



FRIENDS OF RIDGE WOOD

Informal Meeting

Community Meeting Room, Tesco Extra store, Yate

Start time: 7.30pm

Wednesday 5th September 2018

PRESENT:

Sarah Hardcastle (chair)
Jill Hows (vice chair)
Geoff Millard (treasurer)
Dianne Millard
David Barlow (secretary / webmaster)
Emma Morrison (publicity)
Ann Fletcher
Linda Hegedus

APOLOGIES:

Richard Aston
Tim Fairhead
Roger McLean
Pauline Wilson
Bob Evans
Edward and Janette Wrighton
Paula Spring
Jill Bendeaux

1. Introductions / apologies

2. Minutes from last meeting

Minutes circulated by email, agreed

3. Matters arising

- Lockup relocation: SH obtained a quote for moving the lockup from Alan Coward and Sons: this was £160 + VAT. There was some concern expressed about the muddy track and potential for the lorry to get stuck. The consensus of the group is now that moving the lockup inside the woodland would be too much of a security risk, so other options will be explored. Jill believes her neighbour would allow us to use his garage to store the tools, and will look into this again ready for the winter work season.

- Insurance: as discussed last time, the SGC volunteers' agreement insurance cover does not include insurance for our tools. SH contacted Zurich, and the price for contents-only insurance for next year would be £112.95 (or £107.31 with a TCV discount). This seems expensive, but cover would be on an "all-risks" basis. We do not believe that storing the tools in Jill's neighbours garage would alter this price, but SH will check. Agreed SH will obtain a second quote for comparison, but we do need to have some insurance in place from November.
- Corporate volunteering opportunities: GM looked into this again with the Environment agency. It seems we would need to decide what work we wanted to complete, the number of volunteers required and when we wanted to do it: we could then approach them regarding organising a day. SH will discuss with RA regarding re-gravelling the steps – would he be willing to supervise this activity and how many people would be required? This task may be best suited to the summer months.
- First-aid training: DM needs to re-certify. No first-aid courses were listed in the recent SGC newsletter, so SH will contact John Morris to enquire about this.
- Funding / sponsorship: We recently received a donation of £100 from the Chipping Sodbury festival committee – this was part of the money raised during quarry tours held as part of this year's festival, and a donation to FORW was suggested by David Weeks. SH has drafted a letter of thanks. The group account currently contains around £400, which is lower than it has been for some time. JH will chase up the Waitrose Green token scheme again, and we will aim to break even on future events.
- GDPR mailing list changes: DB sent out an email as discussed last time asking members if they wanted to remain on the mailing list. This led to a reduction in the number of contacts from around 80 to 30. 6 new members then signed up at Forest Fun Time. Although this is a big reduction in the number of contacts, hopefully those remaining will be "active" members, and our activities continue to be publicised more widely via posters / local publications etc.
- Local green space designation: RA does not have an update on this at present.

Actions: SH, JH

4. Events

- Forest Fun Time was recently held again on 23rd August. The event was a success with 94 parents and children attending. Ann stated that her grandchildren had really enjoyed the event, which is great feedback. GM will arrange payment to the Forest Schools practitioners as invoices have now been received. With the donation from Hanson's and donations received on the day for refreshments, the event almost broke even so it was agreed it would be a good idea to keep running it as a free event in future.

- The fungi foray will be held on Sunday 21st October at 10.30am. It will be led by Lee Hayward from the Cotswold Fungus group. We will charge £2 for adults and £1 for children attending (Lee's fee is £70). DM will produce a poster for the event for wider distribution, and a poster for the woodland noticeboards that also includes the dates of our upcoming work mornings.
- 2019 events will be discussed at our next meeting in January, but SH asked everyone to think about which events we would like to run or re-run next year.

Actions: DB, EM

5. Winter work programme

- Agreed dates for upcoming work mornings are:
Sunday 23rd September
Sunday 25th November
- The planned work morning on Sunday 21st October has had to make way for the fungi foray. We discussed whether to reschedule this, but agreed not to do so as we would like to try to encourage maximum attendance at the fungi foray.
- Provisional dates for work mornings in early 2019 were agreed as follows:
Sunday 13th January
Sunday 10th February
Sunday 10th March
Sunday 28th April (to include bluebell conservation work)
- RA has suggested that on our next work morning on 23rd September we can start winter habitat management work, coppicing / cutting back vegetation and dead-hedging. The signs can also be oiled (RA has oil). DB stated that he will be happy to attend to oil the signs, and can bring all other equipment needed for this.
- SH wondered about the potential for planting more trees during the work season this year, particularly in view of Ash dieback. Vote of thanks to Tim for sending some useful documents regarding alternative species which can be planted to replace native ash. However the TCV "I dig trees" promotion does not appear to be running this year. The Woodland Trust give away free trees, but the next delivery date is March which is quite late in the season. Hanson's have previously mentioned supplying trees for our use, so it would be worth contacting Alexandra Hemming about this.
- JH mentioned that there is a loop path towards the Quarry Rd end of the wood that is very overgrown with brambles, so this would be good to target on a work morning.

Actions: SH, All (attending work mornings where possible)

6. SGC Volunteers Celebration Events

- This is due to take place on Thursday 27th September in Kingswood as per the recent newsletter, although no official invitation has yet been received. SH is unable to attend, so if anyone would like to attend on our behalf please let SH know and she will forward further information.

7. AOB

- EM asked whether it would be a good idea to try to agree some major projects for the group (e.g replacing steps, planting trees) and prioritise to ensure that we make progress towards our long term goals. These could be in line with the 5-year woodland management plan – we are unsure whether this was ever finalised and will check with RA.
- DB mentioned an email received from a resident in Walnut Avenue regarding trees from the wood overhanging their garden. DB will check with RA whether this was dealt with.
- SH mentioned that a resident raised concern at the August litter pick regarding the fenced off wildflower regeneration area – they felt it looked messy and was unnecessary. JH stated that wildflowers in this area were obviously declining in recent years so we agreed that, while it is unfortunate to restrict access to this area, it is necessary to allow the wildflowers to recover
- SH informed the group that she intends to step down as chair at the next AGM, due to moving house and other commitments. Hence a new chair will be sought. She wanted to give other members as much notice as possible so that succession planning can take place; one consideration is the SGC volunteers agreement that currently she has signed and is due for renewal next April (she will ask RA whether another member could sign this next year on behalf of the group).

Actions: SH, DB

8. Date of Next meeting

Provisionally agreed as Wednesday 9th January 2019

Actions: GM (to book room)