

Notes from Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG) Trustees & Officers Meeting, Wednesday 13th September 2017



Registered Charity No. 1157957

Present: Shlomo, Lorraine, Josh, Alan, John and Jes [6]

Apologies: Phil, Helen, Mark and Rich [4]

Matters arising

- **Water Quality update:** Phil has undertaken further tests that revealed high levels of Nitrate in Ponds 1 and 2, less in Pond 3 and almost none in Pond 4, alongside fairly high levels in the Maun. Phil intends to carry out further Nitrate testing in the future with a view to researching possible solutions, perhaps augmented by Water Quality training (which we requested as part of the Water Catchment Partnership).
- **Rushpool update (from Helen):** Mansfield District Council Parks Development Officer Andy Chambers and his teams are quick to clean up any reported graffiti, and they clean litter around the entrance on a regular basis. The site looks very overgrown as it usually does at this time of year. Helen also reports that a kestrel visits regularly, indeed Helen saw the kestrel three times in one day last Saturday.

Warden's update (Alan):

- Barrier need extending near stonework to deter further erosion.
- Quad bikes accessing the site and coming down the severe slopes between Pond 4 and the ditch at the bottom near the River Maun.
- Fishermen fishing without rod license, and leaving litter.
- A group of people appear to have camped out at Spa Ponds, abandoning their tent and other equipment, leaving such a large amount of rubbish that Barry and Alan had to tidy up - this included a controlled fire.
- Tyres being 'barled' (rolled) from what is left of gun club area to the ponds, especially around Pond 2. The gun club was burnt down, leaving little but asbestos.
- Shlomo passed on some laminated signs for Alan to install near site entrances.
- All agreed that more of an effort was made this year to support Wardens with litter picking, and that this yielded good results, i.e. general reduction of litter left on site.

Membership update (Shlomo):

- Shlomo noted that FTNCG currently enjoys 57 members, with some joining as a direct result of the Spa Ponds Heritage Project. Some memberships are due for renewal.

Finance update (Josh):

- Money in FTNCG bank account: **£4,210** (and around £105 in cash)
- Of this, some (~ £1,440) is committed, as follows:
 - £1,190 to the Spa Ponds Heritage Project, of which £875 is ring-fenced for Matt Beresford's grey literature report (leaving ~£300 left to spend)
 - Just under £250 of FTNCG match funding for the Wetland Habitat Recreation Project (~ £150 for EMEC, £50 travel, £40 printing and promotion, £2.50 research)
- Wetland match funding is bumped up to £1k, due to the fact that we have a £750 line of credit with Naturescape paid for by the EA, which isn't included in our bank account.

- We also anticipate receiving a further £1k from Woodland Trust towards Wetland Habitat Recreation, £750 of which will be used to pay EMEC and £250 for plants and trees
- This leaves FTNCG with around **£2,770** for general operating costs, contingencies, and other monies to be spent in line with our reserves policy.

Correspondence:

- Trustees considered FTNCG's recent submissions to the Footpath Inquiry.
- Trustees were updated on exchanges with Friends of Belper Parks, and it was noted that the Group's David Fisher was shown around Spa Ponds at the recent Work Session.
- Trustees discussed the ongoing correspondence with Area Rights of Way Officer Matt Duckworth of ViaEM regarding the barriers and deterring off-road bike use at Spa Ponds. Trustees encouraged Shlomo to respond based on the conversations that took place.

Action: Shlomo to send a reply to Area Rights of Way Officer Matt Duckworth of ViaEM

Wetland Habitat Recreation Project update (Shlomo):

- FTNCG was successful in securing a grant of £1k from the Woodland Trust, although this has yet to be paid into our bank account.
- Arrangements for the forthcoming visit to Naturescape were finalised.
- The intention to meet on site at Spa Ponds with EMEC and Andy Lowe was discussed.

Action: Shlomo to contact Dave and Andy to arrange date for Trustees to meet with them to discuss our Wetland Habitat Recreation Project plans and how best to implement them.

Spa Ponds Heritage Project update

- Matt's draft contribution to the emerging Heritage Management Plan were discussed, and Trustees were keen to encourage Matt to be FNCG's volunteer Archaeological Advisor / Heritage Officer.

Plans for future Spa Ponds Work Sessions and other FTNCG activities

- Shlomo thanked all those who helped with the transformation of the 'meadow area' - from Rich and Alan's original casting of seed, to EMEC's expansion and re-seeding, to the most recent efforts to further extend the meadow area. It was noted that this area is helpful not only for dragonfly and damselfly but also for bats who use Spa Ponds for foraging.
- Forthcoming events and activities include: Friday 15th September Spa Ponds Heritage Project (SPHP) Management Group session at Flint Avenue; Saturday 16th September SPHP stall at Forest Town Craft Market; Saturday 23rd September Work Session at Spa Ponds; and Friday 29th September SPHP Management Group session at Flint Avenue.
- The following provisional dates were agreed:
 - Further Spa Ponds Work Sessions to take place, with Jes leading, on Saturdays 4th November, 18th November, and 2nd December 2017.
 - FTNCG Meetings to take place at the Sherwood Room on Wednesday evenings 4th October (when Matt Beresford will share results of archaeological fieldwork) and 1st November and 6th December. The 1st November meeting will provide an opportunity to consider meeting dates for 2018.
 - SPHP Exhibition at Mansfield Museum on Saturday 14th October, open to the public from 10am - 1pm.