



Friends of Rising Sun Country Park Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 July 2023

Present: Claire Partleton (Chair), Eric Styan (Treasurer), Keith Taylor (Secretary), Jan Casson, Vivien Fenn-Webber, Amanda Williams, Martin Huttly; Chris Tallack and Elaine Elliott (North Tyneside Council – NTC)

Apologies: Janet Weatherburn, Ian Hogg (McDonalds), Pixie Phelan (NTC), Stephen Gibbinson (NTC), Lisa and Michelle (ASDA Community Champions)

After the formal introductions and apologies, the Minutes of the June meeting were accepted as a true record.

Matters arising from the June Meeting

Chippings for the Wigloo structure in the Wildlife Garden: We're now heading for five months since we installed the Wigloo in the wildlife garden (1 March 2023), so in view of this delay, it was proposed that we go ahead and buy some chippings to try and eliminate weeds. This was put to the vote and agreed. However, Eric has a possible source, and he agreed to make some enquiries. He should know within one week, and if this proves unsuccessful, we will go ahead and make the purchase. This will be reviewed at the next volunteer's working party. **(Action Point 1).**

Voluntary Organisations Development Agency (VODA) Grant: Following the purchase of some perennial plants, we now hold the sum of £ 94.57 as a balance, and if this sum is not spent by November this year, then we can expect to be asked to pay it back to VODA. **(AP 2).** Some of the group attended a recent event called the Community Garden Network, which is aimed at sharing ideas and materials, such as plant swaps, to support various gardening and allotment projects in North Tyneside.

The Wildlife Garden and Giant's Garden: The Wildlife Garden is in serious need of some attention, but in order to take this forward, we need to speak to Graham and Stephen (both NTC), to see what they would like us to do. However, the best time to tackle this area would be after the traditional growing season, so we can review this in the Autumn. In the Giant's Garden, Eric has been making good progress on making a new mud kitchen, which, we are suggesting, needs to be re-sited. Eric offered to e-mail Stephen to discuss this. **(AP 3).** Incidentally, if any funding is required, we may be able to make an application under a process called Save Our Wild Isles.

Remembering the Past: Claire has been accessing various newspaper archives, and has contacted North Shields library, while Amanda has been doing extensive research on Census records. They will share the material they have put together, to see how best this can be presented. Unfortunately, because of restrictions within NTC in terms of how external technology can be used, we won't be able to use the television sets in any of the NTC buildings, so it looks as though we will have to use a physical display board, as we did for the Christmas event. **(AP 4).**

NTC event on 16 August 2023: All scarecrows must be submitted by the end of July, so that we can form the trail for the event. ASDA has kindly agreed to provide small prizes for the children taking part. There are likely to be six stalls in the Holystone room, and we are not permitted to sell anything which is usually available from the café. Eric will see if he can borrow the hook-a-duck game from the Springfield Park Community Centre. **(AP 5)**. Note: volunteers are needed to help NTC on the day and if you can help, please let Elaine know.

The Friends' Calendar: We now have 5 or 6 keen photographers who have given us permission to use their photos for the calendar. Eric will contact the printers, to sort out the deadline for submitting the material, and the bakery, to see if they will be willing, again, to make a donation and/or sell the calendar on our behalf. **(AP 6)**.

Volunteering Policies: Pixie has been extremely busy, so she has not been able to take this forward, but the intention is for her to run an awareness session to ensure that all volunteers are aware of the various NTC policies and what they can, and cannot do, in terms of carrying out activities in the park. **(AP 7)**.

Cheque signatories: The bank has been approached to enable the change of name on the cheque book. Keith Taylor's name will be added. Eric has obtained the relevant paperwork and this is now with Keith. **(AP 8)**.

The new Website: Amanda and Claire will meet to discuss some ideas as to what the new site could include. **(AP 9)**.

Plaques: We need to obtain permission from NTC (Pixie) before we can put up a plaque on the new cherry trees. **(AP 10)**. The plaque on the Dipping Pond has been cleaned and is looking as good as new.

Treasurer's Report

We currently have £ 37.99 in cash, and £ 4,159.72 in the bank, with a number of recent purchases to be factored in. More duck food is required and Eric will obtain this.

Update from North Tyneside Council (NTC)

It is expected that within the next few days, materials will be delivered to allow for the assembly of 2 new Tern islands for the Swallow Pond; these need to be otter-proof. Contractors will be brought in to get these put in place. Also, the bird hide overlooking the Swallow Pond is in a very poor state and will be replaced, using Section 106 monies. Some of these funds are also likely to be spent on footpath works across the park.

Update from Northumberland Estates: With them not being in attendance, there were no updates. Claire is aware of a report of littering at the top hide, which was swiftly cleared. However, there was no news about the replacement of the fencing that is still down. Note: if problems persist in that area, we can approach the Planning Department at NTC.

Other Business:

Amanda has been doing some excellent work to create a Project Plan for the group. The idea is to list all the different activities we are involved in, and present them in a simple, clear document, so that anyone can see what we are doing and what progress is being made, so that things are not forgotten about. The first draft has been distributed and will eventually appear on the website. Amanda will update the plan throughout the year.

Jan has produced an amazing felt model of the stag's head. The stag has been a firm favourite in the park for many years, and once the head is mounted, we need to add an inscription, then see Stephen, to agree where this can be displayed. **(AP 11)**.

Forthcoming events:

28 July to 6 August: Love your Parks week

31 July: next litter-pick

7-13 August: Allotment week. (Claire will speak to Stephen regarding the feasibility of inviting members of the public to see what we have been doing).

29/30 September: Euroblitz. Claire will distribute the background material.

Next Meeting: Friday 11 August 2023, 12 midday @ Countryside Centre, RSCP