

Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG) Open Committee Meeting

Wednesday 23rd January 2013, from 7 pm, at the White Gates Pub

Present: Lorraine (Chair), Dave (Vice-Chair), Alyson (Membership Secretary), Shlomo (Secretary), Josh (Treasurer), Ian (Site Management Support), Megan, Frances, Barry, and Alan [10].

Apologies: Jeff (Rushpool Representative), Helen, Ron, Rose, and Andy [5]

Fond memories of the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG) Christmas party were shared, and all agreed that visiting the White Gates Pub for a party is a tradition worth repeating!

Finance update – Bank balance of £1,242.69, further details were circulated.

Action: Josh and Shlomo to transfer accounting information to written format for audit by Ann.

2013 Programme (including Posters and Leaflet) – Nigel Slater confirmed his availability to talk about Butterflies and Dragonflies. Shlomo arranged provisional date for visit to Cedar Sanctuary. Shlomo and Lorraine have begun drafting a programme leaflet for printing and distribution.

Nigel Slater Talk (Wednesday evening 13th March at the Welfare) – All agreed to have a suggested donation (admission charge) of £2 to raise funds to cover £50 for the talk. Posters and press release to be produced to promote the event, hoping to receive some coverage in the Chad.

Action: Shlomo to draft poster and press release.

Visit to Cedar Animal Sanctuary (from around Noon on Saturday 18th May) – All agreed we should publicise this event to see how many wish to go, and then arrange transportation, by either car pool or mini-bus. We also intend to make a donation (about £50) to the Sanctuary, located at 25 Cedar Avenue, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, NG17 8BD. Website: <http://www.cedarwildlifesanctuary.co.uk/>

Next (Open) Committee Meeting / General Meetings / Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Next (Open) Committee Meeting: Wednesday 27th February; General Meetings: Wednesday evenings 17th April and 17th July, with Annual General Meeting on Wednesday evening 22nd May.

Action: Shlomo to check availability of Welfare.

Surveying the Stinting Lane Hedges – All agreed to establish a Stinting Lane Sub-group, to include Ian, Shlomo and others, who can produce an induction pack describing what we do, how & why, including checklist of anticipated species...

Action: Ian to consider rhythm of sessions, start date (end March), How often? Which evenings?

Balsam pulling at Spa Ponds / Cavendish Wood – Potential rhythm of sessions was considered. Dave suggested that there was no great value in picking too early. We could start in May and pull more frequently in June – August.

Action: Dave to come up with some dates. Shlomo to forward Ruth Testa e-mail to Dave.

Guided walk around Rainworth Heath and Rainworth Water – To be led by Ian and Andy. Possibly to also include Ransom Wood. Possibly in early June, but should not clash with balsam pull.

Action: Ian to coordinate with Andy

Lorraine noted the Bird Ringing Demonstration at Rufford Country Park from 9 – 11am on Saturday 9th February (for NWT Members only, which includes FTNCG as we are a group member of NWT). Booking essential, contact NWT Membership Team on 0115 958 8242

Fungi Talk – Ann to choose an evening in September (either 11th, 18th or 25th)

Posters and Leaflet – Posters for Nigel's Talk and the Cedar Visit will be produced and displayed. Also a 2013 Programme leaflet is to be drafted, designed, agreed, printed, and circulated. Questions arise re: Where (Linneys?), how (glossy?), and how many to print.

Action: Shlomo to ask Peter to recommend a printer. Lorraine to help cost printing options. All to provide quotes (very brief testimonials) from Group members for use to 'decorate' the leaflet.

Hedge Laying – Andy empowered to progress this, with our support.

Sightings Recording –Pauline was thanked for submitting so many forms, and Helen was thanked for transferring the data onto the spreadsheet. Josh and Shlomo delivered a four-hour training session with Helen, and since then Helen has taken over primary responsibility for recording the sightings. Sightings information and photographs can be submitted in hard copy or by e-mail. Shlomo will provide Pauline and Dave, and anyone else who wishes, with an electronic version of the sightings form that will make it easier for Helen to process. Consideration was given to ways we could use our data, e.g. create list of species seen (note Dorothy's presentation) and how endangered they are, provide links to sources of information (on the website).

Action: Please keep recording wildlife sightings in and around Forest Town and sharing your data with us. Shlomo to add links, including <http://www.nottsbirders.net/>

RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch, where people record bird sightings for one hour at any time over the weekend, is this weekend (26th / 27th January). If you participate, please share records with us.

Mansfield District Council (MDC) Parks & Green Spaces Strategy consultation – Shlomo gave a brief account of the background, including the MDC motion not to sell land before “Spring 2013” Strategy, the uncertainties over timescale and context (e.g. is this strategy to be part of the Local Development Framework or not?). Shlomo is awaiting a reply from MDC to the 7-page letter sent before Christmas raising a series of, as yet unanswered, questions. It was noted that MDC appears to want to sell some parks/open spaces to pay for upkeep of the remainder. It is difficult to know how to progress before receiving answers. FTNCG is not currently working with MDC on any MDC-owned site. Watching brief for now. Full correspondence available upon request.

Spa Ponds – Update from wardens: Still a problem with off-road bikers, especially in the snowy weather. Wardens have been breaking the ice to help the swans. Biker problem linked to increased popularity of The Dessert. It remains vital to report each incident. Problems of algae growth (eutrophication) in the ponds linked to farmer’s use of fertilisers.

Action: Shlomo to share concerns with Ruth Testa.

Shlomo described the very positive meeting with the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT) Sites Committee, who agreed that if the community purchased the site but could not continue to look after it, NWT would take over, and that NWT would look to sign a 25-year lease with whoever owns the site. On this basis we did two things: we put forward a project for funding as part of a Landscape Partnership Bid, and we put in an offer for the land. The offer was turned down, but the project is moving forward, with interest from both NWT and the County Archaeologist.

Discussion took place regarding fund-raising to purchase the site and/or help pay for work to be carried out on the site. FTNCG Committee endorsed idea of CIIGI moving forward, together with FTNCG, to raise funds. Ideas include: Sponsored balsam pulls, approaching dog walkers who use Spa Ponds, inviting people to sponsor ‘squares’ of land, launch appeal with support of NWT, ask Councillors, contact ASDA and other local businesses. Dave pointed out the great need to raise awareness (as many know the site as “Gara Wood” and not as Spa Ponds), e.g. via feature article in the Chad. There is a need to form a Spa Ponds Sub-Group involving Shlomo, Lorraine, Dave, Ian, Barry and Alan, as well as Andy and Ruth, ensuring CIIGI, FTNCG and NWT are represented. This Group could be expanded (into a project steering group) if we are successful with one or more bids, e.g. could include the County Archaeologist (Ursilla Spence).

Action: Shlomo to contact NWT’s Estates Manager Charles Langtree re: progress with lease and report back to FTNCG.