

**Fairfield Association: Flora, Fauna and Orchard Group [FFOG]**  
**Time June 10<sup>th</sup> 7:30 by zoom**  
**Chair: Hilary Short**  
**Minutes**

1. Apologies Received  
Peter, Ian, Chris and Dave
2. Minutes of last meeting approved
3. Matters arising from Minutes:
  - Letters to neighbours were delivered.
  - Volunteers have worked on the playground – this will be reported to the FA meeting on June 16<sup>th</sup>
  - The cheque has been paid for the John Muir award
  - Gate notices have been put up.
  - The FAUNA Stone was checked (following the tractor collision) and found to be safe
  - John Lamb has been invited to give a talk but so far there has been no response.
  - A small group (Mick, Hilary, Sue, Steve, Clio and Ian) met Phil Reddell from the Lancashire Wildlife Trust at Heysham on Monday Jun 7<sup>th</sup> to consider management of the rushes in Big Meadow. Notes from the meeting will be issued with the minutes.
  - The unofficial path through the wild part of orchard has been successfully closed.
  - A meeting with Callum Booth from the RSPB took place and was very helpful.
4. Management:
  - 4.1. Arable Field:
    - 4.1.1 Lapwing Project
      - Work was done as planned but no lapwing have nested or displayed due to the population collapse locally.
    - 4.1.2 Arable Crop
      - Herbicide has been applied. Sue gave the contractor the list of NE approved herbicides with the contract.
    - 4.1.3 LDBS Feeding Station.

It was agreed that this would be reinstated in November **Sue** to arrange with Dan. It was also agreed to contribute £100 towards bird food (**Sue** to arrange)
  - 4.2. Woodland and hedges: Pony Wood path margins
    - The power scythe has proved effective in cutting the nettles on the margin of the field side of the Long Pads and will be stored in Sue's garage whilst work is continuing.
    - Yellow rattle is doing well in the path margin by Pony Wood so no further action needed.
    - It was decided not to cut back the nettles by the path too hard.
  - 4.3 Orchard:
    - Discussion centred on the response from a neighbour regarding the management, of the southern end of the orchard. It was decided to defer a decision to the September meeting as this is work for the winter.
    - The Annual Monitoring Report was received and will be used as a resource for the proposed annual review. Thanks expressed to Keith and Glenys. (**Sue** to convey)
  - 4.4 Ponds and Wet pastures.

The report on the LWT project was received without further comment.
  - 4.5 Meadows:

An estimate has been received informally (via Fraser) for cutting, baling and wrapping the hay. Dave has also applied to the RPA (Rural Payments Agency) for a derogation that would allow the cattle to graze it off; the RPA decision is not expected before the end of June. We are advised that from a conservation viewpoint we should leave the meadow as long as possible and that grazing is a good option. No decision has been reached. **Sue** to follow up

#### 4.6 Scattering bird seed in the Flora Field margin.

- Dan to be consulted on positioning of the second bird table. (**Sue**). It was agreed that birds feed happily on the ground but the table is valuable to allow them to be observed. It was decided not to install a feeding station in the orchard because of attracting rats in that area.
- David expressed disappointment over mis-use of the notice board. It was decided to take no action as the incidence may decline as people get used to it being there.

#### 4.7 Cosh Assessment

This has been completed

#### 4.7 Cattle Grazing

Graham expressed disappointment that his paper had not been included in the meeting. It was agreed to circulate this with an accompanying statement from trustees. (**Sue and Hilary**)

### 5. Items for Discussion:

#### 5.1 Nature Reserve Review

The proposal was approved but action deferred to the September meeting when volunteers will be needed to draft reports. It was noted that a face-face pub meeting will depend on the lifting of restrictions

### 6. Monitoring:

#### 6.1 Maintenance and HLS habitat inspections

- Graham reported that there are currently no bees in the beehives. It was agreed that we would like to have bees on the reserve. **David** will contact Keith to enquire about his plans.
- David expressed appreciation to Graham for his reports.

#### 6.2 Progress with surveys:

- Reports on winter birds, diptera and butterflies were received. Two wild flower surveys have been completed and at least one breeding bird survey. The completed surveys are on the website now with a link from the home page.
- The flush count, based on fewer counts, due to the restrictions, indicated an improvement on the previous year (2019-20). The report will be circulated with the minutes

### 7. Volunteer activities:

7.1 Reports for April and May '21 were received

7.2 Work plans for June and July '21. Further proposals:

- Add strimming around the legs of benches
- Clearing drainage channels on the Sunnyside Lane path
- Strim around trees using shears, or short-bladed scythe. (**David** to speak to Ian)
- Replace field name signs. (**Ian**)
- Design notice to inform the public of LWT work for Aldcliffe Rd entrance (**Hilary to speak to Peter**). An existing notice will need to be taken down to make room.

### 8. Standing items:

#### 8.1 Arrangements

Members have been reminded of arrangements for this period

8.2 Financial control: a) actual and expected income and spending

- A hand trailer for equipment and possibly on the fields was proposed. The group were not convinced that this would work for both functions or that the paths are wide enough. It was decided to try to borrow one from Simon Gershon to test it out in our situation (**Hilary**)
- Work is needed to control damp in the shed, possibly by putting in air vents but also possibly work on the roof. A water butt and a solar panel have also been suggested. LED lighting will be installed. The effectiveness of the solar panel in that situation especially in winter was queried. We are assured that solar panels are much more efficient now but **Hilary** will query the effectiveness in winter Total estimated cost £1440.

8.3 Planned Events:

- Dan Heywood (Birds at the feeding table) to be open to FA membership. **Sue** to confirm date with Dan (zoom)
- John Lamb (Background to the ponds project). Tbc (zoom)
- Volunteer picnic. **Ian** to follow up.

8.4 Morecambe Bay Facilitation Fund Partnership: Nothing to report. Events have been circulated

8.5 Items to Report from/to FA: Nothing to report

8.6 Items to report from trustees: Nothing to report

9. AOB: Nothing to report

10. Date, place & organization of next meetings: Sept 2<sup>nd</sup> Business meeting FMH, October 14<sup>th</sup> Review Meeting tba, Nov.4<sup>th</sup> Business Meeting FMH

Additional papers to be circulated

Flush Count results 2020-21

Report of meeting with Phil Reddell

2 papers on grazing