

## **HARLOW BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING 11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015 AT 2.00PM HELD AT PARNDON WOOD NATURE RESERVE**

#### **THOSE ATTENDING:**

Darren Fazackerley, Andy Bradley, Brian Bull, Colin Lincoln, Jan Ragg, Edna Stevens, Sally Naylor, Josey Travell, Chris Rees, Patrick Bailley

Terri Bishop – Minutes.

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

Cllr Jean Clark, Andrew Tomlins, Eric Gammer, Lenny Collins

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

Agreed as a correct record.

Annual report for Natural Harlow 2014 available.

Green Flag Award – submitted application for this year. Going to be mystery shopped next autumn.

Marshgate Spring – encampment cleared and cleansed. Subsequent encampment and some tents need to be cleared. Reported to community safety. Another tent to be removed from Latton Common.

Kingsdon Lane Pond – Work in progress. Pond cleared and rubbish needs to be removed followed by tidy up. End of March to complete.

Roman Temple – Archaeologists didn't get funding and looking for alternative funding so no date as yet. Volunteers have been doing some work. Objective to bring the site into positive conservation management, and hope to become a designated wildlife site. Requires investment.

Rosemary Close memorial works completed. Newfoundland at the Ark campus, notice needed to inform visitors why the tree is there.

#### **3. LANDSCAPE AND BIODIVERSITY OFFICER**

New Landscape and Biodiversity Officer Patrick Bailly was introduced to the group and described his background and what he hopes to bring to the role.

#### **4. ECCO UPDATE**

Recent events:

Mammal weekend – November

Santa's Grotto – December.

Big Bird watch with RSPB – February. Some rare birds spotted. Also build a bird box weekend.

Who lives here? Trail hunt – March.

Visitor numbers increasing as weather improves.

Beehive project – HBKA and Natural England. 4 different hives going in initially.

Concrete Planters from the Stow – replanted with bee friendly plants. Harlow Garden Centre helpfully donated some more plants.

Bird box camera – on centre roof, hope to have up and running very soon.

Tree donations – take into nursery if potted. Can't go into the reserve, but will find locations elsewhere in Harlow.

Bluebell Bench – have a flat bench, may put in place in a bluebell location.

## 5. **HARLOW COUNCIL UPDATE AND KIER HARLOW REPORT**

Budget setting process – no budget reductions.

Biodiversity Officer in place.

Lenny's contract has been extended to the end of July.

Thanks to David Calvert and Alex Hollocks for interim cover of the Biodiversity Officer post. Alex put together the annual report. Now working at Canal and Rivers Trust.

End of 3<sup>rd</sup> year of partnership with ECCO. Council funding ceases end of March.

Working really well, some fantastic achievements made.

Kier Harlow

Just coming off of winter hedge cutting and bramble removal. Start grass cutting 1<sup>st</sup> April. Going out to map Bee Orchid areas now. If you notice any, please let Kier know.

Olympic trees – 70 trees planted around the town.

Spring bulbs – a lot of bulbs have been planted over the winter.

Kingsdon Pond – been dredged, but a lot of debris to be removed. Will be completed by end March.

Town Park HLF – a lot of work has been carried out since Blakedown's started in November. Water Gardens to be drained and de-silted in the next few weeks. Some trees have been removed to open up the vista. A lot of tree planting and bulbs – Rhododendron Dell.

Pets Corner now closed and being refurbished.

Spurriers House – being refurbished.

Building works should be completed by autumn.

Mike Levett leading a lot of walks and events in conjunction with Town Park volunteers.

Badger Setts – there are 2 in the park. Derek Barry has not been alerted to any concerns there. DF speak to Derek and Mike Levett.

## 6. **ESSEX FIELD CLUB EXHIBITION – WILDFLOWERS AND BEES**

Display of wildflowers, bees and butterflies photos for exhibition. Very well received. On display now at Parndon Wood.

## 7. **FLAGSHIP SPECIES FOR 2015 - BEES**

Bees are declining across the county and it is important to assist the population.

4 beehives at Nature Reserves with consent from Natural England. Update on when hives can be put in place.

Harlow Beekeepers Association can provide advice. Hives on allotments and Gibbered Garden. Look at installing hives at the museum. Speak to Mike Levett re possibility of placing a hive in the walled garden.

Bee Day – promoting and creating awareness of bees

**8. HARLOW WOODS SSSI MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014-2019**

Plans in place for Parndon and Hospital & Risdens Wood.

A lot of woodland management work has taken place through the winter. Working well. Winter rain has de-silted ponds which has caused some issues

**9. LATTON WOODS MANAGEMENT PLAN 2012-2022**

Management plan in place. A lot of work has been done in hand with Capel Manor College. Able to use the trees as training for students.

Volunteers are working in the woods and ponds, making a real difference.

Veteran Hornbeam pollards to be protected were possible.

**10. OAKWOOD POND AND OAKWOOD SOUTH IMPROVEMENTS**

Meeting with Ponds Forum and Stort Valley Angling Society. Starting to look at funding opportunities in order to take work forward.

East of England Biodiversity Forum held a funding event to inform on various way of obtaining funding for projects including:

Heritage Lottery

Crowd funding – sponsorship system for projects, build a website explaining the project and link to a submission method such as PayPal.

**11. WARD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT UPDATE**

Programme to complete by the end of March. Some of the projects include; Benches, seats, youth centre at Sumners, art projects, tree and bulb planting.

**12. NATURE RESERVES UPDATE & WILDSpace! REPORT**

PB helping to see the winter work programme through, working to get remaining coppicing completed. Larger oaks being taken down as part of the programme. 35 oaks to be planted in their place.

Latton Woods – Opening up system of rides. Good progress being made, doing a lot of felling/thinning out in conifer areas. Will be able to do some work on veteran pollards – reduce the weight on some of the bulkier trees.

Lincoln Hide Pond – full of silt. Wildflower meadow turned arable and a likely cause of the problem. Hoping to build silt traps in the autumn to prevent silt getting into the pond.

Roman Temple Site – Understorey under Oak trees to be removed because of encroachment.

Willow coppicing and pollarding in Marshgate Springs and on Stort Valley meadows.

13. **WILDLIFE PROJECTS GROUP UPDATE**

Been looking at the possibility of creating a wildflower meadow on Stort Valley Meadows. Funding is available to create the meadow, but issue would be future maintenance.

Sally contacted Poundland with a view to purchasing the appropriate machinery for maintenance. A container has been made available in the walled garden to store a mower. If have machinery to cut and collect the grass, may be able to sell the hay. Habitat piles of grass – have been done in the past, but prone to arson attacks. Also may get lots of nutrient run-off from the grass. There may be Bee orchids on the site.

Netteswell Pond up to town centre may be an alternative location.

Parndon Meadow to front of crematorium could be improved with the possibility of involving schools. Link into Flagship species – Bees.

14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

River Way Car park – been used recently by factory workers who block it. This appears to have worsened following Comet distribution centre redevelopment. The Highways Panel was meant to approve pay and display at this car park to combat this, but it was not approved. If user groups submit petitions this can be revisited and referred back to the Panel. Sally has started collecting signatures, but it seems that many people are not keen on this due to various reasons – dog walkers etc. Look at the possibility of reimbursement for volunteers working at the site. Another option would be to put a gate on the car park.

Employability – Derwent Centre asking for gardening help. If anyone is able to help, please let DF know.

Meeting closed 4.00pm.