

**Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG)  
Open Committee Meeting, Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2015  
at the Forest Town Welfare, Sherwood Room**

**Present:** Shlomo, Lorraine, Josh, Ross, Mark, Helen, John Callaghan, Kevin, Malcolm, Megan, and guests Keith Wallace and Steve Parkhouse

**Trustee Apologies:** Rose, Rich, Barry, Alan and Ian



Registered Charity No. 1157957

Public Rights of Way

The update and discussion regarding footpaths and bridleways in and around Spa Ponds began with Shlomo giving a brief description of some positive exchanges with Rachael Rickell, Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) Rights of Way Officer, re: bridleway support for Spa Ponds. Rachael confirmed that some soft landscaping will be carried out at Spa Ponds (by sub-contractors paid for by NCC) that FTNCG can then maintain. This work will take place in the next couple months, and will include: levelling the bridleway where a deep rut has developed, introducing a drainage channel to prevent puddles forming on the bridleway, and possibly also measures to ensure water does not flow over the bridleway near Packman's Bridge. There is also the possibility of working with NCC to introduce new waymarkings. Rachael set out the responsibilities of the landowners and those of NCC in relation to footpaths and bridleways. Shlomo expressed his gratitude to Keith Wallace and Steve Parkhouse who helped initiate this process.

Keith introduced himself and described some of the activities of the Mansfield & Ashfield Rights of Way Network / Ramblers group (see <http://www.mansfieldramblers.org.uk/> and <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/walksfinder/> and visit their Facebook page). A programme of walks is available via their website, and an informative article about Rights of Ways is at: <http://www.mansfieldramblers.org.uk/articles/5-england-a-wales-rights-of-way.html>

It was noted that Section 56 of the Highways Act 1980 provides a statutory process by which a member of the public can go to the court and obtain an order requiring a highway authority (e.g. Nottinghamshire County Council) to repair a highway maintainable at the public expense. Keith explained the importance of members of the public reporting all problems associated with footpaths, bridleways and Rights of Way to Nottinghamshire County Council, explaining that if the problem persists after having been reported to NCC then please contact the Rights of Way Network via: [footpaths@mansfieldramblers.org.uk](mailto:footpaths@mansfieldramblers.org.uk)

Steve briefly described the work of the Kings Clipstone Project and efforts to connect local footpaths (see: <https://kingsclipstone.wordpress.com/> & <http://sherwoodforestvisitor.com/> for further details). Steve is involved in several public rights of way applications that are currently being processed, and would like to enlist FTNCG's support with an application for a well-used footpath connecting to Spa Ponds (across the field from New Mill Lane). It was agreed that FTNCG would help gather evidence in support of the application, and that this would be included for discussion at the forthcoming FTNCG meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March.

Steve and Keith were thanked for their input.

**Action:** Shlomo to ensure footpath application support is discussed at 4<sup>th</sup> March FTNCG meeting, and (if there are sufficient volunteers) included as part of the Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March Spa Ponds activities (in addition to boundary marking and bridleway maintenance).

## Finance and Fundraising Updates and Discussion

Lorraine reported on the outcome of fund-raising activities involving FTNCG's Funding Group (which includes Lorraine, Celia, Helen, Megan, Rose, Alan, Barry and Rich). The amount raised from various fund-raising activities since 27 October 2014 was as follows: £137.01 from scrap metal and also CDs and books; £98.50 from two car boots; £15 from textiles; and £4.36 from Forest Town Heritage Group market stall - making a total of £254.87 raised (not including donations arising from Rich's Spa Ponds spoons). Lorraine reminded everyone that we are still collecting clean folded 'rags' (incl. curtains, towels, etc.) and metal for recycling, and that items can be passed on at our 4<sup>th</sup> March meeting. Lorraine also noted that the next Funding Group meeting is due to take place from mid-day on 5<sup>th</sup> March at Helen's and that anyone interested should contact Lorraine.

Megan, who is a member of the Institute of Professional Willwriters, described her intention to offer to prepare six basic wills for a discounted price of £50 each in order to raise £300 for FTNCG. Megan explained how very busy she is at the moment, and how the special offer would have to be limited to six and would not commence until mid-March. Megan provided the Group with a number of leaflets about wills and a form to be completed by those who might be interested in the willwriting service. These are available from Lorraine.

**Action:** Anyone interested in a leaflet/form should contact Lorraine - Ring (01623) 640134. Shlomo to ensure Megan's kind offer is discussed at the 4<sup>th</sup> March FTNCG meeting.

As Treasurer, Josh provided a brief account of FTNCG's current financial position, noting FTNCG currently has nearly £2k (£1,961.35), of which £773.50 is ring-fenced for Spa Ponds, leaving over £1k (£1,187.85) in the general fund. Our success securing recognition as a charity from HMRC and associated Gift Aid opportunities were also mentioned.

## Rushpool Updates and Discussion

FTNCG's Rushpool Project Group is headed up by Rich, supported by Helen and by Sherwood Forest Trust's (SFT's) Andy Hollis. A Rushpool Workday took place on 8<sup>th</sup> January. The Workday planned for 16<sup>th</sup> February has been postponed and will now take place on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February, with further Rushpool Workdays planned for Mondays 9<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> March and 27<sup>th</sup> April. Shlomo noted that, thanks to SFT's efforts, bush cutter training took place in November 2014 and certificates were awarded to Ian, Rich and Ross.

## Spa Ponds Updates and Discussion

Shlomo thanked those involved in the NWT Workday (18<sup>th</sup> November 2014) supervised by NWT's Gary Cragg, with NWT and FTNCG volunteers working together to widen the bridleway, install timber to stop soil runoff, repair barriers and fell dangerous trees.

Shlomo reinforced the importance of reporting crimes to the police (e.g. criminal damage, off-road biking) and sending associated incident number to Shlomo for FTNCG's records.

A member described their experience of reporting Spa Ponds incidents to the police, and Shlomo shared his view that this reporting helped ensure that, when a further incident was reported, the police sent a representative to the site. In Shlomo's understand, a report is currently being assembled by the police, who have been made aware of FTNCG's concerns and status (as landowners).

Shlomo explained that FTNCG has employed a solicitor to help with deeds transfer to Charity Commission's Landholding Service.

Shlomo reported that the Landowners Group (which covers Spa Ponds through to Clipstone and Rainworth) is expecting to be involved with an access control project to deter motorbiking and to improve access to pedestrians as part of Heritage Lottery Fund Sherwood Landscape Partnership Scheme, and that this could include Spa Ponds.

Shlomo explained how the Water Catchment Partnership has expressing willingness to support funding bids for Spa Ponds water quality improvement work.

Shlomo thanked WatersideCare's Les Warren who has provided some equipment (e.g. FTNCG-branded tabards, retractable saw, bin bags and hoops, grappling hook, throwline, water quality testing kit, first aid kit, etc.). Les also offered to fund First Aid training for Rich (when his current certificate runs out in 2016). Water testing took place with Les' support on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2014. Further information about the water testing results, and/or a full list of items received from Les are available upon request.

Shlomo celebrated the fact that Spa Ponds has been recommended for inclusion as a Local Green Space (LSG) in Mansfield's Local Plan, expected to be out for consultation in 2015. LGS status could offer protection from development in and around Spa Ponds.

Shlomo noted Forestry Commission plans to thin some of their trees near Spa Ponds.

Shlomo gave a brief account of the Spa Ponds Project Groups that were formed at the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2015 Spa Ponds meeting, including:

- Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) - Sherwood Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) - Shlomo heading up, supported by Rich, Ian, Mark and Josh, to work with Notts Wildlife Trust (NWT), EMEC (environmental consultants linked to NWT who are currently working on a Habitat Management Plan for Spa Ponds Nature Reserve), and the Mercians to submit revised proposal for Spa Ponds ecology and heritage input into Site Management Plan as part of HLF Development Phase. Development Phase proposal ideas received from the Mercians and from EMEC are currently being considered.
- Spa Ponds Heritage (to work with Mercians) - Lorraine, supported by Mark and Rich.
- Boundary Marking - Ian, supported by Rich, to meet to prepare for boundary marking and bridleway maintenance session to take place on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March (from 10 am).
- Toad Count - Rich will contact those who have expressed an interest once we approach 'peak toad' (March / April), including: Shlomo, Rose, Helen, Kevin and Ross.
- Bridleway Maintenance - Ian, supported by other volunteers, will consider opportunities to double-up with other activities, e.g. boundary marking session on Sat. 14th March.

#### Any Other Business

Forthcoming events were discussed - see Programme Handout (below) for details.

Helen made FTNCG members aware of a 3-year-old male house cat in need of re-homing.

**Next FTNCG Meeting: from 7pm Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March, Sherwood Room**  
**Rushpool Workday: from 10am Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February at Bridleway (ASDA) entrance**

**Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG) 2015 Programme (as of 20<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015)**  
**Visit [www.ForestTown.net/Nature](http://www.ForestTown.net/Nature) for the latest information on FTNCG's programme**

February 2015

- Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February: Rushpool Workday, from 10 am at The Bridleway (ASDA) entrance

March 2015

- Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March: FTNCG Meeting from 7pm, Forest Town Welfare, Sherwood Room
- Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March: Rushpool Workday, from 10 am at The Bridleway (ASDA) entrance
- One evening, probably between around 10<sup>th</sup> March and 20<sup>th</sup> April: Spa Ponds Toad Count
- Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March: Spa Ponds boundary marking and bridleway maintenance (from 10 am)
- Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March: Rushpool Workday, from 10 am at The Bridleway (ASDA) entrance

April 2015

- Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April: FTNCG Meeting from 7pm, Forest Town Welfare, Sherwood Room
- Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April: *Spring Community Archaeology Conference (with the Mericans)*
- Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April: *Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (NottsBAG) Annual Event, £6 per person, must be booked in advance via Chris Jackson*
- Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April: Rushpool Workday, from 10 am at The Bridleway (ASDA) entrance
- Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April: Special Meeting for Trustees and Potential Trustees

May 2015

- Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> May: *Magna Carta walk from the Parliament Oak to King John's Palace*
- Wed 6<sup>th</sup> May: Forest Town Nature Conservation Group Annual General Meeting from 7pm, FT Welfare, Sherwood Room, with guest speaker Andy Lowe talking about GPS bird-tracking
- Sat - Sun 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> May: *Spring Thing - Magna Carta Re-enactment, Sherwood Pines*

June 2015

- During balsam pulling season (especially June and July): Balsam pulling at Spa Ponds and environs, including in conjunction with WatersideCare and NottsBAG
- Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June: Guided bird walk with Andy Lowe (Booking via Shlomo is essential)
- Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June: FTNCG Meeting from 7pm, Forest Town Welfare, Sherwood Room
- Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June: Guided bird walk with Andy Lowe (Booking via Shlomo is essential)

July 2015

- Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July: FTNCG Meeting from 7pm, Forest Town Welfare, Sherwood Room
- Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July: Making A Difference Day (with Samworth Academy & Forestry Commission) - Volunteers needed, please contact Shlomo [shlomo.dowen@gmail.com](mailto:shlomo.dowen@gmail.com) or (01623) 640134
- Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July: *Clipstone Gala (FTNCG could have a stall - again, we welcome volunteers)*

September 2015

- Sat 12<sup>th</sup> September: Autumn Fungi Foray at Spa Ponds (with Nottinghamshire Fungi Group)
- Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September: FTNCG Open Committee Meeting from 7pm, Sherwood Room

October 2015

- Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October: FTNCG Meeting from 7pm, Forest Town Welfare, Sherwood Room

November 2015

- Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November: FTNCG Meeting with guest speaker David Budge talking about the Medieval Pottery of Sherwood, from 7pm, Forest Town Welfare, Sherwood Room

December 2015

- Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December: FTNCG Open Committee Meeting from 7pm, Sherwood Room