



FRIENDS OF RIDGE WOOD

Informal Meeting

Community Meeting Room, Tesco Extra store, Yate

Start time: 7.30pm

Wednesday 11th September 2019

PRESENT:

Jill Hows (vice chair)
Geoff Millard (treasurer)
David Barlow (secretary / webmaster)
Richard Aston (SGC)
Emma Morrison (publicity)
Dianne Millard
Sarah Hardcastle
Mary Capnos
Edward Wrighton
Emma Worlock

APOLOGIES:

Bob Evans
Laura Royle

Tonight's meeting chaired by Richard, minutes taken by Sarah

1. Introductions / apologies

2. Minutes from last meeting

Minutes circulated by email, agreed

3. New members welcome

DB informed the group that 4 new members have signed up to our mailing list since the last meeting. EW attended her first meeting tonight and has also signed up. All new members are very welcome into the group.

4. Matters arising

- Since our last meeting, DB has sought opinions on how to address the recent website issues. It is now felt that the host company changes which recently causes problems are unlikely to recur, and therefore the

website should be ok for the next 10 years without further action which is great news.

- We discussed the evening chorus walk held in May and led by Alan Daniells. This was a very good event, and it was very kind of Alan to lead this for us for no charge. A range of species were seen / heard. Attendance was slightly down on previous years, which might have been down to less favourable weather conditions. Donations on the night totalled £29 to add to group funds.
- RA confirmed that a new gate has been ordered for the Quarry Rd entrance to replace the broken one. It should hopefully be fitted within the next few weeks.
- SH confirmed that she is now receiving the SGC newsletters again.
- RA informed us of the SGC annual volunteer celebration event which is due to take place at the Bristol science and business park on 15th October. Up to 4 representatives from each community group can attend free of charge. Presentations will include how the council is planning to deal with the climate change emergency, and an update on Ash dieback. SH will look out for the email and circulate it once received.

Action: RA, SH

5. Winter work programme

- RA is unable to make the upcoming work morning on 29th September, and SH may not be able to attend. Currently, due to the lack of Chair, the group is uninsured for any woodland work undertaken without RA present. Therefore it was decided to cancel this work morning, but to add an additional date in December so the overall amount of working time available is not reduced.
- Agreed dates for upcoming work mornings for the rest of the season are as follows:
 - Sunday 20th October
 - Sunday 17th November
 - Sunday 8th December
 - Sunday 19th January
 - Sunday 16th February
 - Sunday 15th March(A further April date may be added in due course)
- Woodland work for this season is likely to include further coppicing and dead hedging. RA would be keen to re-do dead hedge running along the boundary with Hanson's land. EM asked about hedge laying which was previously discussed as a way of replacing the fallen fence towards the Greenways Rd entrance: RA will look into this.

Action: RA, All (attending work mornings when possible)

6. Future Planning for Group

Since SH stepped down at the May AGM, unfortunately a replacement chair has yet to be appointed. The email sent out to the mailing list following this meeting appealing for nominations was unsuccessful.

We discussed the practical implications of the chair's position remaining vacant. This means the group is unconstituted. We therefore cannot apply for grant funding, and the SGC volunteer agreement becomes null and void (meaning that separate insurance arrangements are needed for work mornings / events). We agreed that having appropriate insurance in place is very important as we cannot rely on RA being able to attend every work morning, and therefore SH will approach Zurich in order to broaden the scope of our insurance policy (currently contents only) to cover these activities.

Whilst unconstituted, the group can continue to take advantage of training provided by SGC, and can still run day to day. SH pointed out that it will be important to have somebody to chair meetings, and suggested this could be done on a rotational basis amongst the committee. Accessing funds will not be an issue as SH was not a signatory to the group account whilst chair, and there are still a number of authorised signatories.

EM wondered about replacing our three times yearly informal evening meetings with extended work mornings from time to time to allow planning and discussion to take place. However, it was decided that the meetings do fulfil a useful function in allowing members of the community to attend and express any concerns about the woodland, and that there is usually plenty to discuss, so the format of meetings will remain the same at present.

All agreed that continuing unconstituted would be the best way forward, and that our priority in the short term will be to continue our woodland work programme. Appointing a replacement chair remains a medium term goal.

7. AOB

- JH is now the group's only trained first aider as DM's training has expired. RA advised that first aid training dates can be accessed via "The Hive" newsletter on the SGC website. Now that SH is no longer chair, it would be good if other committee members also signed up to receive this newsletter direct from SGC as it does contain useful updates.
- GM enquired about holding a tin-shake at Tesco as discussed last time. This is less straightforward for groups who are not registered charities. We will put this on hold for now, but JH will look into Gregg's as a possible alternative source of funding.
- Unfortunately the Tesco community room will no longer be available by the time of our next meeting. EW said she may be able to arrange access to a suitable alternative venue and will email DB. Otherwise we can go back to considering other venues discussed in the past such as the library.

- RA informed us that unfortunately Ash dieback is becoming an increasing issue in South Gloucestershire, and is likely to result in loss of significant numbers of trees. We will need to consider this as part of future woodland management planning.
- Motorcycles are being ridden through the wood. RA advised that if this behaviour is observed, the police should be called. In the past some group members have been advised that the woodland is not the responsibility of the police as it is private land, but RA advised that as a public right of way the police do need to take action when this occurs.

Actions: DM, JH, EW, all.

8. Date of Next meeting

Provisionally agreed as Wednesday 15th January 2020, venue TBC