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## The Friends of Horton Country Park

Minutes for the meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2012

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**Present:** Gill Munton, Alan Cheshire, Anne Cheshire, Ray Eyres, Rosemary Eyres, Monika Roth, Bob Murray, Catherine Thompson, Will Thompson, Brendan Kilby, Terry Summerfield, Ian Tilbury, Sarah Clift.

**Apologies:** Tony Gibb, Brenda Hammond-Gibb, Pat Lowe, Eileen Tomlin

### **Matters Arising:**

£50 was given to the Alzheimers society in sponsorship money for Richard Haygarth's bike ride. £30 was given to the Friends from the Chessington WI for Stewart's talk on the Horton Light Railway. £50 was given to the Friends from the Syroptomists for Brendan's talk on Horton Country Park.

The Eucalyptus trees are being removed from Hobbledown. Stewart and David Gadsdon (tree officer) had a good meeting with the owners and have given advice on suitable trees to be planted. The owners are definitely keen to cooperate.

Notes from 7<sup>th</sup> August 2012 meeting:

- Agreement to remove the dipping platform at Field Pond.
- Stewart gave details of the new Ranger set-up. The Friends are keen for the Rangers to have more site knowledge.
- Dog behavior sign could be more pictorial, less words!
- Agreement to re-order apple trees, Friends to adopt a tree for a couple of years before planting out in the orchard to try and aid survival.
- There will be a Living Woodlands Fayre on 21<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Stewart to find the banner that Peter Tomlin produced and pass to Brendan to order.
- Sports training is an issue in the park, detracts from the tranquility.
- Woodland management discussed.
- Brown Hair-streak eggs have been found on the hedgerows which have been managed by scalloping.
- Pond management possible project discussed.
- Bat surveys discussed.

### **Woodland Management:**

A work schedule will be produced this winter for the work outlined in the survey of the veteran trees, which was carried out last November.

Pond Wood will be worked on first by Richard Manners during November. It will be thinned, ready for planting up with Hazel by the volunteers. Due to the potential presence of dormice, the cants have been reduced in size and the work schedule ensures no adjacent cants will be worked on in successive years to ensure continuity of habitat.

Richard manners will then tackle Hendon Grove. The volunteers will be coppicing Sherwood Grove and Four Acre wood.

**Orchard Management:**

Brendan has ordered the trees from Brogdale, which are:

- Byfleet Seedling - Cooker – Oct picking
- Claygate Pearmain – Eater – Oct picking
- Cockle Pippin – 1600s – Oct picking
- Curltail – Cooker – Sept picking
- George Carpenter – Byfleet – Early Sept picking
- Highview Pippin – 1900s – Weybridge
- Joybells – Godalming
- Duchess' Favorite – 1600s – Addlestone

The London Orchard Project have been in touch and would like to help us get the trees back in to better management. They will be leading workshops for volunteers interested in managing the trees and restoring the orchards. Dates to be confirmed.

**Pond/Stream Management:**

We have been in contact with Jim Jones at Surrey Wildlife Trust who has been to visit Horton Country Park to look for any recent signs of Water Voles. Unfortunately there were none to be seen, but he has given us some advice on managing our watercourses and is keen to be more involved.

We have been lucky enough to be approached by a team in the Environment Agency who want to have a volunteer day with us, as they have recently taken over responsibility for the watercourses in our area. We are setting them to work on the section of stream between Field Pond and Pond Wood. Along with 2 Countryside Team volunteer tasks planned, we should get this stretch well maintained.

**Visitor Management/Site Security:**

The fleeces have been ordered. The logo set up cost has been covered by the Friends' accounts, which was £30. Each fleece is then £17.50 with the embroidered logo.

**Species Sightings:**

Ongoing surveys include the butterfly transect, bird records from Timothy Tomkins, and Dormice. Since the talk in May, 2 volunteers, under the guidance of Pete (new Countryside Officer) have been recording plants in HCP and condition assessing the woodlands. Pete has also managed to try and find signs of Water Voles, surveyed Bats (none found in the bat roost), Great Crested Newts and Bryophytes. It is hoped we can set up a reptile survey next year as well. A species monitoring strategy will be organised before Sarah goes on maternity leave.

**Any other business:**

If any Friends are interested in manning the stand at the Living Woodlands Fayre on 21<sup>st</sup> Oct please call Brendan – 0208 391 5925.

The deer are still definitely here in numbers and are breeding well.

There are now 30 paid up members, Gill is a new member. Monika and Bob have given a kind donation.

Ideas would be gratefully received as regards future plans and where to focus the Friends' money. With Sarah leaving to go on maternity leave at the end of February it was suggested that the role of minute taking is rotated within the group.

Please can we have ideas for articles for a newsletter?

**Date of next meeting:**

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> December, 7:30 p.m.