



Friends of Rising Sun Country Park

Meeting: Friday 10th June 2022

Minutes:

Present: Eric Styan (Treasurer), Keith Page (Secretary), Claire Partleton (Chair), Janet Weatherburn, Ian Hogg (McDonalds), Jan Casson, Dave Gordon (NTC), Chris Tallack (NTC), Dennis Nelson, Pat Nelson, Vivien Fenn-Webber
Apologies: Keith Taylor, Stephen Gibbinson (NTC), Graeme Sample (NTC)

Minutes 8th April and 19th May 2022 - Matters Arising

Invited Guest

CP informed the meeting that Matt Sharp (Rising Sun Farm Manager) had this morning sent apologies as he was unable to attend this meeting. In view of the threat to Public Safety caused by the continuing 'escape' of Rising Sun Farm livestock, it was decided to discuss some of the issues. There have been numerous incidents this year (at least 16) of livestock leaving their fields/enclosures and wandering out onto public footpaths, including within the last 24 hours. There is a question over the suitability of the fencing for cattle, especially a sizeable Bull which is currently in a field where - due to gaps in the hedging, he is retained only by a wire fence less than three feet in height. The gates are not adequately secured, being mainly held shut by string. One pair of field gates is also 'hinged' by string alone. It was highlighted that should cattle become loose while the Outdoor Education Team are out with large groups of children there is potential for a serious incident.

In view of the threat posed to Public Safety it was decided to leave this as a Standing Item on the Agenda and to again invite Matt Sharp to attend our next meeting.

S.106 Monies & Canopy

Kp updated the meeting re s.106 monies from housing development at Station Road North. Kp has met with Daniel Wise at NTC to get updated figures of monies available and is expecting an updated spreadsheet next week. There is currently over £600,000 available to be spent on Public Rights of Way (PROWs), tree-thinning, aquatic enhancement, and information boards, among others. There will also be a further sum in excess of £370,000 over the next few years as the site west of Station Road North develops. Progress is being made on plans for tree-thinning. Suggested that a meeting is set-up between Parks Managers, Land Manager, PROW Officer, FoRSCP, Biodiversity Officer and Land Architecture Officer to progress plans on pathway improvements and other areas. IH asked if any s.106 monies could be spent on fixing potholes on Kings Road North. Kp advised this was outside the remit of s.106 and that DG had provided contact details within NTC to pursue this issue - unfortunately, when a resident tried to pursue this, people within NTC passed the baton until phone numbers given weren't answered. Kp to contact local Ward Councillors.

Treasurer's Report

Counter Bird Food Donation box emptied - £37. Duck food box emptied twice - £15 and £19. Bird food box also emptied - £10. Currently have £84.71 in cash and £2766.02 in the bank.

ASDA entrance

No update. CT advised ne had been told it would happen in March (it hasn't). Kp to follow-up with Head of Regeneration at NTC.

Northern Power Grid (NPG)/Flight Diverters

NPG had phoned CP this morning and were sending a Customer Service Representative out to meet CP and CT next week.

Meadow

No update.

Fund-Raising Ideas

JC wants to start the felt stag artwork soon. CT suggested we may like to get a card-reader as few people carry cash any more. JC to investigate.

Child Safety Near Car Park

No update but DG updated the meeting re a meeting he'd had with NTC Marketing re signage and gave KP a summary document.

Cherry Trees

No update.

Volunteering

DG updated the meeting re plans and advertising to recruit more volunteers. volunteering. Posters currently at the printers. Volunteers' Application Form needs to be updated and is currently with HR for approval.

Jobs List

Agreed there needs to be a jobs list for volunteers. ES provided one he produced a while back. Agreed there were several jobs in the Wildlife garden which could be progressed.

Willow-Weaving

CP and JW met with Justine (NTC Casual Education Warden). Justine advised that the existing willow in the wildlife garden be replaced with slower growing variety which will be easier to manage. CP advised cost would be £350 - agreed Friends' Group would fund this project. DG will inform Justine. A section of arch which has been storm damaged will be removed next Thursday, along with trimming back other parts. DG advised all volunteers get a cuppa.

Signing In and Out

DG advised this is being worked on at the moment but volunteers/friends should not be working alone.

Flower Beds

CP informed the meeting that, due to the access times to the centre grounds, Shiremoor Scouts would not be able to take on the flower bed at the front of the old hospital building (Scouts meet in the evenings when the grounds are closed).

AOB

JC suggested that when the new signage appears, we have an open day. Agreed as a good idea, perhaps next spring, tied-in to next year's events calendar.

CP advised that Heather (Education Warden) had asked if our group could help re sorting out the play equipment in the Giant's Garden. DG suggested that potential projects in the Giant's Garden would be a good focus for the next few Thursdays.

JW stated better water access was needed for the raised beds area. Suggested we keep a hose in the shed. Water butts need to be connected to the downpipes. All raised beds are now in use.

Kp stated he had been told of a member's experience of a see-through beehive as mentioned last meeting by JW. CT gave CP contact details for a local bee-keeper which CP will give to Kp with a view to exploring the idea further.

Kp asked if the Lily Rose pond liner needed to be replaced. ES advised it wasn't thought it was actually leaking, just that under the bridge it wasn't high enough so water lapped over the edge of the liner and he has pulled up the liner. Agreed the sides are too steep. Consider pre-seeded hessian to increase plant numbers. CP advised that whilst the pond has a lot of leaf debris, it was also full of wildlife. CP to lead on planning pond refurbishments/improvements.

DG updated re the tree leaning on the wires - it will be inspected by relevant people imminently.

DG has contacted NTC Marketing re updating the Park Maps. Not an issue but if we want the Park Extension included, they would need the artwork. Kp to email this to DG.

DG has explored having an interpretation board at the Bird Hide. Agreed this is a good idea as would help people recognise what they may see on the Swallow Pond.

DG advised that, if we wish to replace the noticeboards withing the RSCP Centre with photos of the park and its flora and fauna, Elaine on Reception would print them and do this. Kp to send regular photos from the FB page.

CT advised that agreement is now in place to create a new pond in Benton Field.

Kp asked if there was any movement in the updating of the Park's Interpretation Boards - due to running out of time, it was agreed to defer this to the next meeting.

Date of Next Meeting:

Our next meeting will be on Friday 8th July at 12 mid-day at the RSCP Centre.