

**Notes for Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG)
Trustees Meeting, 7- 9:30 PM, Wednesday 14th September 2016**



Registered Charity No. 1157957

Trustees Present: Lorraine, Shlomo, Josh, Rich, Rose, and Jez [6]

Others Present: Helen (Rushpool Liaison) & Mark (Tree Recorder) [2]

Apologies: Alan and Ross

WELCOME

Shlomo noted that this was the first FTNCG Trustees meeting since 15th June 2016.

FINANCE AND MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Finance update: On 11th September 2016 FTNCG had **£3,780** in the bank and in cash. FTNCG has spent the £155 Spa Ponds Fund we had at the beginning of the financial year, so all remaining funds are unrestricted, in that they were not given for a specific purpose. As set out in our Reserves Policy, we have allocated all our existing funds for one purpose or another, e.g. running costs, site maintenance work, heritage project - so there is a need to raise funds to pay for next year's expenses.

Membership update: On 11th September FTNCG had **52 Members** (7 due for renewal).

SPA PONDS SITE MANAGEMENT

Shlomo conveyed Alan's Warden's update, and the increase in litter arising from the increased use of the site (due to a combination of good weather and school holidays) was noted, as was the need to establish a "Summer Team" to support our Wardens next year. It was also noted that fishermen leaving litter has also increased, despite requests.

Mark provided a Tree Recorder update which included circulating 2 handouts (see below) detailing the 185 trees in EMEC5a (the left-hand of the site as one walks from the Clisptone Drive entrance). Mark identified 25 tree species in this part of Spa Ponds. The evidence gathered by Mark shows that sweet chestnut was grown on purpose, e.g. for coppicing - possibly to supply wood for fencing. Tree recording provides evidence of historic managed woodland at Spa Ponds, and it was noted that this information will be used to inform the emerging Heritage Management Plan, within the context of Spa Ponds' natural heritage. The opportunity for Mark to offer geolocation training to fellow FTNCG volunteers (as part of the Heritage Project) was noted.

Actions: Mark to burn tree photos onto a CD for safe keeping by FTNCG. Mark to consider how and when to offer geolocation training (as part of the Heritage Project).

Shlomo provided a brief update on the EMEC work due to start Friday 16th September, at a cost of between £1,500 - £1,700. The workplan arose from the 15th July Spa Ponds Site Management Meeting and subsequent 5th August meeting with EMEC on site. The Forestry Commission (FC) was informed, and documents exchanged (e.g. EMEC's insurance certificate and FC's permission to access Spa Ponds through FC land).

Lorraine provided an update on recent planting sessions and EMEC's planting advice for the "seedbed" area. Lorraine suggested that the focus for the forthcoming Work Sessions should include: bridleway maintenance, glade creation, fern gully, paths across ponds, seedbed area; bramble; nettles; clearing around recently-planted trees; and dead-hedging. Rich confirmed arrangements for 22nd October and 19th November, when Rich will offer strimmer training, accompanied by Health & Safety consideration.

Action: Shlomo to publicise Saturday Work Sessions (which will start at 10am).

All agreed that more detailed discussions would take place at the next Spa Ponds Site Management Meeting scheduled for Wednesday evening 7th December at the Welfare.

Action: Gather agenda items for December's Spa Ponds Site Management Meeting.

RUSHPOOL UPDATE

Helen provided the following update:

- I have seen the Council team picking up litter at 'The Bridleways' entrance (behind ASDA), and sometimes they do go down the path a little way. I think most of this litter comes from the cars that 'meet' there most evenings. I haven't seen them causing any trouble. Of course the team could litter pick the whole site, but I've not seen this.
- The grass at both sides of the path and the route the dog walkers take has also been mowed over the summer, although I've not seen the Council actually doing this.
- The bin is still being used by the public, and I have seen people crossing the road and carrying their rubbish to the bin. Even children & teenagers have been using it.
- I have been litter picking, sometimes on my way to do shopping, sometimes just for a walk, and taking pictures for sighting recordings.
- At the top of the steps, Rosedale Way site access - I noticed a couple of weeks ago that a conifer tree, that was at the side of number 28 Rosedale Way, had been cut down, and there are branches of a conifer dumped on site at the top of the steps. Last weekend a large metal cog had been placed with the tree branches. I don't want this to lead to further fly-tipping, if possible.
- I still have sightings to input for flowers/plants, and last week I noticed a pink bindweed that I don't think has been recorded before, but I don't know which type yet.

The ensuing discussion included the following points:

- There is a noticeable improvement demonstrating the positive impact of the plastic bag tax, with fewer plastic bags littering the Rushpool Open Space.
- Shlomo suggested that FTNCG focus on Rushpool as part of next year's International Clean up Mansfield Day, and this was agreed in principle by fellow Trustees.
- There is a need to replace the second litter bin.
- Abandoned ASDA shopping trolleys are being pushed through the conifer trees near Holstead Close.

Action: Helen to confirm location (between which houses) and pass the information on to Shlomo, who will contact MDC Parks Development Officer Andy Chambers, and also Grime Busters, to see if they can take action to address fly tipping and trolleys, and to check on plans for removal or otherwise of burnt gorse (also, see below).

Shlomo shared the substance of recent exchanges with MDC Parks Development Officer Andy Chambers about Rushpool site management, including:

- "We do have some S106 available for Rushpool - £4,600 and more than happy to discuss with FTNCG how this is best spent on site. If you want to meet up on site sometime next week please let me know."
- "With regards to costs for management of the site, I do not get involved with the purse strings regarding management costs. You may be as well contact Jo in relation to costings?"

Action: Lorraine to work with Shlomo to reply to Andy, raising points outlined above (fly tipping and trolleys, and to check on plans for removal or otherwise of burnt gorse), and suggesting that MDC focus on gorse management and meadow creation, starting with committing £900 - £1,000 per annum on paying EMEC for 2.5 days of work a year for the next 4 - 5 years (2 days/year on gorse management, ½ day/yr on meadow creation).

FIRST AID TRAINING

Jez and Ann are to attend St John Ambulance training on 11th October in Chesterfield. These two places were booked and paid for by Keep Britain Tidy via Les of WatersideCare. Jez and Ann will scout out the training, and if it seems worthwhile, FTNCG can pay for others to undergo the training (e.g. Dennis).

FUNDRAISING AND VOLUNTEER HOURS

Lorraine provided an update on recent recorded volunteer activity, emphasising how uplifting our volunteer achievements continue to be and how important it will be to keep records as part of the Heritage Project. It was also noted that such records inevitably underestimate the actual level of volunteer activity, as many are shy about reporting their contributions.

Lorraine also explained the opportunities that are available to volunteers who are prepared to keep track of documents available via FTNCG's Virtual Office. All agreed that this was proving a useful communications tool that can be expected to come into its own as part of the Heritage Project.

It was noted that letters requesting funds for FTNCG have been sent to all Forest Town District and County Councillors.

Shlomo shared Sarah's update on market stall / mug and card success to date:

- Sarah has sold 7 x mugs = £42, nearly 50 cards c. £42, and a copy of A Palace for Our Kings, as well as donations totalling £16.75
- We have 1 book, lots of cards, and 14 mugs left - so will need to restock before long.
- There was a very positive response from people about the goods on sale and a lot of interest in the group and charity. A few people didn't even know the Spa Ponds existed, even though they were local, so more interest has already been raised.

Trustees expressed thanks to Sarah for agreeing to run a stall at 5th Oct. meeting, and Rose agreed to support Sarah at the Forest Town Market on Saturday 17th September.

SIGHTINGS RECORDS

Sighting records have been sent to the various county recorders, and FTNCG received an offer of bee identification training, as follows:

From: Dbud01@aol.com Date: 25 August 2016 at 17:00

"...It would be a useful extension if the observers' sightings could begin to consider adding the species identification to their records. I might suggest that anyone interested gets in touch to look at options for them to improve on their id skills. Your team might like to come along to the DaNES annual exhibition at Derby in October and I have attached a flyer with details. This flyer is at the end of the attached Events List and your members are free to attend. Please let me know what you think. Thanks for your supporting comments and best wishes. Dave"

A copy of the DaNES event poster was circulated to Trustees, with electronic copy posted to all FTNCG members and supporters with e-mail addresses.

LANDOWNERS GROUP

Shlomo explained that he has been unable to attend Landowners Group meetings of late, and how this has not stopped FTNCG from contributing to the Group's focus on developing an overarching management Masterplan for wider area which includes Spa Ponds. Shlomo explained how the Spa Ponds vision document came about, alongside reviewing FTNCG's role as part of the Miner2Major Landscape Partnership.

SPA PONDS HERITAGE PROJECT

Our bid for funds was successful, and FTNCG is now in the process of signing a contract with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The HLF do not want us to 'go public' with an announcement of the project just yet. We hope to be able to announce our success at the 5th October FTNCG meeting. Shlomo also clarified that although a public announcement would be premature, Trustees can begin gathering contact details of people to inform when the time comes, as well as inviting people to the 5th October and the 2nd November FTNCG meetings.

Details of the project plan, including promised outputs, outcomes and budget, were circulated to Trustees, with further detail available from the Virtual Office.

Shlomo, Lorraine and Josh met with Matt on 1st September (notes circulated), and some dates were worked out, including:

- Tuesday 1st Nov. 2016 – Official Project Start Date (subject to HLF confirmation)
- Wednesday 2nd Nov. – Matt's FTNCG presentation: "Archaeology For All" (from 7 pm)
- Friday 18th November - Site visit and Project Management Team meeting with Matt
- Saturday 14th January 2017 (10am – 3pm) – Introductory Workshop
- Saturday 25th February (10am – 3pm) – History Research Skills Training Workshop
- Saturday 11th March (10am – 3pm) – Interpreting Maps Workshop
- Either Saturday 25th March or Saturday 1st April – Lidar Workshop (To be confirmed)

Actions: Shlomo and Lorraine to contact Matt and let him know our preference for Friday 18th November (10am - 3pm) for a site visit and Project Management Team meeting (with Friday 2nd December as a backup date if need be, e.g. because of the weather). Also confirm date of Lidar Workshop (if possible).

Shlomo to promote 2nd November FTNCG meeting more widely, as well as coordinating with the HLF as required.

PROGRAMME FOR REMAINDER OF 2016

- ▶ Sunday 2nd October (from 10am) – Spa Ponds Fungi walk with Ann Ward
- ▶ Wed. 5th Oct. (from 7pm) – next FTNCG Meeting (entertaining illustrated updates)
- ▶ Saturday 22nd October Spa Ponds Work Session (10am - 1pm)
- ▶ Wednesday 2nd November (from 7PM) – Archaeology for All with Matt Beresford, followed by discussion (including support for Ann's Spa Ponds oral histories project)
- ▶ Saturday 19th November Spa Ponds Work Session (10am - 1pm)
- ▶ Forest Town Market Days Saturdays 17th Sept., 15th October and 19th November
- ▶ Heritage dates October – December (see above)

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- MDC Local Plan process is progressing slowly, more consultation expected in 2017.
- FTNCG Task List includes more items to action as and when time allows.