

Fairfield Association
Fauna and Orchard sub-Group [FOG]
Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 6th February 2014, 7.30 pm
at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close

Present: Dave Brookes, Andrew Brennand, Graham Brandwood, Oliver Fulton, Helen Hicks, Sue Nieduszynska, Ian Procter, Rebecca Procter, Hilary Short (mins), Mick Short (chair), Chris Workman

1. **Apologies:** Glenys Ferguson, Tony Finn, Ian Fraser.

2. **Minutes of last meeting:** Agreed.

3. **Current/recent developments:**

- Ian Sharp has been added to the Fields Access List.
- The Big Farmland Bird Count for 2014 detected 28 bird species of which 21 were breeding on site. Sadly the Reed Bunting, found in 2012, was not amongst the set. (Full report attached to the January minutes)
- Housing Proposals: The Flora and Fauna fields have been put forward as possible sites for house building. Andrew has sent a letter to the City Council saying that our land is not available for housing development and that we would be opposed to housing development on the Aldcliffe Hall fields because of the status of our fields as a nature reserve linked to the Morecambe Bay Improvement Area and traffic problems.

4. **Matters arising from Minutes:**

- **Tool shed coping stone and key:** Mr Edwards will repair the stone when he comes to carry out work on the play area.
- **Pads path clarification:** The FA has responsibility for the path as far as Sunnyside Lane.

5. **Report from the FA meeting:** Nothing of relevance to the FOG meeting was discussed with the exception that Tony will need more stewards for the Easter Egg Hunt in April.

6. **Report from Flora Steering Group:**

Capital works are now in progress with both Hanafins and Huddlestons on site. It was agreed that we should now claim HLF (Mick and Hilary) and HLS funding as soon as the agreement goes live (Dave).

Dave reported that, according to Claire, we now have until the end of March to complete the work. Since NE have not confirmed this, we will continue to work to an end of February deadline.

Both Richard Storton and Claire Harris are agreed that we should interpret 'deep ploughing' as the maximum depth of normal ploughing.

The educational programme is in train. The lectures at the Storey are averaging 31 people per lecture.

Ian, Tony and Oliver have visited Ripley and made contact with Jane Price who is enthusiastic about our project, particularly in relationship to A level Environmental Science Studies. Jane Price has also volunteered to contact Myerscough College on our behalf.

7. **Fauna:**

- Monthly maintenance and HLS monitoring inspection: Full reports attached.
- Water trough: This is now in the right temporary place and it was agreed that this could be its permanent position. The hard standing is yet to be put in place.

- Track extension and other works: Fraser has argued that the track extension to the Gun Range is not necessary. Since this is not funded, it was agreed that there is no need to do anything for the time being.

Huddlestone will put the finer stone on the path through Fauna and the cost will be deducted from Hanafin's retainer. Dave reminded the meeting that the path between the ramp and Robin's gate is not Hanafin's responsibility.

Sam Hanafin has been asked to dig out the ground around the Paddock gate and put in clean stone whilst he is on site working on the Paddock hedging.

- Paddock hedging: Hanafin is currently working on this and the February volunteers infilled some of the hedge which runs alongside the footpath. A hedging working party will lay parts of the hedge. The boundary is in the conservation area and the trees are protected in line with this.

- Anna's Pool repairs: This will take place under Richard Storton's supervision when the contractors are on site for Flora. Richard has arranged funding from S2S for the installation of a new sluice that is eel friendly (adding a smaller diameter, flexible pipe with a floating collar to an ordinary pipe sluice and bund system). The work will be done by Huddlestone from the Gleeson's field side. This job has a deadline of the end of March.

- Willow screening of School Pond: Scheduled for the February Volunteer session under Graham's guidance..!

- Rural Payments Agency remapping: Dave has submitted revisions showing the revised internal boundaries of Fauna. When these changes have been accepted, he will make the revisions relating to the path and ponds.

- Concessionary Path and Local Nature Reserve Designation: Glenys has contacted Claire Harris who has contact Ann Wood but so far no result. **Oliver** will ask Visitor Information if they can help.

8. Flora

- HLS agreement for Flora is not 'live' in the sense that we cannot claim on it at present.

- Formal declaration of 'no right of way' across the Flora fields: **Mick Tarja**

Wilson has directed Mick to a helpful website. Oliver has taken on this task. **(Oliver)**

- Aldcliffe Road wall repairs: This task will be carried out in the summer. Simon Gershon will provide additional stones for the body of the wall but we need to look out for coping stones. **(Hilary)**.

- Historical artefacts: The boundary stone in Field 3 has been knocked over again by the cattle. Mick has identified and made contact with the person who has been keeping the top of the stone.

The metal detectorists have forwarded pictures of their finds. Sue will speak to Ian Sharp about the best way to publicise the results. This will be after Easter when the ploughing has been done **(Sue)**

The local Historical Association will follow the plough with FA members in the hope of further finds. Tony has sent a message to say that this is not a good activity for children. The metal detectorists will then do a further sweep. The Oxford Archaeological Society have been approached to help identify and map our finds but they would charge us around £2000

. Other ways of identifying and mapping are being sought.

- SPS: We are still waiting for further information on the new scheme from Rodney Coward.

- Interpretation boards, HLF sign, carved stones, finger posts: To be incorporated into the planning application and funding proposal for the path **(Hilary)**.

- Change of use to nature reserve, local nature reserve designation: Chris reported that local nature reserve designation *is* possible in the absence of local authority involvement in Flora.

9. Volunteer activities:

Ian's reports of the volunteer work undertaken during December and proposed for January are attached. Ian noted that:

The fallen trees in Little Wood have been dealt with.

There were 24 people at the January volunteer session.

Ian suggested that there should be a list of experienced volunteers who could lead groups in the case of large numbers. This was agreed.

The February volunteer session will include volunteers from the University. The group will move brush, plant saplings on the western Paddock hedge, trim the hedge along the long pads, litter pick and prune the apple trees.

The Hedge Working Party is now averaging 9 – 10 people and expects to complete the hedge in the western field before the end of February.

Ian will ask Andy Lee and Tarja Wilson for suggestions about planting saplings in the Pony Wood extension.

Because of his particular requirements (long periods of volunteering), it was decided that we were not the best organisation to accommodate the blind volunteer who has contacted us.

10. Educational activities: Tony was absent and there was no report.

11. DBS checks: Michael Shepherd has been contacted and is chasing this up.

12. Financial control: Expenditure includes the toilet (Fauna Sustainability Grant), Further hedging saplings and holly, approximately £108 (Fauna budget). Nose pump £312 (S2S) Future expenses

- About £300 committed for wall repair, probably in July.
- Tony Finn will be spending some £200 on resources for schools (Community Spaces sustainability grant).
- Around £4500 will be required to buy Single Payment Scheme Entitlements (**Mick/Hilary**).

13. Widening of Long Pads Footpath - consultation: deferred.

14. Flora path –permissions, design and funding: The advice from County Highways is that they have no objection to a path which opened out on to Aldcliffe Road but they would need a build out on both sides of the road. The FA would have to pay for this and would have no control over the bill which Dave thought would be between £3000 and £4000.

Hilary will contact Georgina about the design of the path which will run up to the viewing point and along to Aldcliffe Road and Dave will do the costings Dave is still trying to contact the appropriate person in the Canal and River Trust.

15. Go Wild: It was agreed that we already have/have had activities that can be considered as suitable events either as part of the lecture series or as offshoots of the series. In addition Graham's campfires in Pony Wood will be advertised as part of Go Wild.Week.

16. AOB:

a) Dave will return the Entrust form.

b) In agreed to put a notice on the Goat Willow to explain that it has been pollarded.

17.Date and place of next meetings: Thursday 13th March (Whitegates) and Thursday 3rd April (Whitegates).