

Fairfield Association
FAUNA and Orchard sub-Group (FOG)

Minutes of the meeting held on
Thursday 4 August 2011, 7.30 pm
at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close

Present: Graham Brandwood, Andrew Brennand, Dave Brookes, Oliver Fulton, Helen Hicks, Hilary Short, Mick Short (chair)

Apologies: Sue Nieduszynska, Glenys Ferguson, Rebecca Procter

Minutes of last meeting: Approved

Matters arising:

- New Secretary for FOG: we are still looking for a volunteer.

Current developments

- None of note.

Grants and fund raising inc. Aldcliffe fields

- Mick reported on the total in the Fields fund – the amount is still growing. There had been suggestions that the fields would be advertised in today's Westmorland Gazette, but this has not happened. However, we still expect a sale date shortly.

FAUNA

- Ragwort: the hay meadow is almost clear of larger plants, thanks to efforts by many people and notably Graham. However, we have spoken to a local hay dealer who says there are too many new plants appearing and their leaves will contaminate the hay, so we will have to tip it along with the dug ragwort. We have the name of a local farmer who might be willing to cut and bale it for us.
- The other fields are still highly infested with flowering ragwort, and there is a danger that the ragwort will not only spread more densely still, but the seed could blow into the hay meadow, so that new ragwort plants appear next year along with the wild flowers we aim to introduce. So we need to remove as much as possible.
- The Young Offenders (Community Payback) came only once to help with ragwort clearing. They sent a message saying that they couldn't come until further notice owing to staffing constraints and offender absenteeism. Oliver will follow up and see if they can now come again.
- The 40+ overseas visitor volunteers from the University are coming in two groups for about 1.5 hours each on 9 August. The first group is expected between 9.45 and 10.00 a.m.
- The wildflower recording group will be surveying the hay meadow, and also the wet area, with Graeme Skelcher on Saturday 6 August. Results will be circulated and posted on the website: we do not expect to find many significant plants, but the survey will provide a benchmark for future years.
- The Wildlife Trust will be ready to provide the green hay in a couple of weeks' time.
- We are reluctant to finalise the name of the Nature Reserve until the fields have been sold. It was agreed that because of time constraints in spending the grant money for the plaque, we should ask Henry to go ahead with engraving it using the name FAUNA, which was after all the name used for the whole campaign period.
- There will be four main contracts for FAUNA work.
 - The Cromwell Road ramp: Cameron Watson has been appointed contractor, for a start later in August. The date needs to be finalised once we have confirmed timings for the hay making and seeding the hay meadow.
 - Ponds, sluices and reed beds. Richard Storton has completed the design and we will send this

out to tender once we have details of specialist contractors, which he is sending us.

- Main footpath contract. Georgina Peacock has redesigned the plan and Oliver and Dave have gone over it with her. She is working on the final version for approval and subsequent tendering. It was agreed that we should not include inter-planting the eastern half of the LGGS hedge with more varied species to complement the hawthorn, as this would be a good task for winter volunteers and we can get free plants from the Woodland Trust. The contract, for more than £10,000, has to be let by sealed tender using Community Spaces (Lottery) approved procedures. We should be able to go out to tender by the end of August.
- Information / notice boards. We need to set up a working group and agree on a suitable designer, as we hope to complete these by the end of 2011.

Orchard

- Graeme Skelcher has sent the final version of the new management plan. Oliver will circulate this to members of FOG and send it to James for the website. He (or his successor) will include recommended tasks for each month in the FOG agenda.
- The new tree labels have arrived. Tasks agreed for Saturday 13th include mowing (Simon has mowed recently), clearing round all new trees and any older trees which are being overwhelmed; and attaching the new tree labels, using the map of varieties which Simon and Phil Rainford revised a year or two ago.
- Graham and Tony held a Family Fun Day on 3 August and have arranged another for younger children for 10 August. There is also a new page on the Orchard website with suggestions for independent family / children's activities.
- Towneley path: we have now heard from County that our grant application has been approved. Total cost to us for the new path itself will be £50.

Events

- Apple Day 2011 (September 24th) Helen has made a number of arrangements: John Wilkinson (formerly with Workspace, which is closing) will bring his woodwork plus his own gazebo. Tony will organise children's activities as usual – he will need a gazebo. Elaine Weedy has been asked to organise a craft table for children – she will need a gazebo. Competitions to include apple pies / pasties as last year (Carol Kierzek will judge these again). Ann Fenwick will do a wood carving demonstration. Mick was asked to arrange for a quorum of musicians. Ruth to be asked to organise teas as usual.
- Helen will bring the final plan to the next FOG meeting.

A O B

- Hilary has been asked if we would like to contribute to the BBC's New Domesday Project. Anyone with good photos of the Orchard is invited to pass them on to Hilary, who will also liaise with known photographer members.

Next meetings :

7.30 pm, Thursday 8 September 2011 (***please note changed date***) at **Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**
7.30 pm, Thursday 6 October 2011 at **Whitegates, Sunnyside Close**