



Friends of Rising Sun Country Park **Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 September 2023**

Present: Claire Partleton (Chair), Eric Styan (Treasurer), Keith Taylor (Secretary), Jan Casson, Amanda Williams, Elaine Elliott (NTC) and Amanda (Bennett (North Tyneside Council – NTC), Rev Dr Rae Caro (Rising Sun Neighbours)

Apologies: Janet Weatherburn, Vivien Fenn-Webber, Ian Hogg (McDonalds), Pixie Phelan (NTC), Stephen Gibbinson (NTC), Chris Tallack (NTC), Lisa and Michelle (ASDA Community Champions).

Note: Claire had received a message before the meeting from Jill Potts (Northumberland Estates), to let her know that as she is now required to work on Fridays, she will no longer be able to attend these meetings.

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

Matters arising from the August Meeting

All the **chippings** for the Wigloo structure have now been laid. Hopefully those visiting the Wildlife Garden will respect the area.

We have about £ 80.00 of the **VODA Grant** still to spend, with the deadline being 15 November 2023. It was suggested that some items, such as fish blood and bone be purchased to improve the soil in the allotment area. Eric has a price list which he will bring in.

A new connector has been attached to the hose for the allotment area, at no cost. Thanks go to Terry for providing and fitting this.

The Wildlife Garden and Giant's Garden: Although we may be able to apply for some funding, through Save Our Wild Isles, this would need to be discussed with, and agreed by, NTC first. In the meantime, NTC intends to purchase some nets to try and contain the weeds in the pond. Eric has experience of submitting funding applications and will review those he has previously been involved with, to see how best we could draft an application.

Remembering the Past: This will form part of the wider event which takes place on Monday, 9 October this year. The NTC Education Team has located some posters from a previous heritage event, 10 years ago, but these will need to be updated. NTC can also provide some display boards which can be used on the day, but the room will need to be set up in advance. NTC may also be able to help with printing and laminating various documents. Claire and Amanda W will be meeting to finalise the Friends' presentation material. The meeting agreed that any purchases which are required can be made. The **Stag's Head** is due to be mounted on the back board next week. Elaine will discuss event with Stephen on his return from leave, and hopefully arrange installation in the exhibition room ahead of the event. We need to come up with a suitable form of words then sort out the engraving for the plaque.

The Friends' Calendar: Before the meeting, five of the group had met to select the 13 photographs which, assuming there are no problems at the printers, will appear for 2024. The images will be sent to the printers next week. A huge vote of thanks goes to Claire who has done a massive amount of work in getting us to this stage. This has involved publicising the calendar, encouraging people to submit their pictures, collating and distributing the pictures round the rest of the group, so that the final selections could be made, and chairing the selection meeting. This has been a stressful and very time-consuming process, so with this in mind, we need to decide if we wish to go ahead with this for 2025 and if so, to ensure that we fully prepare for the exercise, so that we can avoid a late rush, as we did this year. Possible alternatives to a calendar were suggested as Christmas Cards or note-books.

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.

Cheque signatories: All relevant documents and information have now been submitted so this matter can now be closed.

The new Website: Amanda W and Claire will meet to discuss some ideas as to what the new site could include, although in view of the other matters they are already involved with, this is low priority at the moment. It will be kept under review as an item on our planning document.

Plaques: As Stephen was on holiday, this will be picked up next month.

Wigloo cost: At the last meeting Vivien had agreed to draft a response to the lady who had submitted a request for payment in the sum of £ 200.00 for professional advice and assistance, which we all felt was excessive. In Vivien's absence, Claire read the proposed reply, which was agreed, except for the sum to be offered be raised from £30.00 to £ 50.00.

In preparation for the **Christmas Grotto** events, the Friends will start working on this in late October/ early November, and it was suggested that we could do this on Thursday mornings, as part of our regular volunteering sessions. In addition to the school's Grottos there is a public event scheduled to take place on Saturday, 2 December, between 11.00 and 3.00. and there will be a fun fair, craft tables and a church choir. It's a free event for the public, although stall-holders will be charged.

The **EuroBio-Blitz 2023** event takes place on 29-30 September. Claire, Amanda B and Amanda W met to discuss a possible public event to be held on the Saturday (30th) which would involve pond dipping activities and a 'guided' walk in the wider park. This event still requires approval from Pixie, additional volunteer help would be appreciated if this gets the go ahead.

Treasurer's Report

We currently have £ 44.81 in cash, and £ 4,339.29 in the bank, although there are the usual small purchases to be accounted for. It was agreed that any monetary donations from the allotment produce table should be accounted for under the one Friends' account.

Update from North Tyneside Council (NTC): A "mystery shopper" report was received only within the last few days, so they have not had time to digest it yet. Any areas where the Friends may be able to help can be raised at the next meeting.

Other Business:

As this was Rev Caro's first meeting, she was invited to give the group an idea of what her groups were hoping to get out of their visits to the park, in case there were any areas where the Friends Group might be able to assist. She explained that the emphasis was on the Community, so that as many people as possible could enjoy being in the park and exploring it further. Sometimes accessibility was an issue; an example being those who may not be able to purchase outdoor clothing or footwear, so her churches hope to run a charitable scheme to provide some of these items. She confirmed that Claire has her contact details, and she is aware of the litter-picks and the Thursday volunteer sessions. She will attend our meetings depending on her other commitments – and sent her apologies in advance that she would not be able to attend in October.

Forthcoming events:

Next litter-pick: 25 September.

NT Garden Network Event: suggested dates for next meeting:- Thursday 19th October 10-12 or 12-2 or Thursday 26th October 10-12 or 12-2 preference need to be given to Vicky Batsioudi (Grow & Eat) by 15th September – please let Claire know if you wish to attend.

Next Meeting: Friday 13 October 2023, 12 midday @ Countryside Centre, RSCP