



Friends of Rising Sun Country Park Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 August 2023

Present: Claire Partleton (Chair), Keith Taylor (Secretary), Vivien Fenn-Webber, Amanda Williams, Janet Weatherburn, Lisa and Michelle (ASDA Community Champions)

Apologies: Eric Styan (Treasurer), Jan Casson, Ian Hogg (McDonalds); Pixie Phelan, Stephen Gibbinson, Chris Tallack and Elaine Elliott (all North Tyneside Council: NTC)

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

Matters arising from the July Meeting

Chippings for the Wigloo structure in the Wildlife Garden: Eric had advised Claire that Wickes were selling 100 litre bags of chippings at an offer price of £ 30.00 for three, each bag covering approximately 2.5 square metres. After a discussion, mainly for the benefit of those who, amazingly, don't know the difference between square metres and metres squared, it was agreed that we should purchase 6 bags, and keep anything not used as spare. It was noted that children might decide to throw the chippings into the pond, in which case we'll clear the pond and not replace them. Keith will contact Eric to ask him to make the purchase, and they will lay them once they arrive. **(Action Point 1).**

Voluntary Organisations Development Agency (VODA) Grant: No further purchases have been made, so this needs to be kept under review. **(AP2).** Claire and Janet had emptied the donation box which we used for the produce from the allotment, and they have put the sum of £ 16.91 in the cash box to be used as a float for the table-top sale at the festival. Unfortunately, the chain for the box has been broken, so the meeting agreed to purchase another, along with a new tap connector for the hose. Claire will ask Terry if he can sort out the purchase for the hose. **(AP3).**

The Wildlife Garden and Giant's Garden: Eric had informed Claire that he had e-mailed Stephen (NTC) about this, but with neither in attendance, this will be taken forward. Claire received email from Elaine to say that Stephen is happy for any volunteer help in the Giants & Wildlife Gardens. It was noted that the pond needs clearing of debris and Keith said he would look at this the following Thursday. In terms of developing the Wildlife Garden, Claire mentioned that Donna Weiss from Groundworks may be able to help us obtain some funding through the Wild Isles Project. Claire will make further enquiries, and if, possible, prepare an application. **(AP4).**

Remembering the Past: Claire and Amanda will be meeting up to agree how this is taken forward for the presentation on 9 October this year. In view of the issues that the screen in the Exhibition Room cannot support a memory stick, we'll need to use a physical display board, as we did for the Christmas event. **(AP5).**

NTC event on 16 August 2023: The scarecrows trail material has been distributed and thanks go to ASDA for their generous donations of prizes for the children. As there is an entrance fee for those attending, our activities (hook-a-duck and hoopla) will be free. Our fund-raising

activities will be done via the table-top sale as well as a donation box. To save some time on the day, we can set our table out on Monday.

The Friends' Calendar: The number of photos which have been submitted for consideration is still disappointingly low, and this led to a discussion as to whether we should proceed, in view of the small profit we are likely to realise, added to which the bakery has indicated that it is unable to make a contribution. The bakery will, however, still sell the calendar for us. After a discussion, it was agreed that we will go ahead. 100 calendars will cost us £278.00, plus VAT of £ 55.60, making £ 333.60 in total. Keith will contact Eric to ask him to find out from the printers what their deadline is, as we need to sort through the photos on hand. In order to try and save some time, it was agreed that at the next meeting (8 September 2003), those who are able will meet one hour earlier and will agree the final selection of the photos. This, however, is dependent on the printer's deadline. A further suggestion was made that, before 8 September, the photos should be distributed among the group, so that we can narrow the selections down to a more manageable number to deal with on the day.

Volunteering Policies: Nothing further to report. To be taken forward. **(AP6).**

Cheque signatories: Keith has been into the bank and has had his identify officially verified. The documents are now with the bank and we await their confirmation that the necessary changes have been made. **(AP7).**

The new Website: Nothing further to report. Amanda and Claire will meet to discuss some ideas as to what the new site could include, although in view of the number of other issues we are currently dealing with, there are no time pressures on this. **(AP8).**

Plaques: We are still awaiting confirmation from NTC that they agree that a plaque on one of the new cherry trees can be installed – and that they will do the installation. **(AP9).**

Stag's Head: We have had confirmation that this can be installed in the Exhibition Room; we now need NTC to arrange for this to be done. **(AP10).** If anyone can think of a suitable inscription for the board on which it will be displayed, please let the group know.

Treasurer's Report: This was not covered at the meeting and will be picked up in September.

Update from North Tyneside Council (NTC): As there was no NTC representation, there was nothing to report.

Update from Northumberland Estates: As there was no representation, there was nothing to report.

Project Plan: Amanda has been keeping this under review and it was agreed that the decisions we needed to make at this meeting had been addressed.

Other Business

Claire has received an e-mail from the lady who provided advice and assistance when we erected the **Wigloos** in the Wildlife Garden, in which she has requested payment for her services. This is for £ 200.00, which came as a huge surprise to the group. Apart from the fact that it is not a formal invoice, it has gone straight to Claire and the group felt that this was excessive, given the amount of time she spent with us. After a discussion, in which it was confirmed that she had, briefly, visited the park to get an idea of the site, and had spent just under two hours on the day of the installation itself, it was felt that, even allowing for her travelling time, a generous estimate would be that she had spent no more than four hours in total, so the cost does seem excessive. Unfortunately, we do not have any paperwork to cover an estimate before the work was done, nor, in fact, any agreement on our part. Vivien offered to draft a response, which she will put for the group for further comment. **(AP11)**.

Claire had received, and circulated, an e-mail from the NTC Education Team, seeking the group's help for the **Christmas grotto**, as we have done in earlier years. However, it's been suggested that the first meeting should take place on 23 November, which the group felt was too late. Claire is due to meet with a new member of the Education Team next week, and will discuss this issue with her; we need a clearer idea of what needs to be done, and by when, so that we can avoid some of the challenges we've faced in recent years. **(AP12)**.

This year's **Euro Blitz** is taking place over the weekend of September 29 and 30, so if anyone is interested, can you please let Claire know.

In view of various holidays and other commitments, the proposed litter-pick on 28 August, which is a Bank Holiday, will not go ahead. Claire will make the necessary announcements on social media.

In order to try and improve communication and speed up decision-making, it was suggested that we set up a WhatsApp group for the Friends and Volunteers. This was universally agreed. Note: for those who were not in attendance, their agreement will be expressly sought in case they would prefer not to be added.

Next Meeting: Friday 8 September 2023, at 12.00@ Countryside Centre, RSCP – but one hour earlier for those selecting the photos for the calendar.