



## The Friends of Horton Country Park

Minutes for the meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2017

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### Present

Peter Tomlin, Terry Summerfield, Gareth Morgan, Joe Lambert, Alex Foster

### Apologies

Ian Tilbury

### AGM formalities

Terry handed out a copy of the 2016 (calendar year) treasurer's report. The general fund stands at £1048.28 with the Insurance fund at £626, therefore the total funds are £1674.28. Terry was elected for a period of three years so is up for re-election next year in 2018. The role of Chairperson and Membership Secretary remains vacant.

### Membership

A discussion was had with Peter regarding the website. He is happy to update the website with immediate events and will then organise for Sarah to be able to edit the website. Action – Sarah to pass dates to Peter and to attempt becoming an editor of the facebook page as well. Also pass dates and info to Alex as she said she was happy to post things on the Dog Walkers' facebook page as well.

Gareth said he would be happy to hand out membership leaflets to the runners who congregate outside his house to try and

### Woodland Management

John Sinclair has completed the coppicing in Butcher's Grove but still has to come back to remove the cut material. The area has been fenced with tenax as well. The fencing around the cants in Four Acre wood have been removed. The fencing around Lambert's wood was reported as being collapsed. Action – Sarah to investigate repair. Richard Manners was supposed to have thinned the next section of Lambert's Wood but due to unforeseen circumstances this was not possible. He aims to come back in the autumn to complete the work.

There were 3 Oak Processionary Moth nests found in Great Wood which the Forestry Commission will be spraying this year, again as late as possible so as not to disturb the Heron's nesting.

There will be a task at the end of June to lay woodchip on the path leading out from Pond Wood in to Great Ridings.

### **Orchard Management**

The task in February was a great success and a lot more scrub was cleared along with woodchip being laid around the base of a few of the old pear trees. The pruning workshop led by The Orchard Project was also very successful and all the newer apple and pear trees were pruned.

The next event to be organised will be a Bioblitz held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> July. The plan is to invite a few local wildlife groups to help us identify the wildlife in and around the orchard and invite those who attend to have a picnic and learn about the orchard on their doorstep. Once we have confirmed which groups will be attending more advertising can be done.

### **Grassland Management**

Stewart will be sending a letter to Mr Anderson at the Equestrian Centre soon to outline the haymaking for this year. Grassland management will start in earnest from mid-july onwards.

### **Hedgerow Management**

Brown hairstreak butterfly eggs have been found on Tenzle hedge (behind Meadow Pond) which is one of the hedgerows we have been working on to encourage younger growth, which the butterflies prefer.

### **Scrub Management**

Timothy Tomkins (Epsom and Ewell RSPB) continues to keep an eye on the bird life which the scrub areas are supporting.

### **Pond/Stream Management**

Field Pond is looking very good and we are planning on carrying out newt egg searches in Lambert's Pond this year.

### **Site Interpretation**

The Interpretation board for McKenzie Way is on order and the one for Noble Park has been bought. We had to wait for the budget for 2017/18 to buy the wooden surround for them so they will be ordered shortly.

### **Public Access/Visitor Management**

The BBQs have been refurbished.

The Round the Borough Bike will be on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May which starts in HCP and participants ride a 20 mile circular route around the Borough through the main open spaces.

There has been a report of a dog called Wilma having killed a deer. The owner was spoken to by a Ranger and she assured her that the dog would now be muzzled at all

times when in HCP. Alex will put a note on her facebook page to remind people of the dangers of letting dogs chase deer.

A sofa had been dumped near to Pond Wood which has now been removed.

Regarding FP26, a meeting has been had with the rights of way officer at Surrey and she is making progress in contacting the relevant NHS staff. The tree that had fallen down across the path has been cut through although we aren't sure who by.

The access out of the Event Field has become very difficult over the years with the area being very boggy/flooded during the winter and the vegetation is growing over. The plan is to let it completely close over and improve access out on to Withy Bed Land (The old railway line), through the hedge. The Countryside team Volunteers have opened up a route through the hedge and are planning on filling the ditch that will have to be crosses with a pipe and then covering this with woodchip to improve access.

There have been a few fires and also a camp at the back for meadow pond. The Rangers are aware and are dealing with it.

### **Species sightings, Surveying and Monitoring**

A weasel was seen after finishing a GCN survey at field pond. It ran out from Pond Wood.

Newts are being surveyed again in Field Pond, which will start in earnest in May. GCN eggs were found along with 1 male and 1 female smooth newt.

The Butterfly Transects are being walked again, once a week from April until September.

Terry had seen c13 Heron Nests in Great Wood this year.

The plan is to carry out more bat surveys this year on HCP.

### **AOB**

#### **Next meeting**

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 7:30 pm at the Farmhouse.