

**Notes from the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG)  
Trustees & Officers Meeting, Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

**Present / Invited**: Shlomo, Lorraine, Josh, Rich, Jez, John G., and Phil

**Apologies**: Alan, Mark, Helen, Ann, Stephen, and Matt



Registered Charity No. 1157957

**Updates**:

- Venue

Following the unpleasant experience of being pressured to leave early at our November meeting and the subsequent exchange of letters (as circulated to Trustees), there are currently no plans to return to the Forest Town Welfare (Arena) for general meetings, although returning for an event where we pay the £25 per hour fee to secure the room and then ask for donations from attendees has not been ruled out.

- Illegal motorbike access

Trustees will be aware of the work carried out on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) and the subsequent work, paid for by FTNCG and carried out by EMEC, to deter illegal motorbike access to Spa Ponds via Packman's Bridge. Matt Duckworth (Area Rights of Way Officer, North West area - Environmental Management and Design Team, Via East Midlands working in partnership with NCC) urged FTNCG to report all illegal motorbike activity to the police and to continue to work with partners. This partnership working will continue, in particular as part of FTNCG's involvement in the Landowners Group. John kindly offered to accompany Shlomo to the next Landowners Group meeting planned for Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February.

- Biodiversity

Richard provided an engaging update for FTNCG Trustees and Officers in relation to the work he has been doing in the virtual office and his current plans for biodiversity monitoring, recording and education, e.g. what to look for when walking through Spa Ponds at different times of the year.

See: [https://drive.google.com/open?id=1wzcuVz\\_WSMCxLNE2glRkltglbcBBzT1R](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1wzcuVz_WSMCxLNE2glRkltglbcBBzT1R)

and: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1dHGq5Pk5B3D-vEDHzzGge9HLXMGKPUix>

Trustees also appreciated Kevin's bird box report from early 2018.

Trustees agreed that there is a need to plan some identification sessions, perhaps including pond dipping (to establish baseline data to measure improvements arising from our wetland habitat recreation work, etc.), as well as a need to map the various bird boxes installed on site.

- Wetland Habitat Recreation Project

EMEC has carried out 2 days of tree works (for which FTNCG has paid £1,560, including using money from the Woodland Trust Grant).

The next steps include: working with Dave Sutton (EMEC) to agree the number and type of plants to order from Naturescape for a planting session In April / May. EMEC has agreed to help FTNCG with the planting, and also to come back again to help with managing the Himalayan Balsam on the island(s). We will need to decide when (and how) we wish to start removing silt, e.g. from Pond 1.

- Training

Update from Rich on his recent First Aid training (paid for by the Woodland Trust)

Update from Lorraine re: training opportunities with MBarcheology

- Finance / Reserves

By the time the Spa Ponds Heritage Project was concluded all £9,500 were spent as promised. The End of Grant Report was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund as required.

FTNCG currently has a total of about £3,100 (in cash and bank account) which is proposed to be allocated as follows (for the next 14 months):

<b>Cost category</b>	<b>Revised Reserve / Budget</b>
Running costs	£750
Contingencies	£400
Match Funding	£200
Spa Ponds Improvement Work	£400
Wetland Habitat Recreation (Committed)	£1,350 comprising: £1,250 for EMEC (in addition to the £1,560 already paid for most recent EMEC tree work), plus £100 for other, including: £40 Printing & Promotion £50 Travel & Subsistence £2.50 Research £7.50 Other

Raising fresh funds would be required to pay for additional expenses, e.g. projects falling outside the allocations set out above (including running costs for future years).

Lorraine and Shlomo intend to apply to the Greggs plastic carrier bag fund for £2,000 to further the archaeological evaluations that need to be made before we can progress some of our nature conservation plans. This would include £1,000 for 5 days of Matt's time (@ £200/day), with the other £1,000 to cover all additional project costs, e.g. the cost of sample analysis. We are waiting to hear back from Matt regarding realistic costings for core sampling, etc. The application deadline for this funding round is 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

**Consideration of Heritage Management Plan (HMP) Recommendations:**

Relevant pages from the HMP were circulated in advance of the meeting. It was decided that a full consideration of the recommendations be deferred to a future meeting to enable more Trustees, Officers and supporters (including Matt) to be present and to contribute.

## **Decisions:**

1. In relation to the question of how to proceed with training opportunities it was agreed that Lorraine would ascertain the level of interest in a project focussing on the Spa Ponds narrative, and that Shlomo would communicate with Matt in relation to capacity-building support to implement the Heritage Management Plan.
2. Trustees present endorsed the revised allocation of funds as part of FTNCG's reserves policy.
3. Work plans for forthcoming sessions were considered, including an initial discuss about organising when and how we wish to start removing silt, e.g. from Pond 1. Phil agreed to help draft a risk assessment focussing on the de-silting and planting work.

## **Plans:**

- Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2018 Spa Ponds Work Session
  - Measure glade area for seeding, so Shlomo can order enough seed for this area and some surplus to use at Rushpool, in exchange for gorse, with expense to come out of Spa Ponds Improvement Work budget.
  - Tidy up after EMEC work, including adding to dead-hedges
  - Sawing up birch tree that was blown down in recent winds
- Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 Landowners Meeting (Shlomo and John to attend)
- Monday 5<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2018 Water Catchment Partnership Meeting (Phil and Shlomo to attend)
- Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2018 Spa Ponds Work Session
- Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018 FTNCG Management Meeting
- Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2018 Work Session (Rushpool Open Space then Spa Ponds)
  - Mansfield District Council's (MDC's) Parks Development Officer Andy Chambers confirmed that MDC is fine with our plan to clear an area and plant wild meadow seeds in exchange for removing gorse to transplant to Spa Ponds. In an e-mail message he said: "I have no problems with your proposals at all and welcome yours and your groups input and interest in Rushpool OS. If your action day had been during the week I am sure a couple of our staff would have been available to join you but due to past cutbacks parks no longer work weekends. However if you do have some gorse which needs shredding you can pile it up and we will shred it on our return to work on the Monday. With regards to the bagged litter, if you can leave it near the vehicle barrier I will ask the street cleansing team to pick it up for us on the Saturday".
- Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2018 Spa Ponds Work Session
- Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2018 AGM, followed by Ann Ward talk about fungi found at Spa Ponds

## **Actions:**

- Shlomo to order seeds once measurements have been taken (seed mix intended to be used at a sowing rate of 5g per square metre, costing £42.00 / Kg with 1 Kg capable of covering 200 square metres).
- Shlomo and John to attend Landowners Group meeting on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February.

- Phil and Shlomo to attend Water Catchment Partnership Meeting on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> February.
- Matt to provide further details of costs / potential arrangements for core sampling, etc. (in part to inform the Greggs Foundation's Environmental Grant application).
- Lorraine and Shlomo to submit application for a £2,000 Greggs Foundation's Environmental Grant by 9<sup>th</sup> March, with target date for submission: Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February.
- All to help promote forthcoming activities, including our AGM and Ann's fungi talk.
- Shlomo, Josh, Lorraine and others to reach closure with any outstanding loose ends from the Spa Ponds Heritage Project, e.g. developing the webspace to include the HMP, etc.

### **Post meeting update (18<sup>th</sup> February 2018):**

- Note: Shlomo was unable to attend the 5<sup>th</sup> February Water Catchment Partnership meeting. Phil represented FTNCG and provided the following bullet point résumé of the discussions:
  - An important issue was the Water Environment Grant (WEG) - I asked about how small groups could bid for this whether individually or through the Catchment Partnership. The meeting thought that a better way would be for the group to bid using the list of projects Claire already holds. I checked that our projects are on that list.
  - I talked with Les Warren after the meeting and we discussed the advantages of pursuing both routes.
  - The Water Catchment Partnership decided to hold a workshop day in March (Monday 26<sup>th</sup> or Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> or Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> March) to discuss this further.
  - The Water Environment Grant presentation from Cath Leonard has been circulated.
  - On the subject of Project Updates, I talked about our projects we are currently undergoing. I highlighted our issues regarding illegal access by Motorcycles. This generated much discussion. The chair, Nick Brown, highlighted the need for members, as we always do, to inform the police whenever such issues occur. He discussed an app called 'Self Evident' which can be used to collate evidence and give the police evidence to make their funders realise the scale of the problem and their staffing needs. See: <https://www.witnessconfident.org/self-evident-app>
  - Les Warren talked about serious funding issues Waterside Care will be facing after 1<sup>st</sup> April. I spoke at length with him after the meeting and suggested that maybe his support of FTNCG may be compromised after April. He said that this is a possibility as they may have to prioritize areas of greater need than Spa Ponds. However, he still asked what I required re: Water Quality Test strips. His order had been delivered wrongly and they are still awaiting strips so we may still get them. He currently champions the other testing methods that we did when we found out about our high Nitrate levels so I may get into a discussion with him about that in the future.
  - The Environment Agency's Ryan Taylor hopefully will report back at next meeting regarding the release of trout into the River Maun near Spa Ponds. 100 tagged trout were placed in the Maun in November 2017.
  - The date of the next Water Catchment Partnership meeting set for Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May.