

## **Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG)**

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2012, from 7 pm, at the Forest Town Welfare



**Present:** Lorraine (Chair); Dave (Vice-Chair); Shlomo (Secretary); Josh (Treasurer); Ian (Site Management Support); Betty; Alan; Barry; Colin; Malcolm; Megan; Helen; and Ron **[13]**

**Apologies:** Alyson (Membership Secretary); Jeff (Rushpool Representative); Margaret; Christine; Val; Geoff; Frances; Susan; Rose; Pauline; and Andy **[11]**; also Mansfield District Council's (MDC's) Jo Hull **[1]**

### **Thanks**

Thanks to Pauline and Malcolm once again, this time for ensuring the FTNCG display at the Jubilee celebration event was of a high standard. Thanks also to Andy for guiding FTNCG members and others around the Budby site for an excellent evening of bird spotting.

### **Membership Update and Renewal**

As agreed at the recent AGM, annual membership fees remain fixed at £2 per member. There are still some members whose renewal is due. FTNCG still has nearly 30 members.

### **Finance Update**

Since the previous meeting FTNCG has renewed our membership of the Conservation Volunteers (formerly BTCV) and associated (public liability and tools) insurance.

### **Friends of Greenwood Community Forum**

Ian gave a report back from the Forum meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> May. Training is available via Mansfield Council for Voluntary Services (MCVS). Chris Jackson gave a presentation on behalf of NottsBAG. A sculptor also gave a presentation about sculptures at community-based nature conservation sites. Details of the Forum's Annual General Meeting on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> June were shared, and the invitation for a volunteer to attend on behalf of the FTNCG was extended, but so far no one appears to be available to attend.

### **Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT)**

NWT is progressing plans for Strawberry Hill. Brief accounts were given of Mansfield and Ashfield Local Group activities, including May's Budby Walk and September's Fungi Talk with Ann Ward, Chair of the Nottinghamshire Fungi Group (Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2012, from 7:30 pm at the Acacia Centre, Annesley Woodhouse).

### **Outing to Attenborough Nature Reserve**

Three spaces are left in the minibus to Attenborough for Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August, setting off from Forest Town (Welfare car park) at 10am. Donations of £8 per passenger are to be received by the 25<sup>th</sup> July FTNCG meeting.

### **Forward Planning**

Planned activities include:

- Spa Ponds Balsam Pull from 10am on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July meeting up at The Whitegates;
- Meeting at Forest Town Miners Welfare from 7pm on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> July;
- Attenborough Nature Reserve outing on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August; and
- Meeting at Forest Town Miners Welfare from 7pm on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> September.

Other ideas for activities include: Maun Valley Hedge laying, and hedge planting at the Rushpool Open Space, as well as surveying the ancient hedgerows at Stinting Lane. There is also an opportunity to consider amending the Group's constitution at next year's AGM.

### **Sites Updates**

Those present compared notes regarding **Rushpool Open Space**. Shlomo reported that Jo Hull informed the FTNCG that having received three quotes for removing the 'paths to nowhere' MDC has chosen a sub-contractor and the job is expected to be completed by the end of June. Further clarification of the site management plan will need to be agreed and discussed with MDC. The phased plan will spell out where and when we plan to plant hedges. 5 meter buffer will need to be accommodated, and foxes' welfare will need to be protected. Hedge planting may require purchase of additional tools, and we will need MDC to provide support, e.g. with ground clearance (mechanical and/or chemical treatment of stumps). Near neighbours will need to be kept informed.

**Action:** Shlomo, Lorraine and Jeff to meet to discuss site management plan options.

Report regarding **Spa Ponds and environs** – our wardens are keeping a watchful eye, carrying out regular litter picking. Unfortunately, motorbikers are once again causing a nuisance. Opportunity for archaeology/heritage project to establish (and then promote awareness of) the history of the site, e.g. Packman's Bridge as well as the Spa Ponds themselves. Himalayan balsam has grown taller, and is ready for pulling. Andy mentioned possible Water Framework Directive project to enhance water quality of the Maun to be capable of supporting fish – this project would include balsam pulling. Forestry Commission also plan to pull balsam.

**Stinting Lane hedgerows** confirmed as an ancient hedgerow, and this offers some protection from any damage caused by nearby development. Ian suggested that an ecology survey should be undertaken. Lorraine asked Ian to organise a training session for the group to learn more about hedges and surveying. Photos to be taken of the wildlife (including wild flowers), and photos of any fly tipping as well. Ron suggested a student might be able to help. The FTNCG needs to gather initial information, and then Colleges (e.g. Brackenhurst) and Universities (e.g. Nottingham Trent) can be approached. The sooner we start surveying, the better.

**Action:** Ian to provide potential dates / times (including evening) for some initial sessions.

### **Any other business**

Andy to update us about the hedge laying near New Mill Lane, and the impact of the new landowners.

Possibility of involving Nottingham Trent University with Rushpool Open Space planting.

Helen was interested to find out more about supporting house martins to overcome plastic fascias.