



Friends of Horton Country Park

Minutes

For the meeting held on the 06/06/2006

Present:

Brendan Kilby (Chair), Anne Cheshire, Alan Cheshire, Bill Facer, Sandy Fleming, Tony Gibbs, Sarah Hallums, Brenda Hammond-Gibbs, Pat Lowe (Minutes).

Apologies:

Ray Eyres, Rosemary Eyres, Laurence Coley, Terry Summerfield, Ian Tilbury.

Matters Arising:

Newsletter

Brendan reported that the newsletter will be ready for distribution shortly and hopefully it will help to boost new membership.

Tasks

The joint session with the Lower Mole Volunteers to make bird and bat boxes had been very enjoyable. 5 bird boxes, 5 bat roosts and 1 owl box were completed. The owl box will be fixed to the end of the Hall.

Lower Mole Volunteers

Brendan again said that The Friends need to be thinking about taking over some of the tasks that LMV have been doing. We need to be finding out what we can learn from them in order to do this, for example Coppicing.

Information Centre

Anne and Alan have been manning the Centre and have agreed to do so again on 22nd July. They reported that members of the public have been asking where they can buy drinks. It was suggested that The Friends manning the Centre could raise funds in this way. Sarah told us that the Centre had been designed with a window as well as space for a cash register so it could be used as a shop. Brendan explained that we could sell sealed snacks and drinks, but not home-made food, tea or coffee or ice-cream without a Certificate for Food Hygiene etc. because of Health and Safety issues. Ideally the Centre would be open on Saturdays and Sundays from 11.00 to 3.00 between May and September. More volunteers are needed. Sandy suggested a recycling bin nearby for plastic bottles etc.

Action

Sarah will send out an e-mail asking for volunteers. She suggested that replies be to all so that we can all see which days are already covered.

Sarah will also find out who we would need to approach for permission to sell drinks etc.

Horse riders

Brendan said that matters had improved with less riding off-track and better manners. Sandy said he had been tackling offenders and felt that an improved ranger presence, so that riders were being told what they could not do, had helped.

Clarendon Park Fun Day – 2nd July

We have been invited to set up a stall at this to increase interest from local residents. Alan suggested having membership forms available, hopefully more of the people who use HCP regularly can be persuaded to join The Friends.

Action

Sandy will attend and take Information on HCP. Brendan will sort out the Friends display. Pat will help to man it on the day. Other volunteers will be welcome.

Nature Reserve Status

Brendan has seen plaques at the Town Hall commemorating this. Councillor Jan Mason will have money available for Friends if we tell her what is needed.

Bat Roost

Pest Control/Tony Foxwell are coming to get rid of the pigeons and clear their droppings out of the roost so bats will use it. Sarah reported hearing Pipistrelle 45s on a walk with Girl Guides.

Orchids

Stewart has seen one so far but there may be more to come as everything is late this year.

Entomology

Ian Menzies is visiting to do a check. Tony said it would be good to get regular monitoring.

Car Park

Pot holes in the Car Park have been filled in. Section 106 money (from Developers) is to be spent on tarmac for the car park roads (not the bays) as well as a new Entrance to the Equestrian Centre, with the Rangers Office gated. If there is any of this money left over it will be used to re-instate the tracks in Butchers Grove and the Piggeries areas.

Hay Meadows

The Equestrian Centre is to employ someone to cut the meadows for hay and he will also cut the meadows kept for conservation in HCP and on Epsom Common.

Fishing

Fishermen are again using Meadow Pond although less frequently. The remaining large fish will be removed and hopefully this will stop the fishing.



Notice Boards

Sarah asked if we can work together to keep the notice boards up to date. The board in the Car Park has an area for The Friends to use but it is not being up-dated. Volunteers to write up our activities are needed. If members send articles to Peter for the website, eg about Tasks done, then we can extract some for the Notice boards. Sandy suggested using some of the photos from the website.

July 29 Ragwort pulling, 10.00 till 1.00, followed by Barbecue for those who have done the pulling. Clearing is necessary because if it seeds in meadows and dried plants find their way into feed it cannot be recognised in dry state by horses and is poisonous to them. It will be left in places not close to meadows to provide habitat/food for the Cinnabar Moth. Brenda would like some seeds saved to replace plants she lost from her garden in the winter.

Sarah will ask LMV if we can use their garden for the Barbecue.

Action

Brendan to send letters to Horse Establishments asking for volunteers for Ragwort pulling. Sandy will include the Establishments when putting out posters about the Task.

Awards for All

Sarah asked the Friends to consider applying for a grant for repairing the Meadow Pond spillway and restoring the natural pond in Lamberts Orchard. It needs an excavator to de-silt it but the Rangers do not have the money available. The Rangers cannot apply as the awards are not available to them, they are intended for small local community groups who want to improve the local environment, but they would help in filling in the forms. Brendan asked anyone interested in applying to contact him.

Action

Pat to download forms from the Internet.

AOB

Members reported that

- The sapling near the woodpecker carving appears to have been deliberately slashed.
- The fence near the toilet block has been damaged.
- The furthest new apple tree in Lambert's Orchard had died, others are doing well.
- Some of the hedges are getting very high and thick – Sarah said they will be trimmed in the winter.
- The Information Centre was not unlocked on the Bank Holiday. Sandy said it was an oversight – they had been short-staffed.

Requests were made for

- A “dog poo” bin near Primrose Cottage. Members deplored walkers leaving filled plastic bags lying around in the Park.
- Seating along the stretch of track from the Children's Farm to the Piggeries/Lambert's Orchard, Sarah said she might be able to have a bench put there.

Tasks

Brendan has details of the Insurance cover for Friends taking part in tasks.

We need to draw up a list of Winter tasks – Sarah suggested that we use the August meeting to discuss them.

Action

Sarah will invite Louise (Lower Mole Volunteers) to attend so we can co-operate on some.

Dates

Saturday 29th July Ragwort clearing. Rangers Office 10.00am If attending BBQ bring your food and drink to Office at 10.00am. It can then be left in the fridge.

1st October Fruit and Nut walk. Looking for Natural foods and herbs for food and remedies.

Next Meeting Tuesday 1st August, 7.30pm in the New Hall

Meetings are always on the first Tuesday of every second month throughout the year- June, August, October, etc.