Friends of Worts Meadow
Minutes of Committee Meeting
Thursday 7 April 2016

1. Welcome, introductions & apologies.
Present: Phil Clark (Cambridgeshire County Council Greenspaces Officer), Robert Stripe, Ruth McArthur, Ray Gambell, Dannie Gambell, Guy Warren, Anna Bilton, Graeme Bilton, Anna Hicks (County Farms), Robert Humphrey.
Apologies for absence: Frances Dipper, David Pell, Richard Taylor.

The meeting was chaired by PC who thanked AB and GB for supplying the refreshments.

2. Agreeing the minutes of the previous meeting (14 January) as circulated.
The minutes were agreed and signed.

3. Matters arising where not covered elsewhere in the agenda.
a. Dog waste posters. PC handed 3 posters over to RH who will get them to Frances. **Action RH & FD**
b. Nest boxes. GW reported that the damaged boxes had all been repaired and put back up.

4. Management issues.
a. PC reported that he had obtained a copy of the Higher Level Stewardship 'General description of Management required' for the reserve. Under this topping of the vegetation is not allowed. He went on to mention that he thought the meadows were under grazed with only 5 cattle.
PC read out the agreement and will circulate a copy to the committee. **Action PC**
b. Dredging moat. This will be discussed at the Management Walk on 15th April taking account of the wording in the management document**.**
c. Wood chippings for pathways. RH reported that he had managed to obtain another free load from a contractor he found working in the village. The chippings had been spread on the pathways by himself and Steve Anderson. He was hoping another free load would be forthcoming.
d. Depth of new pond. This will be discussed at the Management walk on 15th April.
e. Other matters.

- GW also wanted the depth of water in the pond to be looked at as it was much lower than recent years also the height of the moat overflow pipe which was too high resulting in water overflowing onto the meadow.
- AH thought that the ballcock to the feeding trough had been replaced. On being told that only a temporary fix had been made to stop the water overflowing she said she would take this up again with Richard Holland. **Action AH**

5. Correspondence. None.

6. Treasurer's Report. RH reported that verbally DP had told him that there were no items of income or expenditure since our last meeting.

7. Group training/equipment.
a. Brushcutter course. PC reported that there was money available for this but not enough volunteers at present to make it cost effective.
b. First Aid course. This was taking place at Somersham Millennium Pavilion on 9th April, Frances was attending from our group.
c. Any requirements. None.

8. Events and Activities.

a. Report on events since last meeting.

Amphibian torchlight walk Friday 1st April 2016

Although this was a public event, advertised in 'What's On' and by posters, only 5 people took part: Frances Dipper, John Buckley, Robert Strip, Guy Warren, David Pell. This did, however, give us a chance to concentrate on counting Great Crested Newts. The weather was overcast but still. All the ponds were surveyed and all were fairly murky with the exception of the 'half-moon pond' (is that what we call it?) just outside the wood. This was beautifully clear, with good plant growth underwater and a good depth of water (about half a metre in the middle?) and this was the only pond where significant numbers of GCN were seen. Toads were frequent in the moat but not seen elsewhere. No frogs were seen.

Main pond
Unidentified newts: 3
Common newts: 1

Moat
Unidentified newts: 1
GCN: 1 (but not certain)
Toads: 7 (including one pair)

Half-moon pond
Great Crested Newts: About 21
Smooth newt: 1

New pond
Nothing

Wood pond
Nothing

b. Future Events.

- Management Walk. A reminder that this will take place on 15th April starting at 7pm.
- Dawn chorus. This will take place on 22nd May commencing at 4.30am with breakfast afterwards at the Black Bull courtesy of Frances and John. RH to publicise in the usual places. It was agreed that as we may be moving off the reserve and the finishing time was weather dependant no mention should be made in the publicity about people being able to join in later than 4.30. **Action RH**
- Moth trapping and identification. Date confirmed as 3 July at 8am in the Village Hall.
- Bat walk, fungus foray. PC said there was no news yet from the potential leaders he has contacted.
- Botanical Survey. PC said he can lead this and will discuss it with Frances. **Action PC**

9. AGM 12 May 7.30pm

DG said she would do the refreshments but would appreciate help in the kitchen. **Action DG**
Advertising RH. **Action RH**
The meeting agreed with a kind proposal from Frances that after the formal business she gives an illustrated presentation 'Wildlife in and around Worts Meadow LNR' based on records that have come in and her own observations. **Action FD**

10. Any other business.

- GW said Ash dieback in Bourne Wood doesn't seem as bad as he thought it might be.
- PC said that Amey Cespa had contacted him about supplying volunteers for a day to help out on a nature reserve and that as they were close by he thought Worts Meadow LNR would be a good site. He thought they could build an amphibian refuge close to one of the ponds but asked us to think about other ideas.
  The meeting thought the project was a good idea. PC to reply. **Action PC**
- RG said that trees at nearby Copt Hall looked diseased and should he tell anyone. Following discussion RG said he would contact Richard Ashman. **Action RG**
- AH said she could organise another dog waste bin for us. It was agreed this should be sited outside the main gate to Bourne Wood, suitable for SCDC to collect from but not obstructing the gateway. **Action AH**
- RH said that he had been advised by the Village Hall committee that from June the main hall would be used for brass band practice every Thursday evening. He had discussed this with Frances and agreed with her that we would move our meeting day and that a new day would be decided at this meeting in consultation with members. Following a discussion it was decided to move to the first Wednesday of each month with the next meetings being on 6th July and 5th October.
  RH to advise the Lettings Secretary. **Action RH**
- PC said that following an accident at the Isleham reserve he was checking on all groups to ascertain whether they had cover under their Parish Council's insurance policy. RH said that to obtain cover he had to notify the Parish Clerk of each event and confirm that it would be risk assessed in advance. He had done this for all public events but had not done so for work parties. PC said he wanted to fix a meeting with himself, Frances, Parish Council Chairman and Parish Clerk present to discuss. **Action PC**
  There was a possibility that Cambridgeshire County Council would set up an insurance policy to cover all volunteers.

11. Date of next meeting.

The AGM will be held on Thursday 12th May and the next quarterly meeting will be on Wednesday 6th July.

The meeting ended at 9pm.