**Friends of Worts Meadow**
**Minutes of Meeting**
**Thursday 18 October 2012 Landbeach Village Hall**

## 1) Welcome, introductions and apologies

Present:
Brian Barber, Sue Barber, Anna Bilton, Graeme Bilton, Frances Dipper (Chairman), Dannie Gambell, Ray Gambell, Robert Humphrey (Secretary), David Pell (Treasurer), John MacMillan (Rural Estates Manager), Melanie Hale, Robert Stripe, Guy Warren.

Apologies: Ruth McArthur

## 2) Minutes of meeting on 12 July 2012

The minutes as circulated were agreed.

Matters Arising:

a. Notice Board. Ongoing, carry forward to next meeting.

b. Dog waste bag dispenser. GW to fix this to the main entrance gate in Cockfen Lane. MH to check if South Cambs. DC to supply bags. **Action GW and MH**

c. Record sheets. FD investigating whether our records can be input into iRecord website run by National Biodiversity Network. This would enable records to be input directly by observers and the facility to filter our own records later for analysis. There would still be facility for paper records for those without a computer. **Action FD**

d. Newt Survey results. Malcolm Busby undertook a survey last April and FD holds the results.

e. Record of trained members. RH said he had a record of those members trained so far. FD asked for a copy. **Action RH**

f. Requirements for fencing half moon area pond. Carry forward to next meeting.

g. Action to fill holes in meadow. Agreed to include under 6b with action in February/March. GW suggested we use soil previously extracted from moat.

h. Making footpath diversion to protect orchids permanent. GW said he would attend to this next spring. **Action GW**

i. Newt survey licence for FD. FD said she now had a licence.

## 3. Correspondence.

RH said two items had been received since our last meeting:

i. An email from Sarah Shepherd (Assistant Management Surveyor Rural, Cambridgeshire County Council) asking for our opinions on proposed information board to be erected in Bourne Wood. The email was circulated to active members and feedback given to Sarah.

ii. An email from John MacMillan concerning the gates on the bridge between the two meadows not opening properly, a matter brought to his attention by the Parish Clerk. RH had replied explaining one of the gates was out of alignment with the gatepost but it was now usable. JM reported that the problem would be looked at by the contractors undertaking the tree thinning.

**4. Treasurer's report**

DP said that no funds had yet been paid into our account by Cambridgeshire County Council. RH to ask Phil Clark again about this. **Action RH**

**5. Group training/Equipment, including purchase of bat detectors.**

GW thought we needed someone trained in Risk Assessment. RH to ask Phil Clark if he is running a course on this. **Action RH**

Following a discussion, when funds are available, we thought we needed to purchase:

- 2 Bat Detectors. RH to ask Phil Clark if he has any recommendations. **Action RH**
- I. D. Charts. FD said the Field Studies Council produce useful charts and she circulated some at the meeting. She will put together a list of those appropriate to our needs. GW requested that she include a chart on moths. **Action FD**

JM said that the Wildlife Trust run various courses on identification and FD said she would obtain a list before our next meeting. **Action FD**

**6. Events and Activities**

a. Report on past events and activities:

PLANT SURVEY

An initial qualitative plant survey of the main meadow, main pond edge, moat edge and ditch between the fields was carried out by Dr Lynne Farrell (HGS Botanical Society of the British Isles, and former Senior Ecologist with Scottish Natural Heritage and English Nature) on Friday 13th July 2012. Frances Dipper, Guy Warren and Dorothy Buckley assisted. Several hours were spent in listing the plant species present and afterwards identifying some of the more difficult species. An excel list has been drawn up by Frances and will eventually be submitted to the NBN. There are almost 100 species on this initial list.

RAGWORT CLEARANCE

An initial clearance of ragwort was attempted on July 18th 2012 by cutting and pulling. The aim was to at least reduce the number of plants that might set seed. The

cleared plants were bagged up and later kindly disposed of in the proper manner by Guy Warren. Eight 'friends' turned up to help.

POND DIPPING

Our pond dipping event, arranged by Frances Dipper, took place on a sunny Saturday afternoon September 1st 2012. Deborah Marchant Ecology Officer for Cambridge County Council kindly provided very able assistance and support for which we are very grateful. Deborah also supplied dipping nets and trays. Fifteen adults (plus the 2 organisers) were shown how to pond dip by nine children aged 18 months to 9 years. After an initial introduction and safety briefing from Frances everyone got stuck in (some literally). The (main field) pond margin is very muddy but there is a good amount of submerged weed which proved productive once the children learnt not to scoop out too much black stinky mud! Much to the children's delight there were a lot of newts, mostly juvenile Great Crested Newts (both Deborah and Frances have a licence to handle these). These have very large spots (which neither Smooth nor Palmate juveniles do) and a very sharply pointed tail. A plastic aquarium allowed everyone to see them clearly. Other finds included backswimmers (& water boatmen), pond snails, beetle larvae, red midge larvae, a leech and a minnow. At the end of the session the children asked if we could do it again and most of the adults said they had seen some fascinating animals they did not previously know about.

We are grateful to Richard, the tenant farmer for moving his heifers into the far field which made life a lot easier!

RS proposed many thanks to FD for organising pond dipping event.
JM requested FD send him initial plant survey results. **Action FD**

b. Provisional dates for events/activities in 2013

Hole Filling (February/March)
Bluebell planting (March)
Evening Newt walk (March)
Detailed newt survey (Not yet determined)
Bat Walk (After AGM on 9 May)
Ragwort clearance (12 July and 26 July)*
Children's competition for logo (July)
Pond dipping (mid August)
Moth trapping (mid August, combine with pond dipping)
Fungus foray (October/November)

* JM checking whether Ragwort can be sprayed making pulling up unnecessary.

**7. County Farms plans for coppicing/thinning trees in Bourne Wood.**

GW said he had met with Sarah Shepherd in August to discuss this matter. Sarah had been in touch with the Forestry Commission and their proposal was that there should be a 30% reduction in trees to enable the remainder to develop.
GW suggested that to accomplish this reduction all Field Maple trees should be taken out. Forestry Commission agreed with this but the trees will be coppiced and not

felled completely. Forestry Commission do, however, want the rides to be widened and this will mean a complete row of trees being removed.
Large logs will be left in piles, smaller items shredded.
In addition the two bench seats in the wood will be replaced and a 'kissing gate' will be installed at the Cockfen Lane entrance to the wood.
The work, to be undertaken by contractors, is currently out to tender.
Once contractor has completed work review if further thinning needed which FOWM will undertake.
Following discussion it was agreed that GW should prepare a short article explaining what work was proposed and why it was necessary for inclusion in the next 'What's on'. **Action GW**
It was also suggested that we should put a notice on any log piles created asking people not to remove any logs.

**8. Group logo and website.**
It had previously been suggested that we could run a competition for children to design a logo and this could be in conjunction with next years Village Event (Fete?). This was agreed and FD will talk to Maggie Robertson about it.
**Action FD**

GB said he has space available on his server where our proposed website could initially reside. He could also help us to set it up. FD asked if he would set up some basic pages for us. **Action GB**

**9. Photo Archive/Facebook page.**
No volunteer has come forward but subsequent to our last meeting RH had spoken to someone, who is not a member, but who would be prepared to help us set up a Facebook page.
Following discussion it was thought we should proceed with the website first where photos could be displayed and think about Facebook at a later date.

**10. Volunteer for risk assessments.**

GW said that training was needed and that he had previously volunteered for this but no training was forthcoming. See Item 5 for action.

**11. Items carried forward from previous agenda**

a. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by John MacMillan, Rural Estate Manager at Cambridgeshire County Council and Frances Dipper, Chairman of Friends of Worts Meadow.

b. A survey of silt deposits in the moat had recently been undertaken. Quinton Carroll, Cambridgeshire County Council archaeologist would be undertaking further work.

**12. Any other business**

GW said that he was making a moth trap, which he could demonstrate at our event next year.

**13. Dates for 2013 indoor meetings**

RH proposed the following dates and these were agreed:
Thursday 10 January
Thursday 11 April
Thursday 9 May (Annual General Meeting)
Thursday 11 July
Thursday 10 October

All meetings in Landbeach Village Hall lounge apart from AGM, which would be in the main hall.