



Friends of Rising Sun Country Park

Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 February 2023

Present: Claire Partleton, Eric Styan, Keith Taylor, Janet Weatherburn, Jan Casson, Dennis Nelson, Vivien Fenn-Webber, Ian Hogg.

Apologies: Pat Nelson, Val Watson; and from North Tyneside Council (NTC) - Chris Tallack, Pixie Phelan, Stephen Gibbinson and Graeme Sample.

Matters arising from January Meeting

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) - The amendments to the Group's policy document which were previously suggested, have now been incorporated and the updated document was formally agreed.

Willow structures in the Wildlife Garden – The dates of 21 and/or 22 February have been offered for the work to be carried out; however, the group felt that these dates were not convenient (half-term holiday), so Claire will see if alternative dates can be arranged. She will also approach another potential supplier in case they can offer more suitable dates. **(Action Point 1: CP)**

Interpretation Boards and Signage – In view of there being no NTC presence, this will be carried forward to March, although Eric is aware that the company which has previously been used is now in contact with the Council. **(AP2: NTC)**

Bird and Bat Boxes – With thanks to Claire and Eric, all of these across the centre grounds and Quarry have been identified and catalogued, and a map has been produced to show their precise location. Photos have been taken to show their current condition and some remedial work can be carried out in due course. Mapping of the boxes in the wider park (NTC managed areas) will be undertaken at the next available opportunity. In addition, the Friends received a donation of two open front nesting boxes which will also be sited in the park in the coming days **(AP3: ES, KT & CP)**

Squirrel Survey – In view of the lack of a response from the bio-diversity officer and at the recommendation of Cramlington & District Red Squirrel Group, it was agreed that we will cease any monitoring work. Claire will let the relevant teams know of this decision. **(AP4: CP)**

Cherry Trees – With thanks to Eric for sourcing these, two trees have now been planted in the main grounds. Thanks go to Vivien for funding the cost of one of these. She will also be providing a small plaque, in memory of her horse.

Beeline Project – Eric had asked NTC if they needed any help with this, but in the meantime, a group called The Guardians of the Galaxy have planted approximately 1,000 bulbs near the Stephenson Dipping Pond, so for the time being, no further action is required.

Nature Walks and Talks – Two events have been arranged; 30 March at 08.30 for which all 6 available places have been taken. The second event is on 6 April (same time), for which three

places are available. Claire will promote these events on social media, and they will cost the Group £ 30.00 per session. **(AP5: CP)**. We haven't heard anything further from James Common (senior Naturalist at the Natural History Society), or Mike Pratt (Northumbria Wildlife Trust), ~~so~~ Eric will continue to make enquiries with regards to arranging Bat Walks via a contact he knows. **(AP6: ES)**.

Educational Visits to the Stables – In view of the time of the year, and the corresponding movement of the livestock, added to the on-going uncertainty regarding the running of the farm, it was agreed to keep this matter on hold until things become a little clearer. **(AP7: KT to add to agenda for May or June)**.

Seed Swap event – Claire, Janet and Jan met with Mike Cruddace to discuss this matter, and an event is being held on 18 February, where we should be able to obtain some seeds for the allotment. These will be local varieties, so the expectation is that they should thrive. Claire and Jan will attend the event on behalf of the group **(AP8: CP & JC)**.

Litter-Pick – A group called Living to Learn, based in North Shields came out to help on 30 January. We have some photos and Eric will aim to include some in the next Newsletter. Following the event Claire contacted the group via email, and the students are keen to attend future events. The group visited the centre on Monday 6th February to receive a dozen strawberry plants for their allotment from the Friends Gardening group to them to show our appreciation. The Friends have been invited to visit the Living to Learn Allotment. The next Litter-pick event is on **Monday 27 February, at 10.30**.

Great British Spring Clean – This is scheduled for the period 17 March to 2 April. Our event will take place on 25 March, and we will discuss this more at our March meeting. **(AP9: KT to add to March agenda)**.

City Nature Challenge – The aim of this project is to identify the different types of wildlife which exist in our area, and it is scheduled for the end of April/ early May, so we have some time to prepare for this. **(AP10: KT to add to April agenda)**.

Remembering the Past – Claire has unearthed some old information from NTC, which she has scanned. Vivien will check to see if she has a copy of the old information leaflet (the brown one), which was issued by NTC, so this can be scanned. Eric has a contact (Paul), who is an extremely useful source of information, and Susan McGinty (NTC) has been looking into the history of the hospital. As a group, we need to decide what we intend to do in terms of collating all this information, so this will be an agenda item at each meeting. **(AP 11: KT to add to agenda)**.

Promoting the Group in the NTC magazine – Unfortunately despite meeting the publishing deadline for the latest issue the community space section was full, so the advertisement will be included in the summer edition of Our North Tyneside Magazine which will go out in June. **(AP 12: NTC)**.

20th Anniversary of the opening of the Centre - NTC will be arranging a number of activities, including a Summer Event on 16 August, so we will work with them to see how we can support

them. We will hopefully hear of other NTC planned activities in the coming weeks. **(AP13: NTC).**

The Friends' Calendar – With thanks to the bakery, for their financial contribution, and for selling copies, we eventually sold out, although the last few were sold at a reduced price. Total income was £ 710.50, which includes the bakery contribution of £ 250.00, and the production costs were £ 373.00. To take this forward for 2024, Eric will contact the printers to find out exactly what they need, and by when. We need to agree how we can attract photographic contributions, and we will use social media and the Newsletter to publicise this. **(AP14: All).**

Green Flag preparation – Friends are encouraged to complete the “mystery shopper” document and to send this to Pixie at NTC, so they can consider where improvements may be made. Claire will send out the blank document for those interested.

Treasurer's Report

We received a very generous donation of £560.00 via the Leeds Building Society Colleague Volunteer Donation Scheme. With the usual contributions from the sale of bird food and the income from the calendars totalling £707.50 (this includes the bakery contribution of £250.00 production costs were £373.20), we now hold £ 4,036.00 in the bank and £ 30.00 in cash. If space in the Newsletter permits, we can include a note of thanks for the contribution, and send them a copy.

The Group's Constitution Document – This has been updated and the committee members signed a copy. The updated document was required to meet our Sum-Up financial obligations for AML (anti-money laundering) law.

Other Business – Seed paper hearts have been for the Climate coalition #showthe love campaign. These will be left in the foyer, for people to take and plant in their gardens on Valentine's Day.

Allotment and Grow & Eat (VODA) - Claire and Janet met with Vicky Batsioudi (Grow and Eat Development Worker with Voluntary Organisations Development Agency VODA) on Wednesday 8th February, to discuss the development of the allotment area. The meeting was very productive with Vicky advising on a number of areas relating to the allotment. Vicky will visit the allotment on 16th February to advise on how we can use the space better. Vicky also invited 2-3 members group to a Spring Social Event on 23rd March, (RSVP by 16th March) which will provide an opportunity to network with other community led gardening projects in North Tyneside. There is Community Grant funding for up to £500, which we could apply for. In addition to the allotment advice Vicky also made introduction to Hannah from the Volunteer Centre who can help promote our volunteer opportunities and Victoria (Information & Communications officer) who provided some very useful advice about our Social Media Platforms. Claire to follow up with Victoria for additional support. **(AP15: CP).**

Next Meeting: Friday 10 March 2023, 12 midday @ Countryside Centre, RSCP