



Friends of Rising Sun Country Park

Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 November 2023

Present: Claire Partleton (Chair), Eric Styan (Treasurer), Keith Taylor (Secretary), Jan Casson, Vivien Fenn-Webber, Janet Weatherburn, Chris Tallack and Elaine Elliott (North Tyneside Council – NTC), Lisa and Michelle (ASDA Community Champions), Rev Dr Rae Caro.

Apologies: Amanda Williams, Martin Huttly, Ian Hogg (McDonalds), Pixie Phelan (NTC), Stephen Gibbinson (NTC), Amanda Bennett, (NTC).

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

Matters arising from the October Meeting

Voluntary Organisations Development Agency (VODA) Grant: Following the purchase of the materials to improve the soil in the allotment area, we now have a balance of £ 37.01. It was agreed these remaining funds would be used to purchase some chicken wire to protect one of the raised beds that is being accessed by rodents, topsoil for the polytunnel (as this wasn't included in our initial estimate for soil improvers) and vegetable seeds for next growing season. As part of the Grant application process, we are required to provide some quotes and testimonials of the volunteer experience working in the allotment, so can the Group please send their views to Claire. **(AP1)**.

The Wigloo Invoice: This has now been paid. Keith commented that the Wigloo was looking in quite a sorry state, but was assured that this was normal for the time of year.

Update on preparation for the Christmas Events: For the public event on December 2, NTC are looking for 3 or 4 volunteers – the event runs from 11.00 until 3.00. Eric and Claire are both likely to be available, and Amanda W, Keith and Ian are possibles. Can those who are able to attend please send their confirmation to Claire, so that she can let Elaine know. NTC will be giving the Friends' Group access to a small table, free of charge, so that we can sell the calendar and raffle tickets. ASDA has kindly agreed to provide some donations – other donations for a hamper will be welcome. Claire has been busy putting together the materials for the Christmas Trail in the Centre Grounds and Jan has produced a wonderful felt display for the Education Team. We need to collect the greenery from the park, which can be done during a normal volunteering session, and 23 November is likely to be a busy day, when the decorating of the rooms needs to be done.

Treasurer's Report

No calendar income has been accounted for as yet, and this will be picked up in due course. The bakery has begun to advertise the calendar on its website, so this should help boost sales. As usual, there are a few small items to be paid for, but we currently have £ 3,867.85 in the bank, and £ 10.00 cash in hand.

Update from North Tyneside Council (NTC)

The following items are all in progress:

- **New signage for the park:** There has been a delay because of a recent change of personnel, but all relevant material will be handed over in the coming days.
- **New Bird Hide:** This has been ordered and it is hoped to be put in place in January 2024.
- **The Tern Island** has been finished but this cannot be installed until the new Hide is ready.
- **Tree Thinning:** Because of the time of year and the weather conditions, this is not likely to be carried out before September 2024.
- **Wader Scrape:** Work is expected to begin on Monday (November 13) to dig out the wader scrape in Swallow Field.

The **Park Run** organisers have suggested that instead of their defibrillator being stored in a lock and key container, it should be accessible via code key box, as this would ensure swifter access by the public should it be needed. A secure metal box would be required, and there is a possibility that the Park Run group might be seeking a contribution towards the cost from, among others, the Friends' Group. Although we don't currently have a timescale for this, it was agreed that the Friends would be willing to contribute. **Note:** The installation, wiring, maintenance and servicing of the machine would be the responsibility of Park Run and NTC.

Other Business:

The following items have been added to the Project Plan for the group and will be reviewed periodically:

Work on the **Wildlife Garden and the Giant's Garden** will be limited to routine maintenance and general tidying up, until we receive a steer from NTC.

For the **Calendar** we will account for the income in January, at which point we will decide how and when we proceed with the 2025 version.

Next summer, we will consider how, and when, we can go about organising a **bulb-planting exercise** for later in the year.

If anyone has any ideas as to what could appear on **the website**, please send your suggestions using the group e-mail address.

A number of documents have been placed in a folder called the **Toolbox Information**. This is held in the volunteers' room and it is important that no-one attempts any activity, or uses any equipment, without having first reviewed the information in this folder, in view of the Health and Safety implications, and they must not undertake any potentially hazardous activities on their own. Appropriate safety equipment must be worn at all times.

It was agreed that Eric could buy some timber to make some more **bird boxes** for the park.

The Nature walks and talks led by Oscar were deemed to be successful, so Claire will contact him to see if he would be willing to run some further events.

The attendance at a recent **litter-pick** was such that we didn't have enough of equipment to distribute. Eric is busy repairing half a dozen or so of these but NTC agreed to acquire some more.

It was acknowledged by all in attendance that after a positive meeting in early summer there has been no further involvement or updates from representatives of Northumberland Estates. The group recognised that due to Jill Potts work commitment attending the Friday monthly committee meeting was difficult, so Vivien has agreed to contact her to see if she can make any progress on arranging alternative method of improving communication.

Next Meeting: Friday 8 December 2023, 12 midday @ Countryside Centre, RSCP