



Friends of Rising Sun Country Park Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 February 2024

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

Apologies: Martin Huttly, Pixie Phelan (NTC), Stephen Gibbinson (NTC), Rev. Dr Rae Caro

After the apologies were noted, the Minutes of the January meeting were accepted as a true record.

Matters arising from the January Meeting

Bird Boxes: Eric has been busy making new boxes and we currently have 7 suitable for small species such as Tits, as well as 3 open-fronted boxes, plus another box which merely needs assembly. The next task will be to locate the boxes currently in place, using the location-tracking tool we introduced some time ago, clean them out and then check whether they can be retained. New boxes can be installed, while others can be repaired or swapped as required. Claire, Eric and Keith agreed to take this forward. We can consider in due course if we wish to make boxes which we can offer for re-sale. **(AP 1)**

A suggestion was made that we could consider making and installing **bat boxes**. These require untreated wood; Eric will make enquiries into likely costs, and report back. **(AP 2)**.

Nature Walks and Talks: We have arranged these nature discovery walks to take place every month; provisionally on the third Thursday. These will be carried out in collaboration with the Education Team. The first event is on 15 February 2024, at 10.30 and places can be booked using the Eventbrite tool. The March event is on the 21st (dates are on our Planning Document). In response to a question; dogs are not permitted.

Plans are developing for the City Nature Challenge, which will take place from April 26 to 29, and which should hopefully include a bat walk.

The Friends' Calendar: (The financial aspects are covered in the Treasurer's Report below.) We discussed the pros and cons of going ahead to produce a calendar for 2025, given the amount of time and effort this has required, (especially the huge amount of work put in by Claire to source the contributions and pull them together for the group to consider, against a very tight time-scale). It was agreed that we would proceed, and a suggestion was made that, in an attempt to avoid significant time pressures, this item be added to the Planning Document, so that key target dates can be set and, hopefully, addressed. A further suggestion was made that we consider encouraging photographs or drawings from children, perhaps by working with the Education Team to solicit contributions, with prizes being awarded to those selected. We can also consider seeking sponsorship in due course. **(AP 3)**.

Another source of income was identified by means of making and selling blank greetings cards. (These could be sold year on year). Vivien has a contact in this type of business and she will make enquiries regarding costs. **(AP 4)**.

North Tyneside Garden Network: Amanda and Janet had attended a meeting last month, in which they met with representatives of a number of other groups with an interest in gardens and or allotment projects. The key objective is to encourage each group by means of sharing expertise, and various sessions were covered. By way of example, one group is offering computer skills training for those looking to publicise their activities by means of promotional leaflets or newsletters. This is very much in its early days and some useful contacts have been made.

Litter-picking and Climate Change Campaign: 13 letters to the various North Tyneside Local Councillors' offices were sent out and 3 replies have so far been received, with a promise to try and attend one of our sessions. Seed Cards have once again been made for the **Show the Love** event on 14 February. Flyers have been prepared for the **Great British Spring Clean** event on 16 March and all events will be publicised on social media and on the Noticeboard.

Treasurer's Report

We currently have £ 446.11 in cash, and £ 4,061.00 in the bank, although the cheque we issued for the work done on the Wigloo has still not been cashed. Eric said he will contact the supplier again, to ensure that the cheque was received. The **Christmas Fayre** generated a total of £ 139.00. The total income from **calendar sales** was £ 560.00, with production costs being £ 333.60, giving us a profit of £ 226.40.

Annual General Meeting: This is likely to be held in May and part of the work required will be to arrange an audit of the Group's finances. The VODA Organisation offers a "health-check" service to groups such as ours and this extends to all aspects of our structure and activities, not just the finances. On the assumption that this will not be too onerous, this seems to be a good idea, and may identify areas where we can make improvements. A provisional appointment has been made for 12 February at 10.30. **(AP 5 – report back in March).**

Update from North Tyneside Council (NTC)

It would be appreciated if the Group could tackle the hedging in the barbeque area and do some general tidying-up there. The **Summer Fayre** event is scheduled for 14 August and another scarecrow-type trail is envisaged. This will be a free event, but, as last year, will be ticketed. In an attempt to try and avoid long queues, NTC is considering allocating specific entry times. Stalls and Games will, once again, be on offer, so the Friends Group will begin their planning and all offers of help on the day will be welcome. **(AP 6).**

Given the recent very heavy weather, the areas used by the Education Team have become very muddy and the current cleaning tools for the many schoolchildren coming into the buildings are no longer able to cope. Eric will look into obtaining wood (perhaps from an old pallet) and constructing a new boot-cleaning structure. **(AP 7).**

Other Business:

If we are looking to plant any bulbs in the Wildlife Garden, this needs to be agreed with Stephen or Graham. **(AP 8).** In view of the time of the year, we must not disturb the surface of the pond. This can be considered in due course.

Next Meeting: Friday 8 March 2024 12 midday @ Countryside Centre, RSCP