

## **HARLOW BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING 11<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2013 AT 2.00PM HELD AT PARNDON WOOD NATURE RESERVE**

#### **THOSE ATTENDING:**

Colin Lincoln (Chair), Pauline Tidmas, Chris Rees, Eric Gammer, Cllr Muriel Jolles, Mark Vine, R. Weston, John Wheatland, Lauren Hull, Lenny Collins, D. Spelling, Cllr Jean Clark, Andrew Tomlins, Tony Hall, Cllr Edna Stevens

Janet Cable – Minutes.

#### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Cllr P Waite, Mick Whitby, Darren Fazackerley, Sean Folan, Phil Bowen, Susan Crabb

#### **1&2. MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING**

Agreed as a correct record.

Item 7 Oakwood Ponds – the funds are in place but have been unable to get hold of Ray Matthews. Colin agreed to contact Ray. Note from Darren – work is in progress. Ray Matthews to contact Stort Valley. He also promised chestnut paling.

Trees – there appears to be a lack of communication, has it improved? Note from Darren – the schemes have been costed and Councillors updated.

Are we saying in the ward improvement budget you cannot purchase trees. Check with Darren as this is unclear. November is tree planting time.

Marshgate Spring wood – blockages cleared and there is no flooding.

The monthly e-newsletter has been discontinued – ECCO are doing their own newsletter. Darren has now emailed the distribution list to ECCO. This will contain information on ECCO and what is going on at Parndon Wood. This will be going out at the end of June.

Item 7 Vicarage Wood/Halling Hill contractors compound - There is no threat to the trees and the issue has been resolved.

#### **3. ECCO**

Lauren Hull introduced herself. She has taken over since the last meeting as the Centre Manager. She is originally from Nottinghamshire, studied horticulture for 3 years and then moved to Writtle and gained a degree in landscapes. She has vast experience with children.

The programme of events has been updated, 10 activities have been added, many of which are free. Lauren will have continued links with local schools. The café

opened in the Easter holidays which is doing well. There is hope to further develop this. All the rooms have been decorated and are presently working on the display boards and very soon things will be going back up. Wood sales are continuing from here and ECCO shops. They are currently building up stocks and Andrew is on board with this. There are links with Surestart Centres. Opening hours have been increased and they are now open 5 days a week all year round. Late opening night has been moved from Tuesday to Thursday. Lauren extended grateful thanks to Lenny and Darren for their help.

Q. When will the library be back in place?

A. This is being rolled out at present.

Q. Will the history be back on the wall?

A. Yes, engraved on an oak slab.

Q. Any possibility of having a library of all the books?

A. Happy to create a database. If you want a specific book Lauren will try to find it for you. Lauren to contact Harlow main Library as well.

#### 4. **KIER HARLOW**

No representative attended.

Questions for Kier

Q. Is it true that Kier have had their budget cut by £1M. If so how will this affect them?

Q. Can Kier please stop mowing wild flowers down? At Tanys Dell they have massacred all the flowers. Mower drivers need educating. There is a need to compile a list of areas which should not be mown and be given to Kier. Is there a possibility of putting something in Harlow Times and on the website? When the Landscape and Biodiversity Officer is employed they will be able to help with this kind of work.

Q. At New Hall – group have done maintenance works on the woods (Barnsley Woods) for which they got a grant. Have they moved paths with no permissions. Who should be contacted about this?

#### 5. **LANDSCAPE & BIODIVERSITY OFFICER UPDATE**

Job has been advertised which closes on 14<sup>th</sup> June. Interviews to be held 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> July. Hope to have someone in post by September.

#### 6. **NATURE RESERVES UPDATE & WILDSpace! REPORT**

Please see report by Lenny Collins, Wildlife Sites Assistant.

This is what Lenny and the volunteers have been doing since the last meeting.

Q. Brenthall & Barnsley Woods – complaints that fly tipping has increased despite the kissing gate being installed?

- A. Lenny will be there in 2 weeks and will take a look at this. A PCSO has leafleted this area about this.
- Q. Is dumping grass cuttings fly-tipping?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Greenteam “makes the woods safer”, what does this mean and were the trees dead?
- A. There has been problems with insurance companies and the Council are trying to eliminate the risks. The Council has a responsibility to make things safe.
- Q. New fencing to stop access to railway line.
- A. Fencing has been erected to stop dogs getting on the railway line. There was a second complaint from the same person and so more fencing was put up.
- Q. There are very few southern marsh orchids – can we do something about this?
- A. These are normally cut annually but the contractor did not reply to emails and so it was not cut. This smothered the orchids and they did not grow again this year. There is a possibility that Darren may be trying to get Kier to do something. The end of July is the perfect time.

Could contact Herts and Middlesex to ask them who cuts their meadows.

Another idea is to have grazing animals tagged by GPS so that if they graze outside of a permitted area they get a little shock, this could be considered for the marshes.

## **7. WILDLIFE PROJECTS GROUP UPDATE**

This has been wound down. We are now on Phase 2 of the Essex Biodiversity Project which involves the Greenteam digging out and planting. The area is more or less finished. Essex Biodiversity Project are holding off digging as they need an invertebrates survey – will come back in September. They are into the sustainability phase. They have been given money and bought tools. They have also run a school competition. There is money for training and they need to publicise an event. The money has to be spent by September.

Harlow Schools Consortium contacted 32 schools and only had replies from 3, only 2 took part, Henry Moore and Roydon Primary Schools. Entries are to be displayed at the Civic.

1000 new reeds have been planted, and they are just starting to grow now.

Kier have agreed to mow a small area of grass near the picnic benches.

## **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Concern was raised about the amount of horses on cycleways, roundabouts etc. Essex County Council are responsible for this and not Harlow. There is a need for

Harlow Council to move Essex County Council to do more. Cars are driven across verges to get to the horses. When a horse was killed contact was made with Essex County Council. The horses are moved but they arrive back. In the winter months the horses are up to their bellies in mud. The horses also ate all the flowers. The RSPCA set out on their website the criteria for horses and Essex County Council follow this. The RSPCA are now saying that they are against the tethering of horses. Horses are by nature pack animals.

Q. ECCO, are you in touch with high Beech School.

A. No. ECCO have operational rights at Parndon Wood and Pets Corner is Harlow Council.

Suggest everyone gets together to create educational work to get children involved. Justin Hopwood can be contacted so that he can advise how many schools make use of Pets Corner.

ECCO charge £2 per child for a visit. In her first year Lauren will be building connections with local schools.

There is a meeting next Monday of the Town Park Users Group.

Archaeological meeting – applying for funding. Meeting later this month if anyone is interested. They are people from Oxford and are interested in information gathering.

There was an article in the Sunday Times reporting on Harlow Marshes as an area to visit, does anyone have a copy of this?

The Green Flag Award says how good we are and yet there are Police notices warding off people going into the woods. In Ram Gorse there are named individuals who are not permitted to enter the woods, can this be implemented in other areas by the Greenteam

A414 – Parndon Mill Lane, is it Harlow or Essex county Council

There are still a problem with badgers which should be taken up with Planning.

New Hall badger sets, trying to force them to move.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

5th November 2013 at 2pm at Parndon Wood Nature Reserve.

Meeting closed 4.10pm.