



FRIENDS OF RIDGE WOOD

Informal Meeting

Community Room, Tesco Extra, Yate

Start time: 7.30pm

Wednesday 13th January 2016

PRESENT:

Sarah Hardcastle	Chair
Jill Hows	Vice chair
Richard Aston	South Glos Council
David Barlow	Secretary / webmaster
Geoff Millard	Treasurer
Dianne Millard	
Emma Morrison	Publicity
Tim Fairhead	Avon Wildlife Trust
Dai Edwards	
Edward Wrighton	

Apologies: Pauline Wilson

1. Introductions / apologies

2. Minutes from last meeting

Minutes circulated by e-mail following last meeting; agreed.

3. Matters arising

- Lockup roof repairs / wall repairs / repairs to Greenways Rd entrance. RA confirmed that these have all been completed. Lockup roof was repaired at no cost to the FORW. Lockup has not yet been inspected to ensure it is now watertight: aim to do this at next workday.
- Tool purchase: SH has submitted an area forum grant application to SGC on behalf of the group which will hopefully fund this. A decision is expected in April. TF advised that it might help our case to send a representative to the area forum meeting in March to discuss the application. RA will advise of the date of this.
- In order to proceed with grant application, group policies on safeguarding and equality / diversity are now in place. DB will make these available on our website.
- Fundraising: JH has approached Waitrose regarding their green token scheme and completed an application form on behalf of the group. She met with Shirley, Waitrose's community liaison person who was enthusiastic about supporting the FORW and stated that events funding may be available. JH is awaiting further feedback on this and will report back to the group in due course. It may also be worth publicising our workdays to Waitrose staff in order to attract more volunteers.

- Training: DM has now completed the short first aid training course run by SGC so is able to act as first-aider on occasions where JH is not available: vote of thanks. She is yet to receive her certificate and will chase this up with RA's help if necessary. SH stated that she is not aware of any training dates for the coming year from SGC: RA advised that a new newsletter is about to come out which should hopefully contain this information. Phil Taylor has now left his post at SGC; our new contact will be Miles Harris.
- Insurance: SH informed the group that our TCV insurance policy has now been renewed until November 2017.
- Annual newsletter: EM has produced a draft of this which will be discussed later in the meeting.
- Volunteer hours: We have yet to submit these to SGC because SH was waiting to hear back from group members regarding time spent preparing for Forest Fun Time. RA advised that we will be able to submit these hours in retrospect – SH will aim to do this as soon as possible.

Actions: SH, RA, DB, All

4. Events

The moth discovery evening event held on 2nd October was discussed. All who attended agreed that the guide, Ray Barnett, was very engaging and interesting, but unfortunately there were very few moths to view. This was likely due to a combination of factors including holding the event late in the season, a particularly cold evening and the fact that one of the moth traps failed to operate. It was felt that we would like to run the event again, however if it were to be held earlier in the year the necessary later start time might deter families with children from attending. We will therefore keep this event in mind to run again in future years.

Events for 2016 were discussed. All agreed that we would like to run Forest Fun Time again, and a provisional date of Thursday 18th August was suggested. SH will contact forest schools to enquire about this and make a provisional booking.

Other potential events discussed included an evening chorus walk, wildflower walk, bat walk and fungi foray. It was decided that we would like to re-run the evening chorus walk as this was felt to be excellent and very popular – SH will contact Ed Drewitt to enquire about his availability.

Running another event as part of the SGC Discover festival was also discussed. Options for this (due to the autumn timing) include a bat walk and fungi foray – the latter would be a daytime event possibly held at a weekend or during October half term. TF has a new contact (Lee Hayward) who would be able to run this and advised that AWT are not planning to run a similar event this year. The cost of this is usually around £60. A vote was held and, of the 2 events, the bat walk was more popular; however it would be possible to run both if group members were able to commit to attending. SH will therefore make provisional enquiries about possible dates and feed back to the group.

It is hoped that we will attract sponsorship for Forest fun time so this will once again be a free event, however it was agreed that it would be appropriate to request voluntary donations for other events where the leader charges a fee. This would be in the form of a “suggested donation” of £2 for adults and £1 for children to help cover costs.

Action: SH, TF, RA (to please supply contact details for bat walk and fungi foray leaders)

5. Winter work programme

RA is unable to attend the upcoming workday on Sunday 24th January but has advised on a schedule of work to include:

- cutting back brambles and blackthorn from the area at the back of Dorset Way (opposite bluebell bank)
- continuing to cut back vegetation from the path edges at the Jubilee gardens entrance
- clearing the area in which snowdrops were previously planted.

SH should be able to attend and lead this workday. Committee members will meet at the lockup to collect tools: DB will wait at Melrose Close entrance to greet any members of the public who turn up.

Remaining workdays will take place on:

Sunday 21st February

Sunday 24th April (provisional date for bluebell conservation work)

It was decided after the meeting that **the previously proposed workday on Sunday 13th March should be cancelled** as RA can no longer attend and turnout is anticipated to be very low: unfortunately no suitable alternative dates in March could be found.

Workdays will be publicised via the usual channels as well as in the upcoming newsletter.

The April workday will hopefully again be used for bluebell conservation work. TF will approach PW to see whether she would be available to attend, and the aim would be to survey the Spanish bluebells in advance. Information regarding this work would again be displayed at the woodland entrances on the day.

Action: TF, All (attending workdays where possible)

6. 5 year woodland management plan

It was noted that the woodland management plan displayed on the website is now out of date. RA explained that SGC would normally commission somebody to write this, but that at present funding is limited. One possibility is that several Friends groups may have their management plans renewed at the same time via a group contract. This would be at no cost to the FORW. Until this happens, the existing 5 year management plan will remain in place.

Action: RA

7. Feedback from Hanson's liaison meeting

Thanks to JH who attended this meeting on behalf of the group in December. The following points were noted:

- Hanson's indicated they would be prepared to give financial support to Forest Fun Time 2016, and Jill has formally approached them about this.
- The quarry yard has now closed and 11 houses are planned for this site.

- The Quarry club (previous venue for FORW meetings) has also closed and this site has been earmarked for 9 houses.
- No further development at the Barnhill site is currently planned.
- Hanson's have launched a new community website which may be worth visiting.
- Alexandra Pick from Hanson's has offered to meet informally with group representatives to discuss issues within the woodland. JH is liaising with her about this, and RA will aim to attend.

Action: JH, RA.

8. Arrangements for future meetings

All agreed that the community room at Tesco Extra is a suitable venue for our group meetings going forward. RA proposed changing the start time for meetings to 7pm, but unfortunately SH is unable to make this earlier time at present, so meetings will continue to start at 7.30pm. SH advised that our contact at Tesco for booking the room is Georgie Hudd (community champion).

Action: None.

9. Annual newsletter

This has now been drafted by EM with copies circulated to the group. The content was felt to be very good. It was agreed to add some information regarding meetings, including our next meeting date, and some images (possibly clip-art). Once finalised, the newsletter will appear on our website in colour, with black and white copies to be distributed to the streets nearest the wood (including Dorset Way, Melrose Close, Jubilee Gardens, Walnut Gardens / Ave, Wiltshire Ave, Kent Ave, Greenways Rd (as far as bridge) and the new development by Waitrose. JH also suggested Brook St, the Parade and some of CS High St). Copies will also be placed in public areas such as the library and tourist information office. The aim is to inform local people who would not usually access our website about our activities and to hopefully attract new members and volunteers. New members can join by email (preferred), but there is also a postal address for those without internet access – EM will check with Yate Town Council if this address is still valid.

It was agreed that we will aim to get the newsletter out as soon as possible once our next meeting date has been finalised. Hopefully all committee members can assist with distribution.

Action: EM, all.

10. AOB

- Photography competition: this was previously discussed as a way to encourage submission of new photos for the website. It was decided that we will run it this year, with categories for age 10 and under, 10-16 and adult. Photographs can be of anything, as long as they were taken in Ridge Wood. The proposed deadline for entries is 31st August, and the competition will be advertised in our newsletter, on our website, via the Boundary magazine, on our noticeboards when space allows and via posters to local schools (distributed closer to the summer holidays). Submission will be electronic (by email) where possible and the committee's decision will be final. A short list of terms and conditions as above will be posted on our website. Prizes will be

required – we would aim to get sponsorship for this: JH will approach Waitrose in the first instance.

In future another idea put forward is to run a competition to design a new logo for the group, possibly involving local schools.

- GM and DM expressed concern that the woodland path at the back of Dorset Way is currently very muddy and treacherous underfoot. Previously this path was gravelled but RA explained that this requires heavy machinery and is therefore expensive; deterioration in the state of the woodland paths is to some extent to be expected during winter and in wet weather. This will be discussed at the informal meeting with Hanson's as previously they supplied some gravel for this.
- DB has an invoice from Link-2 for website hosting which needs to be paid: GM will assist with this.
- DB has received an email from a resident in Melrose Avenue / Dorset way regarding trees from the woodland overhanging their garden: this will be passed to RA for action.
- GM drew our attention to the upcoming SGC Environment Forum meeting taking place in CS on the evening of Thursday 4th Feb – RA and TF are already attending. Group members would be welcome to attend if available, otherwise TF will report back on this at the next meeting.

Action: JH, DB, GM, TF

11. Date of next meeting

This was agreed as Wed 23rd March at 7.30pm, subject to room availability (SH has now confirmed room booking).