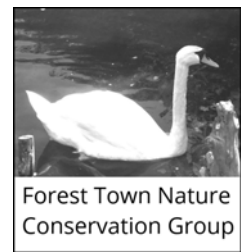


Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG)
3rd September 2014, Forest Town Welfare, Sherwood Room



Present: Shlomo, Lorraine, Josh, Kevin, Celia, Karl, Ross, Mark (& Thomas), Helen, Pauline, Malcolm, Ian, Rose, Barry, Alan, and Stephen G. [16]

Apologies: Ron J., Jeff, Jim, Phyllis, Arnold, Andy, Chris, Christine, Megan, Ron T., Toni, Val, Geoff, Betty, Margaret, Colin, Dorothy, Trev., Steve L., Stephen D., Natalie, Frances and Jes [23]

Updates:

- Shlomo confirmed that FTNCG's charitable status is now official. We are Registered Charity 1157957, and we are now arranging deeds transfer and charitable tax status.
- Rushpool
 - The wild flower walks proved worthwhile. It was noted that as the site is tidied up it is tending to remain cleaner for longer.
Action: Rich to organise another walk and litter pick in the coming weeks
 - Rich circulated paper copies of the interpretation board due to be installed soon.
 - Shlomo reported that, thanks to Sherwood Forest Trust and the County Council Improvement Scheme grant, bush cutter training (worth £600) can be offered to three FTNCG members (Rich, Ian and Ross), on the understanding that FTNCG will cover the cost of certification (approximately £100 in total).
- Spa Ponds
 - FTNCG's Spa Ponds Wardens (Alan and Barry) reported that they have continued to collect large quantities of litter, and that they have noticed a decrease in the number of off-road bikes using the site. They also raised concerns about a tree that had been felled (by persons unknown). Shlomo suggested the incident be reported to the police as a crime.
Action: Rich offered to investigate and report back.
 - Ian reported on the bridleway maintenance work he had done. It was noted that positive feedback had been received via Facebook.
 - Shlomo gave an account of the back-and-forth with Mansfield District Council (MDC) regarding Section 106 monies, and the prospect of mitigating the anticipated damage to Spa Ponds caused by future development (up to approx. 550 homes). Shlomo has lodged an official complaint to MDC on behalf of the Forest Town Community Council (FTCC), and intends to follow this up with planning objections.
 - Alan confirmed the tyre wall at the former Gun Club had been dismantled, and MDC stopped more trees being felled by issuing a temporary Tree Protection Order (TPO).
Action: Shlomo to write to MDC in support of TPO on behalf of FTNCG & FTCC.
 - Shlomo is awaiting word from MDC about Spa Ponds' Local Green Space status.
 - On Monday 8th September Shlomo will represent FTNCG at the Forest Town-Rufford-Clipstone area Landowners Meeting to discuss off-road biking, etc.
- Finances
 - Josh reported that since 2nd July, £14 has been received in membership and donations, and £29.20 was spent on power tool insurance, leaving £991.47 in the general fund and £803.07 in our Spa Ponds sub-account.
- Correspondence
 - Shlomo explained that FTNCG sent letters of support for Heritage Lottery Funding bids submitted by Friends of Thynghowe, Sherwood Forest Trust, Garibaldi School.
 - Shlomo set out FTNCG's involvement with the emerging Sherwood Catchment Partnership (see overleaf), including being put in touch with Waterside Care.
 - Shlomo shared the message received from Police Sergeant (PS) Paul Clarke re: Off-road biking action, and Alan confirmed that bikers were most likely to be using Spa Ponds and environs around 2:30 pm on Sunday afternoons.
Action: Shlomo agreed to pass this intelligence on to PS Clarke.
 - Lorraine explained the circumstances that led to her (and others) writing to Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust re: protecting Clipstone Heath nightjar from sheep.

- Correspondence (continued)
 - FTNCG was invited to join Mercian Archaeological Services CIC at the Castle Field Open Day on Saturday 6th September. Mercian is currently running their annual Field Training School at King John's Palace (Kings Clipstone). It was agreed that, thanks to volunteers: Lorraine, Shlomo, Rich, Rose, Ross, Pauline and Malcolm, FTNCG would have a stall at the Open Day, explaining the Spa Ponds connection.
- Lorraine shared her initial idea about forming a fundraising group to explore ideas for stalls (village market), etc. Several volunteers liked the idea, and offered to help.
Action: Lorraine to contact interested volunteers to arrange a first meeting.
- A discussion took place to consider FTNCG's 2015 programme. It was agreed that we would continue meeting on the first Wednesday of most months (4th March; 1st April; 6th May; 3rd June), supplemented by open Committee meetings. Shlomo said he hoped that Andy Lowe would be willing to speak about the Birklands Ringing Group Sherwood Forest to the Congo and back project, at our 6th May 2015 AGM in addition to leading a nightjar walk. In addition to meetings we can expect to arrange dates for a toad count (in March / April, depending on the weather, etc.), as well as balsam pulling and site maintenance at Spa Ponds, and ongoing wildlife recording at Rushpool. The next Making a Difference Day with Samworth Academy is scheduled for Monday 6th July 2015.
- In the nearer future we can look forward to:
 - **Tuesday 23rd September - Open FTNCG Committee Meeting (Sherwood Room)**
 - **Wednesday 1st October - FTNCG Meeting with Chris Jackson talking about toads**
 - **Sunday 16th November - Rainworth Heath Work Day from 10am**
 - **Wednesday 19th November - Mercian talk about their Sherwood Project 2014/15**
 As well as:
 - Sunday 21st September - Fungi at Vicar's Pond
 - Saturday 4th October to Sat. 22nd Nov.- Clipstone Camp exhibition (Mansfield Museum)
 - Saturday 22nd November - Fungi at Ransomwood
 - Thursday 27th November - Forest Town Christmas Lights Switch-On

Sherwood Catchment Partnership

The European Union Water Framework Directive commits member states to achieve good quality status for all water bodies. Currently, only 27% of water-bodies in England are classified as 'good' under the new standards. A catchment is the area from which rainfall flows into a river, lake or other water-body. Sherwood falls within the catchment area that covers Idle and Torne rivers, as the River Idle is formed by the Rivers Meden, Maun and Poulter.

FTNCG has been involved in meetings to set up a partnership to support improvement of water quality in the Sherwood sub-catchment area, which includes the River Maun, as well as Rivers Idle, Ryton, Poulter, and Meden, and their tributaries and surrounding land. The aim of the Sherwood Catchment Partnership is to create a healthy and wildlife-rich water environment for the benefit of both people and biodiversity.

FTNCG has taken part in two meetings, both held in Forest Town, attended by a range of partners, including the Environment Agency (EA), Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT), Severn Trent Water, Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (NottsBAG), District and County Councils, Thorsby and Harworth Estates, Sherwood Forest Trust, and fellow community groups such as the Maun Conservation Group and the Warsop Footpaths & Countryside Group. Shlomo is currently FTNCG's representative, with Ian as our substitute.

FTNCG is working with the emerging Partnership, in particular with NWT, the EA and NottsBAG, to identify (and apply for funding to enable) projects that would contribute to water quality improvements for the stretch of the River Maun that runs alongside Spa Ponds. These projects could include help managing hard-to-reach Himalayan balsam as well as narrowing the River to speed up the flow, thereby improving water quality. There may also be scope for creating water vole sanctuaries to help protect this species from predators such as mink.

Next Forest Town Nature Conservation Group Meeting: Wednesday 1st October - Notts Amphibian & Reptile Group (NARG) Chris Jackson talking about toads