

Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG)

Wednesday 17th April 2013, from 7 pm, at Forest Town Welfare



Present: Lorraine (Chair); Dave (Vice Chair); Shlomo (Secretary); Josh (Treasurer); Alyson (Membership Secretary); Ian (Site Management Support); Betty; Alan; Malcolm; Rose; Colin; Helen; Barry and Richard [14]

Apologies: Frances; Megan; Margaret; Christine; Pauline; Ron; Lee, Val; Geoff; Jeff; Andy; Ann & Dorothy [13]

Feedback from Group re: Nigel Slater talk

- Members found Nigel to be a knowledgeable and enthusiastic speaker who delivered an engaging and memorable presentation that has been found to be genuinely helpful in subsequently identifying butterflies (and we hope dragonflies).
- Shlomo noted that the books Nigel recommends are: Pocket guide to the Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland. Richard Lewington. £ 9.95. ISBN 0-9531399-1-3 and Field guide to the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Great Britain and Ireland. Steve Brooks and Richard Lewington. £18.95 ISBN 0-953-13990-5

Report back from Positive Information Day

- Shlomo gave his thanks to Ian, Ron, Helen, Lee, Ruth and Sarah. The event offered an opportunity for good cooperation with the Mansfield and Ashfield Local (Wildlife) Group.
- Helen felt the event went well. It was well advertised and fairly well attended.
- £11.50 was raised, many programmes were distributed and some contacts made, e.g. FT library display.

Website Update

- Josh explained how the website at foresttown.net/nature/ now includes a spreadsheet (.xls) version of sightings reporting form, many new photographs, and the very latest version of FTNCG's Programme.
- All present were supportive of changes to the Facebook page/group to enable wider public access.

Action: Josh and Shlomo to improve public access to FTNCG's Facebook page / group

Spa Ponds (Gara Ponds)

- Wardens Alan and Barry reported ongoing problems with litter (they go out collecting every day) and motorbikes. Shlomo reported the situation to the police, who are prepared to send a high-visibility team to walk the site with the Wardens to signal the interest that the police are taking, especially following the fatal shooting of a swan. Barry also reported seeing many frogs, and some tufted ducks and mallards.
- In conversations held during the meeting and subsequent discussion with Ruth Testa (Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT) Reserves Officer) it was agreed that Ruth and her volunteers would work with the FTNCG to pull balsam and improve the Spa Ponds site on Tuesday 21st May and Sunday 7th July (10 am – 3 pm). Should the balsam prove too small on 21st May, then other work would be undertaken on the site.
- Betty, Alan and Barry handed in pledge cards worth nearly £550, and other pledges were also received, meaning that the current total (as at this point in the meeting – see below) was £2,745. In addition, nearly £30 cash has been raised (through the raffle and from the Positive Information Day).
- All agreed on the need to further raise the profile of Spa Ponds, also known locally as "Gara Ponds", especially in the run-up to the 17th July presentation about the History of Spa Ponds by Mercian Archaeological Services CIC. Ian agreed to organise a £50 per square grid map of the site in time for the event on 17th July. Ian also agreed to contact the land agents for Spa Ponds and to report back on progress at the AGM on 22nd May. Malcolm suggested we make the case (in writing) about the advantages of community ownership of the site, to help 'sell the site to the local community'. Ian suggested holding a Butterfly Identification Open Day at Spa Ponds, possibly in August, potentially involving young people via the Wildlife Watch Group.

Action: Ian to progress grid map, and Ian to contact Land Agents and report back at the AGM (22nd May)

Finance update

- As of 17th April 2013 the FTNCG bank account showed a balance of: £1,216.39. A quantity of cash has accumulated for depositing, including: £48 membership (including Richard's), money for the Spa Ponds Appeal and general donations. Additionally, FTNCG is 'owed' £25 from the Mansfield and Ashfield Local Group (because Nigel refused to accept £25 of the £50 he was offered for his FTNCG talk). Also, FTNCG received a cheque from Councillor Denise Moody for £80 from her Mansfield District Council ward fund.
- FTNCG will need to cover the following outgoings: TCV membership and insurance (£215.31); Donation to Cedar Wildlife Sanctuary (£50); Friends of Greenwood Membership (£10); Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust Membership (£33), plus any additional expenses for the AGM, e.g. purchase of raffle prize.
- Therefore, not counting any further donations, FTNCG has about £1,435 with liabilities of about £310, meaning a balance of around £1,125. After discussion it was agreed that FTNCG would pledge £1,000 to the Spa Ponds Appeal, and in the short-term £750 would be ring-fenced for this purpose (and further money would be ring-fenced when it became available), to be reviewed on a regular basis.

Action: Shlomo and Josh to produce a reserve policy to support ring-fencing, ensuring that any reserve is reported alongside other funds to ensure transparency.

Constitution

- In light of the need to adjust the FTNCG Constitution, as recognised by the Committee, a draft was circulated. Comments and questions should be received by Shlomo by 8th May (latest) to ensure that a vote can be taken at the AGM on 22nd May. See accompanying draft.

Volunteers for the new Committee

- Those interested in volunteering to join (or to remain on, or to leave) the Committee should let Shlomo know by 8th May. Jeff indicated (by e-mail) his desire to step down as Rushpool Representative, and Alyson confirmed her desire to step down as Membership Secretary. Dave expressed his desire to step down as Vice Chair, but to remain as a Committee Member. Lorraine stepping down as Chair but willing to take other role on Committee. Shlomo prepared to take on role of Chair.

Stinting (Greeny) Lane Hedge Survey

- Ian has devised easy-to-use recording sheets to help with the surveying, and a first survey of the season took place on Friday 12th April.
- The next survey will take place from 6:30 pm on Thursday 2nd May, meeting at the Old Mill Lane entrance

Visit to Cedar Wildlife Sanctuary Saturday afternoon 18th May

- Shlomo has received 11 bookings so far. These are from: Ron, Helen, Lee, Christine, Ann Davis, Shlomo, Lorraine, Josh, Rose, Ian and Colin. Car sharing still needs to be arranged.

Annual General Meeting (AGM) with talk from Ruth Testa, Wednesday evening 22nd May

- Arrangements for the AGM are progressing, but have yet to be finalised.

Guided walk around Rainworth Heath and environs, Wednesday evening 29th May from 8 pm

- Car sharing still needs to be arranged.

FTNCG Resource Library for sharing amongst group members

- Josh explained the idea, and the form, which will be made available via the FTNCG website.

Action: Josh and Shlomo to upload Resource Library form to the FTNCG website.

Affiliation with Mansfield and Ashfield Local Group

- Shlomo briefly mentioned the advantages of the FTNCG formally affiliating itself with the Mansfield and Ashfield branch of the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, known as the "Mansfield and Ashfield Local Group".

Time ran out for any other business, apart from brief introductions to welcome Richard, our newest member