

Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG) Committee Meeting Notes

Tuesday 17th December 2013, from 6:30 pm - 7 pm, at the Forest Town Welfare Lounge

Present: Shlomo, Lorraine, Josh, Ian and Richard

Minutes and Matters Arising

- Ruth replaced by Gary Cragg as our Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT) Reserve Officer.
- Toad count discussed with Chris Jackson, who agreed to show members around the site during the day to look for likely toad spots (possibly Saturday 8th March 2014), with the most confident to join the count. Chris would then explain the findings at the FTNCG meeting on 7th May 2014, if all goes to plan (which depends on the weather, etc.).

Spa Ponds update

- Thank you and update sent to Appeal pledgers and donors, as agreed by the Committee.
- Committee agreed to reimburse the Dovens for £83.38 (comprising £58.38 for the cards and envelopes, and £24 towards postage).
- Committee agreed that in light of surveyor's report an improved Spa Ponds offer of £10,200 is to be submitted before Christmas.

Action: Ian to write to Sam Skinner accordingly and report back on any response.

Finances

- Renewing Friends of Greenwood membership was discussed. Renewal would cost £25. It was agreed that FTNCG lacked the resources (time to attend meetings during the day in particular) to become properly involved. It did not seem prudent to be part of a network that we would be unlikely to attend and that we do not have the resources to support / influence.

Action: Shlomo to write to Friends of Greenwood explaining our situation, confirming that the matter will be kept under review.

Chair's Note: On 18th December 2013 Ian wrote to Sam Skinner (Fisher German) with FTNCG's offer of £10,200. On Tuesday 7th January 2014 Ian received a reply stating: "...Having discussed your offer at length, my client might be prepared to agree a sale at £15,000. I should highlight that my client has advised that he might take the Spa Ponds off the market shortly so should FTNCG wish to pursue a purchase, now might be the only opportunity to do so. I look forward to hearing your thoughts". The reply was discussed by various Committee members in person, by telephone and e-mail, and a full Committee meeting was arranged for Friday 10th January 2014.

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Friday 10th January 2014, from 5:30 pm - 7:45 pm, at the Downen residence

Present: Shlomo, Lorraine, Josh, Ian and Richard

Committee members considered all aspects of the situation, including funding currently available in FTNCG's Spa Ponds sub-account and pledges made. Concerns were expressed that a decision to withdraw Spa Ponds from the market could be tied to termination of the lease with NWT and a breakdown of cooperation, potentially limiting FTNCG's ability to carry out improvement work on the site in the future. The Committee had previously hoped the cost would not be more than £12,000, however raising an additional £3,000 seemed achievable. Furthermore, it would not seem respectful of those who pledged their support to forfeit the opportunity for the sake of £3,000. As FTNCG has been offered several interest-free loans from members, borrowing money to bridge the gap represented an obvious fall-back position should our Urgent Appeal fall short. Having deliberated, it was unanimously agreed to proceed with a best and final offer of £15,000. Lorraine and Shlomo were tasked with gathering quotes for solicitor's fees, etc.

Chair's Note: A letter to this effect was agreed and subsequently sent to Sam Skinner as an e-mail attachment. On 15th January 2014 Sam telephoned Shlomo to confirm that the owner had agreed, subject to contract, to sell "Lot 4: Clipstone Farm" (Spa Ponds) to FTNCG. Further informal Committee meetings were held (including to review quotes and choose a solicitor for conveyancing and NWT lease arrangements), and the Urgent Spa Ponds Appeal was launched.