

Notes from Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG) Open Committee Meeting

Wednesday 16th September 2015 at the Forest Town Welfare

Present: Shlomo, Helen, Alan, Lorraine, Josh, Rose, Andy, Rich, John, Mark, Kevin, Jes, and Ian [13]

Apologies: Barry, Ross, Pauline and Malcolm

(and Dave Morris, who passed on some information leaflets and an offer of support with the Spa Ponds site management plan, but could not stay for the meeting)

NOTE: The update circulated in advance of the meeting is included after these notes.

Shlomo welcomed FTNCG Trustees and Members, thanking Spa Ponds Wardens (Barry and Alan) and those involved in fund-raising efforts.

Fundraising

- It was noted that more than £700 has been raised since our May 2015 AGM, plus about £35 from Gift Aid and a pledge of £250 each from the Divisional Funds of County Councillors Bell and Harwood. There is also the prospect of donations from ASDA, and from our District Councillors' Ward Allowance. Shlomo to contact District Councillors.
- Rich noted how FTNCG fundraising efforts (including circulating leaflets, providing an FTNCG display, and demonstrating the use of a lathe at events such as the Clipstone Gala) helped raise the profile of the Group as well as funds. Helen noted the success of the 'lucky dip' in attracting and enthusing youngsters.
- Rose's hard work in four car boot sales was acknowledged, as was her reluctance in heading up any further car boots. Rich and Rose will sort out remaining items in the coming weeks. It was suggested that unsold items could be donated to the RSPCA.
- It was agreed that gala events are more fun than car boots. Lorraine noted the need for enough lead-in time to allow involvement in events organised by others.
- Shlomo noted how the Group's fundraising efforts demonstrate our commitment to potential donors. Shlomo also took this opportunity to remind those present that all of the funds raised by, and donated to, FTNCG is spent to help further the Group's charitable object, to: "promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in and around Forest Town".

Wardens Report

- Barry and Alan have spent an hour or two on the site every morning for the past few weeks (weather permitting), collecting at least one bag of rubbish per day. Shlomo will add this information to the record now being kept of volunteer hours, etc.
 - Alan also noted that, once again, 'No biking' signs have been taken down and need replacing. Rich offered to replace the signs.
 - The following Spa Ponds Biking Incidents need to be reported to the police:
 - 10 off road bikers seen on Sunday 6 Sept 2015 between 2pm and 6pm
 - 2 bikers drove past us during Fungi Foray, Sat 12 Sept around 10:30am
 - 11 off road bikers seen on Sunday 13 Sept 2015 between 2pm and 6pm
- [These incidents were subsequently logged with the police: Incident no. 435-18092015]



Registered Charity No. 1157957

Work Sessions, Surveying and Tree Planting

- From the first Friday in October (2nd October) Rich will head up a series of weekly Friday sessions throughout October and November (weather permitting). These will tend to be in the mornings, and will entail some wildlife surveying and some light work on the site. As arrangements may change week by week it is important that volunteers contact Rich to indicate their interest and share their contact details. Rich can be reached on 07910 143370 and by e-mail to: golfingrich39@yahoo.co.uk
- Starting on Saturday afternoon 19th September, from 2pm, Ian will head up a monthly work session at Spa Ponds. Sessions are also planned for 2pm - 4pm on Saturdays 17th October and 21st November. Parking permitted at the Whitegates pub.
- Arrangements for the 19th September Spa Ponds work session are quite advanced. The session will focus on creating one or more silt traps (and this will entail some ditch digging), as well as bramble removal, and identifying and marking out (and clearing) areas for planting trees.
- Plans are in place to ensure we have sufficient tools, including: spades; loppers; gloves; tabards; slashers; spray paint; litter pickers; bags; First Aid kit; and matt hook. Shlomo will be responsible for keeping an attendance list and Ian will be responsible for Risk Assessment / Health & Safety.
- Shlomo explained that FTNCG is to receive more than 80 trees for planting at Spa Ponds, including 50 trees from TCV (10 each of the following: Wayfaring, Guelder Rose, Spindleberry, Dogwood, and Goat Willow), and it has been confirmed (post meeting) that we are to receive a further 30 trees from The Woodland Trust (6 each of the following: Hawthorn, Hazel, Holly, Dog Rose, and Dogwood). FTNCG has also received an offer of 2 young oak trees for transplanting to Spa Ponds.
- The trees from TCV and the Woodland Trust are due to be delivered in the first week of November, and should be planted as soon as possible, although they could be stored and watered to last up to a fortnight. We therefore hope to have tree planting day(s) on Saturday 7th and/or Sunday 8th November (in addition to the work session planned for Saturday 21st November). Shlomo noted that this is the first time round for FTNCG when it comes to tree planting, so we are learning as we go along.
- There is a need to purchase canes (supports) and spirals (guards) for trees (plus extras for whips we trans-locate on the site) - this could cost approximately £100.
- FTNCG remains keen to reach out to potential volunteers to help with the tree planting!

Next FTNCG Meeting will be on Wednesday evening 7th October

- This meeting will include brief updates, e.g. membership, fundraising and finance.
- Rich will provide illustrated updates on his archaeology training experience and on recorded sightings, and Mark volunteered to provide an update on his research into the historic ownership of Spa Ponds. Helen also offered to show some footage of creatures at the Rushpool site.

Current FTNCG Tasks were discussed; these include:

- Determine Spa Ponds hedge ownership - contact Chris Jackson for advice.
- Get quotes for Spa Ponds entrance improvement work (for S106) - to include drainage solution to serious problem with run-off from Clipstone Drive during heavy rains.
- Approach the Forestry Commission and/or Natural England regarding existing grant schemes for Spa Ponds woodland management.
- Landowners Meeting re: illegal access in and around Forest Town / Clipstone / Rufford
- Project proposal to Water Catchment Partnership for dredging of top pond at Spa Ponds - this would be a place-marker proposal that would depend on both finance and circumstances / capacity to oversee a project of this scale. The desirability of revealing the historic spring - the source of the water in the ponds, was agreed, as was the need to address silt run-off (as it would be pointless to dredge if the ponds remained vulnerable to new waves of silt). Shlomo to contact NottsCC's Rachel Rickell for advice.
- Send request for funding to District Councillors (this has now been done, and Councillors Barton and Wright were quick to respond positively).
- Send FTNCG sightings to recorders in October.
- Contact Sherwood Archaeological Society to invite them to walk around Spa Ponds with FTNCG rep's to discuss boundaries, pathways, hedgerows, old trade routes, etc.
- Update data protection policy & memb'ship form to reflect constitutional disclosure rule.
- Keep Les (WatersideCare) informed of volunteer hours, whilst being mindful of avoiding any 'double counting' of in-kind contributions. When attributing financial value to in-kind contributions it is important to distinguish between volunteer hours and expert hours.
- Get more leaflets printed (professional printing? business cards?) - John has offered to help with this once a decision has been made about what we wish to print, etc.
- Make and display poster / leaflet for our upcoming programme
- Arrange trip to archives and Mansfield Woodhouse Local History library
- Purchasing more boards for display purposes?

Note:

- Ian noted c£2k cost of step-through/kissing gates. Spa Ponds site m'gmt meeting needs to be arranged. Shlomo asked Trustees to consider dates, and finalise meeting arrangements on Saturday. Post meeting Shlomo suggested Wed. eve. 14th October.

From Update (already circulated):

- Membership: 46 (not including several lapsed members).
- During the 4 months since our AGM in May 2015 FTNCG members have delivered about 950 recorded volunteer hours. This figure now stands at over 1,000 hours.
- FTNCG currently has around £2,500 in our bank account, and around £40 in cash.
- FTNCG may receive £5,400 Section 106 towards improvements to access, entrances, signage and notice boards (should garage and Spar shop development go ahead)
- Regular Spa Ponds work sessions planned for 2pm-4pm on Saturdays 19th September, 17th October, and 21st November, to be topped up by Friday morning sessions (which will include wildflower surveying at both Rushpool and Spa Ponds) as weather allows.

FTNCG Diary of Coming Events

Note: The use of the Sherwood Room is confirmed, no darts team on Wednesdays

- Sat. 19th September, from 2pm: Spa Ponds Work Session (parking at Whitegates)
- Friday work sessions throughout the autumn from 2nd October. Please contact Rich for further details on 07910 143370 or e-mail to: golfingrich39@yahoo.co.uk
- Wed. 7th Oct., from 7pm: FTNCG Meeting, FT Welfare (Arena) Sherwood Room
- Sat. 17th October, from 2pm: Spa Ponds Work Session (parking at Whitegates)
- Wed 4th November, from 7pm: FTNCG Meeting (Special guest speaker David Budge to talk about the medieval pottery of Sherwood - to be confirmed), Sherwood Room
- Sat / Sun 7th / 8th November: Planting trees at Spa Ponds (parking at Whitegates)
- *Tues. 10th Nov. - Mansfield & Ashfield Local Wildlife Group Talk on Ponds from Chris Jackson (NottsBAG) "All About Ponds in Nottinghamshire", explaining the value of ponds to wildlife, 7pm at Bridge St. Methodist Church, Mansfield. £3 donation.*
- NOTE: Forest Town History Day has been postponed, so will not take place on 14th November. Expected around Spring 2016
- Sat. 21st November, from 2pm: Spa Ponds Work Session (parking at Whitegates)
- Wed. 2nd December, from 7pm: Open Committee Meeting, Sherwood Room