



FRIENDS OF RIDGE WOOD

Informal Meeting

Community Meeting Room, Tesco Extra store, Yate

Start time: 7.30pm

Wednesday 9th January 2019

PRESENT:

Sarah Hardcastle (chair)
Geoff Millard (treasurer)
Dianne Millard
David Barlow (secretary / webmaster)
Emma Morrison (publicity)
Richard Aston (SGC)
Bob Evans
Pauline Wilson

APOLOGIES:

Jill Hows
Edward & Janette Wrighton
Roger McLean

1. Introductions / apologies

2. Minutes from last meeting

Minutes circulated by email, agreed

3. Matters arising

- Insurance: SH confirmed that a contents-only insurance policy has been renewed with Zurich for this year at a cost of £112.95. A second quote was not obtained as we were unsure which other companies we could approach for this. TCV membership is no longer a condition of our insurance, as only a very small discount could be offered for this. As funds in the group account are currently low (£282.26), it was agreed that it would not be worth rejoining TCV for the coming year as this would cost £38.00 without providing any obvious benefits for the group.
- First aid training: SH has contacted John Morris directly about this (as DM needs to renew) but has not heard back yet. RA said new dates

should now be available, and appeared in the most recent issue of the Hive newsletter which SH did not receive – RA will look into this.

- Corporate volunteering opportunities: this is still something we would like to pursue in the future. RA will have a think about the logistics of offering a day to re-gravel the steps (number of people and equipment required); we could then approach companies looking to organise such a day.
- Local green space designation: RA has still heard no update and will enquire about this
- 5 year woodland management plan: the survey has been done, but the plan has not been completed as yet. SH stated we would be keen to see the plan once finalised, as it would help us to decide on our goals as a group for the coming years.
- DB enquired about the issue raised by a resident in Walnut Avenue concerning overhanging trees into somebody's garden. RA confirmed that this has been addressed.

Actions: SH, RA

4. Events

- The fungi foray was held on Sunday 21st October. All who attended agreed that this was a good event, and that Lee Hayward was a very knowledgeable and engaging guide. SH mentioned that she enjoyed the part of the event where participants were encouraged to find their own fungi to discuss. However the event did not prove as popular as others we have run, with fewer than 15 attendees. This meant it did not break even on cost as hoped. Agreed that upcoming events will have to be cost neutral due to current low funds in the group account.
- Ideas for events over the next year were discussed. We usually aim for one spring / summer event, one summer family event (if Forest fun time is to be re-run) and one Autumn event.
 - All agreed that, of the spring events, the bird walk is by far the most popular. However, Ed Drewitt charges the highest fee of all of the guides we have recently used, partly because he lives some distance away. PW mentioned that she knows a local man who is a member of the British Trust for Ornithology and may be able to lead a walk – she will contact him to see if he would be willing to do this.
 - Forest Fun Time was discussed. This is an event we would like to run again due to its popularity, however SH reminded the group that she will be standing down as chair at the next AGM so would prefer not to take the lead on this event this year. We now have a good format for the event so less work is required to organise it, but we would need somebody (or a couple of

people) to take overall responsibility for it, as well as sufficient numbers of volunteers (PW mentioned that Avon wildlife trust volunteers may be willing to help if we were short). The other issue is cost, which is about £450, hence sponsorship would be needed. In the past, Hanson's have been happy to provide this but we would need to approach them to check.

- In the Autumn, options for events include an Owl prowling, moth evening or bat walk. The best time for moths is May to August, which coincides with longer hours of daylight, meaning that this is not the most family-friendly event. Owl prowls are always popular, but have not produced owls in recent years. All agreed that a bat walk is the most favourable option and was not done last year, therefore SH will contact the Avon bat group to try to fix a date for this.
- We discussed trying to run an event as part of the Chipping Sodbury festival (dates 14th-23rd June). A 90 minute talk was suggested by the festival team, but this amount of time would be challenging to fill. A guided walk is an alternative, but it would be too late for a wildflower walk. This may be something to consider again in future years.
- Ideas for funding future events were discussed. PW suggested approaching the Chipping Sodbury rotary club who may be willing to fund a one-off event. We could also consider applying for council member awarded funding, however the deadlines occur infrequently (once or twice a year). One year, Forest fun time was part funded by the Waitrose green token scheme – we are on the list for this again, but it may be a long wait.

Actions: SH, all (to think about Forest fun time feasibility)

5. Winter work programme

- Agreed dates for upcoming work mornings as
Sunday 13th January
Sunday 10th February
Sunday 10th March
Sunday 28th April (to include bluebell conservation work)
- RA mentioned that Hanson's have had an arboricultural survey done and will be funding some tree work including removal of dead trees / dead wood along the main path. This is why some trees have been marked with coloured paint dots.
- RA suggested that the focus of the next 2-3 work mornings will be clearing vegetation from the side of the main path to create a ride-edge habitat. In previous years this has been done by contractors employed by SGC, but there is no funding available this year.

- Discussed tree planting – RA suggested this is not a priority at the moment as there are few areas for them to go, however it may become necessary in future if Ash dieback leads to tree loss.
- Discussed plans for coppicing as local residents expressed concern about this on a previous work morning. RA has suggested coppicing every second stool along the back of Dorset Way to avoid too much loss of privacy in the short term. Some coppicing will now be undertaken by contractors with power tools organised by SGC, with FORW clearing the wood that has been left to form dead hedges etc. EM suggested posting something on the website to explain the purpose of coppicing – DB stated that the information is there already, but we may post a link to the relevant page as part of the write-up following a future work morning.

Actions: All (attending work mornings where possible)

6. SGC volunteers' agreement: 2019 renewal

- SH will sign this again on behalf of the group in April. RA explained that when there is a change of chair then the agreement will remain in place, however if the group becomes unconstituted then the agreement will become void. SH wondered whether our constitution could be amended e.g. to enable 2 individuals to co-chair if nobody wished to chair individually: RA stated that he thought this would be possible if the group wishes. DB suggested an earlier than usual email to the membership appealing for new committee members with a brief description of the roles (as produced previously): all agreed this would be a good idea.

7. AOB

- Fly tipping: Roger McLean has written to SGC regarding rubbish bags near to the Quarry Rd entrance which remain uncollected 10 months after first being reported. He has now received an email from the head of Street Care, stating that as the rubbish is on private land it is not SGC's responsibility to collect. RA has stated that this is incorrect due to the management agreement with Hanson's, and will contact the relevant team within SGC (SH to forward him the email).
- EM mentioned that the gate at the Quarry Rd entrance needs maintenance, and also the fence towards the far end of the main path adjacent to the small field. This would present another opportunity for corporate volunteering but would need funding. RA mentioned that the entrance posts at the Greenways Rd entrance were designed with the help of schoolchildren using a local company – we could look into doing something similar at the far end of the woodland in future.

- PW suggested that it may be worth planting some additional wildflowers in the woodland to boost numbers of some native species already present in some areas. Wapley Bushes nature reserve have recently done this. Species suggested include yellow archangel, wood anemone and primrose. She will let SH know about suppliers and costs. The cheapest option would be to purchase and propagate from seed before transplanting, which PW would be happy to help with. It may be worth referring back to the woodland survey to see if there are any other species we could plant.
- Ideas were discussed to boost the group's profile, which may help to attract new volunteers. Use of the A-board explaining the group's purpose displayed prominently on work mornings was felt to be a good idea (though now requires collecting from the lockup each time). Purchase of some FORW high-visibility vests would also help to make us more visible on work mornings. However, SH said it was encouraging to note the generally good attendance at recent work mornings, with several new volunteers coming along regularly to help.

Actions: RA, PW, DB, SH

8. Date of Next meeting

Provisionally agreed as Wednesday 8th May 2019 – this will be the AGM

Actions: GM (to book room)