree planting at the Bat Roost. Meet as above.
Sunday 16 Dec	Coppicing with the Moles (to be confirmed.)
Sunday 20 Jan	Water vole stream clearing

A.O.B.

- Laurence said 26 members had paid Membership fees. Anyone who had not paid by now was no longer a member.
- A fallen tree is blocking the path in Pond Wood. The bridge across the stream seems to have dropped into the water which is not flowing. The stream from Orchard Pond is also blocked.
- Bill said dog walkers are hanging “poo bags” on tree branches or fences near Primrose Copse because there are no “doggy bins” in the Park and people did not seem to be able to carry their bags into the Car Park to use the bins there. Sarah said the policy was not to have bins in the Country Park. Brendan asked if a bin could be put on the path near that point, which was not really inside the park, as that was preferable to the present situation.
- Tony Gibbs offered to do “Bird Notes” for the next Newsletter.

Next Meeting

Tuesday 2nd October 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.