Friends of Worts Meadow
Minutes of Committee Meeting
Thursday 9 October 2014

1) Welcome, introductions and apologies.

Present: Robert Humphrey (Secretary), David Pell (Treasurer), Phil Clark, Robert Stripe, Ray Gambell, Dannie Gambell, Guy Warren, Melanie Hale.

Apologies for absence: Frances Dipper

In the absence of Frances, Phil Clark agreed to chair the meeting and welcomed those present.

2) Agreeing the minutes of the previous meeting of 10 July.
The minutes were agreed.

3) Matters arising where not covered elsewhere in the minutes.
3a. Dog waste posters. The proposed wording has not yet been circulated for agreement, prior to a metal notice being made. PC said that Sarah Shepherd, who was to have the sign made for us, has now left Cambridgeshire County Council and we should use him as the current contact. **Action FD**

3b. Notice board. There was no news. PC said that if there were problems putting pins into the marine ply he supplied then we needed a lower grade ply. GW said he would try to obtain something suitable.
Action GW

3c. Bird feeding station. This is now in place, many thanks to Guy for making this and stocking it with feeders and seed.
PC asked if Richard Taylor had been able to source any cheap seed, RH will follow this up with him in view of his absence from the meeting. **Action RH**

4. Management issues.

4a. New pond. There is no news.

4b. Mowing a small area in Bourne Wood to encourage orchids. GW said the area had been mowed twice. GW said he would like to spray the thistles in this area and PC said this would be OK providing it was spot treating.

4c. Mowing of first meadow. This was mowed by the tenant farmer during the summer.

4d. Dredging the edge of the pond in the first meadow. GW thought there had been a 20 square metre decrease in the size of the pond which may be down to the level of the water table lowering. Dredging the muddy area would increase the size of the pond to how it used to be.
PC said that he will be seeking permission to remove silt from the moat and then applying for a grant for the work to be undertaken. Work on the pond could be incorporated with this. **Action PC**

4e. Removal of barbed wire from half-moon area. Not done yet. **Action RT & GW**

4f. Updated Management Plan. The new plan was handed out to members by PC. Any additions to be notified to PC. **Action all**

5. Correspondence. None.

6. Treasurer's report.
DP handed out a statement showing the two items of expenditure since our last meeting and that the balance of funds in our account was now £1783.01.
PC asked for the next agenda to include an item on fund raising since we did not want funds to fall too low. Ac**tion RH**

7. Group training/Equipment.

7a. Risk assessment workshop. PC said this was currently on hold as there were insufficient numbers at present to justify running a course.

7b. Moth traps. The meeting decided that we would not purchase our own traps and that we would ask Peter Holt to help again if we wanted an event next year.

7c. Any other requirements. DP asked if he could go on a future Strimmer & Brush cutter training course. PC said he might be able to run this again as GW and others who went on the previous course had a certificate lasting only 3 years.

8. Events and Activities.
8a. Report on events since last meeting supplied by Frances.

- Bat Walk 21st August, led by Iain Webb. The weather was fair but a bit windy and only a few bats were out and about. Nevertheless this was an informative and enjoyable event. Iain gave us an introduction to bats and their way of life before we set of with detectors to go round Bourne Wood and then the churchyard. Inside the Church fresh bat droppings indicated that the roost is still active (as is well known by the cleaning team!). About 10 people attended.
- Pond dipping 30th August, led by Frances Dipper. A lovely afternoon saw 10 children and 14 adults checking out what could be found in the main field pond. As usual the children's sharp eyes spotted a wide variety of pond life especially invertebrates. The variety and abundance of invertebrates was very much higher than the same event last year with water boatmen and backswimmers particularly common. Several dragonfly nymphs were found and adults were flying about the pond. Other finds included several species of water beetles, caddisfly larvae, mayfly larvae, damselfly nymphs and Common Newts. No Great Crested Newt young were seen on this occasion- a contrast to this time last year.
  (Note: Frances found a large Great Diving Beetle in the half-moon pond when searching for moths that evening.)
- Moth trapping 30th/31st August, led by Peter Holt. Three traps were set up on the evening of the 30th by Peter, assisted by Frances. One near the half-moon pond, one in the clearing in Bourne Wood and one near the hedge just past the main entrance. Some time was spent moth hunting. The traps were left overnight and collected early the next morning by Peter. Identification in the Village Hall was attended by 11 adults plus Peter. Whilst the catch was dominated by Square Spot Rustics, there was a variety of other species some not found on the July moth trapping event. Peter has kindly produced a species list for comparison which Frances will make available to anyone interested.

RH gave details of the examination of the bird nest boxes which took place on 20th September.
Of the 18 boxes 7 contained nests although one of these contained 6 dead Blue Tit young. The boxes were cleaned out and 5 boxes were taken down for repair having been damaged by woodpeckers and squirrels.

8b. Future events.

- Fungus foray. PC said that his expert was not now available on 25th October, he was trying to find a replacement and would email RH tomorrow about this. **Action PC**
- Elm planting. PC is to let us have a few more elm tree saplings and we agreed to have a work party meet at 10am on 22nd November to plant these.
- Date for Dick Newell's talk on nest boxes. RH said that Dick would prefer to give us a talk sooner than at our 2015 AGM so that if anyone was interested in having a Swift box on their house it could be organised before the Swifts returned. We discussed having the talk at our January meeting or having a separate meeting that month with perhaps cheese and wine. RH to ask Dick if he was available on 15th, 22nd or 29th January. **Action RH**
- Wildlife recording day. PC said he hoped to organise this for next year with a pool of experts gathered together on the same day. **Action PC**

9. Additional wood chippings for Bourne Wood pathways.
RH said that when pollarding of trees on the recreation ground was carried out the Parish Council would ask the contractor to put the resulting wood chippings inside the Bourne Wood gate (RH to phone the tenant farmer to unlock the gate when work takes place). We would then need work parties to move the chippings onto the pathways.

10. Bourne Wood seat requiring repair.
RH said that a dog walker had reported the damaged seat, it only needs a small batten screwed on to make it safe. It was agreed we would look at this on 22 November after we had planted the elm trees.

11. Any other business.

- GW said that there was a great deal of ragwort in the first meadow despite the work he did in the spring. He would like to spray these soon and he needs to get his vehicle into the meadow to do this more easily. PC said that he could only spot treat the plants and he handed GW a gate key on loan.
  Many thanks to GW for the earlier work he did and for volunteering to undertake more spot treatment.
- GW said that we have Ash dieback affecting some trees in Bourne Wood. PC said he would like to see the trees concerned and GW and PC agreed to arrange a convenient date before the leaves fall.

12. Dates for 2015 meetings.

January (to be determined)
9th April
14th May (AGM)
9th July
8th October

The meeting closed at 9.05pm