Friends of Worts Meadow
Minutes of Committee Meeting Wednesday 25th October 2017

Present: Frances Dipper (Chairman), David Pell (Treasurer), Robert Humphrey (Secretary), Guy Warren, Robert Stripe, Ray Gambell, Dannie Gambell, Anna Bilton, Graeme Bilton, Melanie Hale.

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies and notification of the Fire Procedures and emergency exits.

FD made the usual introductions and thanked DG and RG for supplying the refreshments.
Apologies for absence: Cllr. Anna Bradnam, Ruth McArthur, Phil Clark.

2. Agreeing the minutes of the previous meeting (26th July as circulated).
RS proposed these are accepted, this was agreed and they were signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising that are not covered elsewhere in the agenda.
a. Formalising the mailing list. Carry forward, FD to action. **Action FD**

b. Gate post at Bourne Wood entrance needing re-positioning so that the gate will open.
Per an email from PC, he has been chasing Anna Hicks at County Farms re this but she has changed her role and he has not yet heard from the new person responsible. He will contact us as soon as he hears.
Action PC

4. Management issues:
a. Annual work programme:-
Items 2c and 4c 'Clearance of scrub in the half-moon area and clearance of bankside bramble by Amey Volunteers'.
Per an email from PC, he has been chasing his contact at Amey but so far without success. The person he was liaising with has left, PC will contact us as soon as he hears anything. **Action PC**

Updated work programme for 2017/2018.
RH reported that this had been received today from PC and was emailed out to those likely to be at this meeting. He will email it to all others with these minutes. Members to review the tasks allocated to us so that, where applicable, these can be undertaken on work party dates or specific dates allocated at our next meeting where the target is February/March 2018. **Action all**

b. Construction of a 'Bug Hotel' by Amey volunteers.
As item 4a. **Action PC**

c. Discuss putting up bat boxes.
It was agreed that this was a good idea but using wooden boxes was ruled out based on predator problems with bird boxes made of wood. DP agreed to check what is available and report back at the next meeting.
Action DP

d. Any other items.
FD said that we need to press for a decision on fencing the pond/moat at our January meeting so that they are protected from cattle when they arrive next summer. We need to get some costings ourselves to be able to present them to County Farms.
MH agreed to look up prices for electric fences/portable batteries in a catalogue. **Action MH**

GW said two portable batteries would be needed as the charge will only last about one week so whilst one is in use the other is being re-charged. He also said he thought the cost of fencing the pond only would be in the region of £250-£300.

GW also said there was a major problem with carp in the moat as previously brought up on the Management Walk. They were eating the amphibians and we needed to specify what needed doing to remove them and get a costing. **Action?**

5. Attracting new members.
a. Promotion brochure.
FD thought we could do something ourselves using 'Word', probably an A4 sheet.
GB said that if the material was sent to him, text + pictures, he could produce something.
FD said she could then use the draft to get a quote for printing 50 or 100. **Action FD & GB**

b. Other methods.
FD said she would check our entry on the landbeach.org website to see what details are showing and update as necessary. **Action FD**
FD said that she continues to write articles for Beach News and Fen Edge News that include our details and also gives dates and details of our forthcoming events.

6. Correspondence.
RH reported that Dick Newell had sent him a link to an article on a study in America about reducing predation at bird nest boxes and the effectiveness of these. There were various methods including the metal plates around the nest box hole, but principally the use of a baffle to prevent predators climbing the tree/pole the box was attached to. RH thought this might work where the tree/pole was isolated but in our wood squirrels would just jump across from an adjacent tree.

7. Treasurer's report.
DP handed out copies showing that we now have a balance at the bank of £1007.80, all bills have been paid.
FD thought that when the balance gets down to £500 we must consider fund raising. RS suggested that this might include paying a subscription.
RG suggested that we investigate applying for grants where we have a specific project.

8. Group training/equipment.
FD said nothing had been heard yet about a date for the Brushcutter course that both she and DP had put their names down for.
RS said that he had attended a course on Heavy Lifting and the use of a defibrillator.
FD said she has completed a First Aid Course.

9. Events and Activities.
a. Report on events since our last meeting.

- Pond dipping on 26th August. This event was well attended with 15 adults (including FD) and 10 children, several of whom had never been to one of our events before. The children ranged in age from 2 years to 13 years. A small gazebo was set up with a table and ID books plus a low power microscope. The latter proved very popular in looking at some of the larvae collected from the pond. A bowl and a tiny net provided a 'pond' for the really young whilst the others collected material using our pond dipping nets. The pond was low and very muddy around the edges making access a little tricky. No newt larvae were found. The most common finds were water boatmen (various). Nymphs of damselfly, stonefly, and mayfly were identified. Other finds included mosquito larvae, leeches, water mites, non-biting midge larvae (*Chironomus* spp.), water fleas and pea mussels.

b. Future events.

- Regular work party dates.
  These were fixed for:-
  2nd December, 3rd February, 7th April. Meet on site from 9.30am.
  Tasks already identified are:-
  Clear area around elm saplings.
  Wash noticeboards.
  Repair wooden bench seat.
  Cut and rake orchid areas within Bourne Wood.
  Repair one of the open fronted nest boxes.

RH to send out an email notifying dates and also request help via an entry in What's On in Landbeach. **Action RH**

- Date for checking and cleaning out nest boxes.
  This was fixed for 11 November. Meet on site at 9am. We will also be numbering the new boxes and FD said she would bring along some white paint and a thin brush for this purpose. **Action FD**

10. Nature grants for schools.

PC had emailed that we could contact Waterbeach School to see if they were interested in this scheme whereby a grant of up to £500 could be applied for to purchase resources for them to use at our reserve and also in their school grounds.
FD said that at the Waterbeach Feast she was told that Waterbeach School were unwilling to cross the A10 with pupils without a coach and this is too expensive. GW said this applied to Milton school also.
RH to convey this to PC. **Action RH**
FD thought that the bioblitz next year might attract children to the reserve without it being a formal activity involving the school.

11. Any other business.

- FD thought we should put bird food out again this winter and GW agreed to purchase this and claim re-imbursement from our Treasurer. **Action GW**
- MH agreed to independently examine our accounts prior to next year's AGM in accordance with our Constitution.
- MH said it was a pity the Village Hall did not have Wi-Fi. RH will mention this at the next Village Hall committee meeting. **Action RH**

12. Fix dates for 2018 committee meetings and volunteer to provide refreshments for our January meeting.

Our 2018 meetings will be as follows, subject to availability of the room:-
January 31st, April 25th, July 25th, October 31st (*Note RH gave the wrong October date at the meeting or wrote the wrong date down).*
The Annual General Meeting will be on 23rd May.
All meetings will be in the Village Hall and commence at 7.30pm.
RH will confirm dates after making the booking with the Village Hall Lettings Secretary.

AB and GB volunteered to provide the refreshments for our January meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.55pm.