

## **Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG)**

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2012, from 7 pm, at Forest Town Welfare



**Present:** Lorraine (Chair), Dave (Vice-Chair), Shlomo (Secretary), Josh (Treasurer), Ian (Site Management Support), Margaret, Christine, Shirley Tovey, Frances, Alan, Betty, Barry, Malcolm, Jo (MDC), and Andy (NWT) [15]

**Apologies:** Alyson (Membership Secretary), Jeff (Rushpool Representative), Helen, Ron, Pauline, Rose, Megan, Colin, and Dorothy [9]

Lorraine opened the meeting, and called upon Shlomo to help chair the meeting.

### **Next meetings**

FTNCG's next meeting will take place at Forest Town Miners Welfare from 7pm on Wednesday evening 31<sup>st</sup> October, and will include Dorothy O'Brien talking about her survey work with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), especially along the River Maun parallel to Stinting Lane. And on Wednesday evening 5<sup>th</sup> December 2012, from 7 pm, we will hold our own FTNCG Christmas celebration at the White Gates, Clipstone Road East, Forest Town - by way of thanks for use of their car parking facilities. Feel free to invite others to join this social event. Please bring food to share; drinks, including soft drinks, can be purchased from the bar.

### **Sightings**

The first wave of data (covering December 2011 – June 2012) has been sent to the relevant recorders. There is also an opportunity to record sightings via the BTO's BirdTrack website facility, at: <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/birdtrack>

### **Outing to Attenborough Nature Reserve**

Outing took place as planned on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August, and it was great! We are hoping to arrange for Nigel to come to Forest Town in the Spring to address this Group.

### **Finance Update**

Our thanks to Councillors Mick Barton, Dianne Moody and Martin Wright for their donations.

### **MDC Parks and Open Spaces (Friends Groups) Network Meeting**

Report back from Lorraine and Josh regarding recent meeting (10<sup>th</sup> September). Some Friends Groups were new to the Network. All received a report about the Green Flag Award. Attending the Network meeting led to Lorraine attending a meeting of the Oak Tree Heath Group.

### **Oak Tree**

FTNCG managed a stall at the Oak Tree Heath event on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, and Lorraine attended the inaugural committee meeting of the re-formed Friends of Oak Tree Heath Group (17<sup>th</sup> September). FTNCG members had already pulled balsam with them at Vicar's Pond, Clipstone (26<sup>th</sup> July). FTNCG will continue to support Oak Tree activities and events as and when we can.

### **Stinting Lane**

Ian and Dorothy led another survey, with a further 100m of hedge on each side of Stinting Lane surveyed (roughly half the approximately 1km of hedges on each side). It is hoped that the next survey will take place in February 2013. MDC received a plan that includes repairing these hedges, but despite several formal requests, MDC refuses to release these plans.

**Action:** Shlomo to send details of the case to Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT), who may be able to offer MDC and the developer advice and guidance on their draft hedge plan.

### **Spa Ponds**

The FTNCG has done a fantastic job of helping enhance biodiversity by pulling balsam at Spa Ponds, as well as on nearby Forestry Commission land and at Vicar's Pond. We delivered more than 100 balsam pulling hours in total this season, many by our wardens Alan and Barry. Regarding the sale of the site, it now transpires that although the other four lots were sold, no buyer could be found for the Spa Ponds lot. NWT's Sites Committee is in the process of considering options. I will attend the next Sites Committee meeting on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> October.

### **Hedge Laying**

Contact details provided by Margaret. We are exploring creating an opportunity to work (and receive training) with other Friends Groups and with Wild Sherwood. We will also explore potential sources of funding for this. MDC might be able to help with hedge work in certain areas. Would it be possible to identify who owns the land where Andy's hedge is located?

### **Green Guardian Award**

FTNCG has been nominated for a Green Guardian Award. If we won, this would come with £1,000 to put towards a project. Shlomo, Lorraine and Josh are hoping to submit the Group's application by the end of September.

### **Sherwood Forest Trust (SFT)**

SFT are applying for funds for a hedge and heather projects, and FTNCG may benefit.

### **Rushpool Nature Conservation Area**

Paths have now been removed. Jo wrote to let us know that the bins arrived and MDC is currently in the process of scheduling the work, which should take place in the next couple months, i.e. 'Autumn 2012'. MDC has ordered knee-rail fencing and is considering using some of this for Rushpool.

Jo met earlier with SFT's Ian Major for a Rushpool site visit touch base on site management issues. This is an evolving situation, and Lorraine has now met with Jeff, Helen and Ron, Dave, Ian O'Brien and Andy to progress the plans for Rushpool.

Jo explained that due to rich soil at the Sandlands side, heather would not be suitable there, but heather might be more suitable at the ASDA side. The site would benefit from signage (interpretation boards). MDC has roughly £9,000 of Section 106 money (focussed mainly on Sandlands side). FTNCG will consider options and then meet with MDC. This meeting could involve SFT as well. FTNCG suggested working with existing tree line, as well as introducing a new tree line, as part of the hedge planting. Small area of hard-standing and knee-rail are required on the Sandlands side to help enable gorse management. Jo thought this would be possible, and might be funded by MDC from Section 106 money. At some point Shlomo will contact Jane (Conservation Volunteers) and Wild Sherwood re: volunteers to help plant hedge. Also contact Guides and Scouts, and possibly primary schools.

**Actions:**

Dave to organise a Rushpool work day during the third week in October to prepare the ground for planting, with a planting session to take place during the second week in November.

Shlomo to attempt to identify the location of the historic landfill tip (thought to have been active in the 1950's) to see how near that was to the Rushpool site. Help would be most welcome!

**NWT AGM**

The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust will be holding their Annual General Meeting at Brackenhurst Campus from 10 am on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> October. Further details available from Shlomo.

**Friends of Greenwood Community Forum**

The forthcoming meeting will be hosted by the Maun Conservation Group on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October. We are hoping FTNCG will be represented by Rose, Shlomo, Lorraine and Josh.

**Sherwood Habitats Forum Annual Event**

An interesting event will be taking place at Ransom Wood Business Park on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November from 9:30 am – 4:30 pm. Details are being finalised. Watch this space.

**Posters**

Hard copies of posters for the Mansfield & Ashfield Local Group and the Watch Group (for youngsters) were made available.

**Other Events of Interest**

- Tuesday evening 13<sup>th</sup> November, from 7 pm, Wildlife Group meeting featuring talk on dendro-chronology (tree-ring dating), at the Bridge Street Methodist Church in Mansfield.
- Also, that same evening, Friends of Thynghowe's Annual General Meeting will take place in the Forest Town Welfare.
- Thursday evening 29<sup>th</sup> November, annual Forest Town Christmas Lights switch on celebration.

**Any other business**

Christine donated a booklet from the nearby animal sanctuary – suggesting a possible visit and possible talk-hosting opportunity in the future.

A future walk to be led by Andy will be organised for the end of May/early June.

Shlomo and Lorraine will attempt to contact Margaret's son-in-law (Martyn) to see if he would be able to offer some hedge training for the Group and others.