



FRIENDS OF RIDGE WOOD

Informal Meeting

Community Room, Tesco Extra, Yate

Start time: 7.30pm

Wednesday 6th September 2017

PRESENT: Sarah Hardcastle Chair
Jill Hows Vice Chair
David Barlow Secretary / webmaster
Geoff Millard Treasurer
Dianne Millard
Bob Evans

Apologies: Richard Aston
Tim Fairhead
Emma Morrison
Alison Hosken

1. Introductions / apologies

2. Minutes from last meeting

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

3. Matters arising

- DB confirmed that the annual newsletter was circulated by email to the mailing list following our last meeting
- Lockup relocation: unfortunately Hanson's were not happy with the suggestion to move the container to their bottom car park near the gate. Therefore the plan remains to relocate it inside the woodland. We have not yet made any progress contacting a local contractor for a quote – it was suggested that SH could email John Morris directly about this. Several group members expressed concerns about security and the potential for vandalism if the container is no longer covered by CCTV; this will need to be monitored, a secure bolt fitted and warning notices placed on the container. As the move is now unlikely to happen prior to most of this year's autumn / winter work mornings, possible interim arrangements were discussed as it does not make sense to visit the lockup both before and after each session to collect / replace tools. SH and JH both volunteered to store tools in their garages. JH also mentioned a neighbour with an empty garage located close to the woodland which (with prior agreement) could potentially be used as a store accessible by all – she will make enquiries about this. We would need to check the terms of the group insurance policy regarding these arrangements.

- Publicity: EM has sent an update in absentia regarding recent publicity including an approach to both Yate and Sodbury voice and the Gazette regarding an article about the group, allowing us to publicise our work mornings. A journalist from the Gazette has got back to us with a positive response – we have now sent some photos to accompany a potential article.

Actions: SH, JH, EM

4. Upcoming Events

The Owl prowl is due to take place on Wed 20th Sept, 7.30pm. There is no Discover festival this year, which usually provides some publicity, so this year's event is being promoted via posters on woodland boards, the Boundary magazine, all of the usual local websites and posters displayed at Yate shopping centre. Also via our facebook page and Ian McGuire's own website / facebook. Previous turnouts have been good so we are hopeful for a lot of interest.

SH confirmed that she did contact Bristol Environmental records centre to attempt to find a contact to lead a Fungi foray, but did not hear back, therefore the Owl Prowl will be our only autumn event this year.

SH asked everyone to think about ideas for next year's events prior to the January meeting. Ideas include another evening chorus walk, and re-running forest fun time. As a late summer / autumn event we could consider another moth discovery evening, particularly if not constrained by Discover festival dates. Plans for next year's events will be agreed next time.

Action: All

5. Winter work programme

Dates for upcoming work days are as follows:

Sunday 17th Sept

Sunday 15th Oct

Sunday 19th Nov

At least a handful of people should be able to make each of these dates, so they will now go up on the website.

Work will include scrub clearance, litter picking, coppicing and maintaining the new trees planted last year. RA is unable to attend the September work morning, but SH has been given a schedule of work which we can complete on that day. It was suggested that we dedicate one of the autumn work mornings to coppicing, preferably on a date when RA can attend.

Work mornings will be publicised via the usual avenues and local publications, and via posters on the woodland boards once the Owl Prowl has taken place.

A further session of woodland management training was discussed. SH has contacted Anna Brunton from the Forest of Avon Trust; unfortunately her post is no longer funded so sessions are no longer free. She would be happy to provide another session at a cost of £120 for a half day. It was agreed that it would be worth approaching Hanson's to see if they would be prepared to help fund this training as it would enable the group to continue to maintain the woodland (and as Forest Fun

time did not take place this year, we did not receive the usual grant from them for this event) – JH will look into this.

It was agreed that dates for work mornings in January, February, March and April will be arranged by doodle poll due to core members not being present at the meeting.

Action: SH, JH, All (attending workdays where possible)

6. Insurance

It was agreed that SH will renew this for another year from November with TCV, but that we will look into signing the SGC volunteers' agreement next year if felt appropriate to save on this cost.

Action: SH

7. Quarry Life Awards

Alexandra Pick from Hanson's has approached JH and SH regarding this competition which is run by Heidelberg cement every 2 years. This year there will be a "community" stream so less ambitious projects have a chance of receiving an award. 2 UK quarries are selected to take part, and Chipping Sodbury is one of them this year. Unfortunately the Hanson's liaison meeting was cancelled and rescheduled, and none of the committee are able to make the new date. SH will email Alexandra Pick for an update on this. Ideas for a simple biodiversity project include surveying / replacing nestboxes and / or providing a bird identification board to be placed within the woodland, or something based around invasive species (building on our Spanish bluebell work). However there was general concern that the amount of work involved may be beyond our capabilities, particularly as the submission deadline is November.

Action: SH

8. AOB

- SH informed the group that Sally Pattison from SGC has been in touch about possibly designating Ridge Wood as a local "site of nature conservation interest" (SNCI). SH had to submit a short statement in support of this on behalf of the FORW. It is thought that the application has been successful although official confirmation is still awaited. This should help to ensure that if further development were planned on the site, local people would be informed and conservation implications considered. All agreed that this is very positive news.
- JH enquired as to further first aid training as she thinks hers is about to expire. SGC are running some sessions within the next few days, but the deadline for applications has passed. SH will enquire as to any future dates.
- The next SGC volunteers' celebration event will take place on Wednesday 27th September at Page Park. SH will try to attend this if possible as no one else is free, and will take along a display about the group previously put together by Geoff and Dianne (in need of updating).
- DM/GM mentioned a contact they have at the environment agency who takes part in regular paid "volunteer days". They wondered if it would be worth approaching this organisation for some additional labour to get some bigger jobs done within the woodland, such as resurfacing the steps. They will

enquire who we would need to contact to arrange this. Other companies are likely to run similar schemes.

Action: SH, DM, GM

9. Date of next meeting

January 2018: exact date to be agreed by doodle poll