

FFOG meeting- Decisions & Actions

Location: FMH

Date: 12.01.23

Time: 7.30 to 9.30pm

Attendees: Sue Nieduszynska (chair), Graham Brandwood, Steve Bullen, David Elliot, Clio Graham, Anne Greenwood, Rebekah Key(New member welcomed), Ian Procter, Hilary Short, Mick Short, Chris Workman,

Apologies: David Brookes

ITEM	ISSUE	DECISION	ACTION	OWNER
previous Minutes	Accepted.			
Matters Arising	Big Meadow: Thermal Imaging Devices were used on 9 th January to assess numbers of Jack snipe. However, the density of the rush prevented an accurate assessment. Volunteers counted 19 jack snipe in Big Meadow & one in School pond. The mosaic area in big meadow was noted to be extending.	To continue using volunteers for flush counts.		
	Fence posts: Approx. 50 fence posts are required per annum. Discussion re whether capital grants funding of fence posts should be investigated.		SN, HS & IP to have a separate meeting to discuss this issue	SN/HS/IP
<i>Actions carried over from previous minutes</i>				
4.3.3	To promote the Big Meadow and research into what causes this area to be so successful. Rick to contact Lancaster University to see if there are students interested in research of the area		Ongoing -to devise an objective that would form a basis of a dissertation project for ecology students	RG

5.1	Maintenance: Graham proposed that the gate to the hay meadow be closed to prevent cattle access and the introduction of nutrients. Sue said the phosphorus locked into the clay was the limiting factor.	It was accepted that there were different views on this issue and advice needs to be sought.	Glen Swainson to be asked for advice	SN
5.2	Progress with surveys: Sue has received revised surveys from Hil for butterflies & ponds. These will be sent out with the minutes		SN to send to AG who will distribute	SN/AG
4.1.	Arable field: Colin McShane raised the possibility that snipe in Big Meadow may be feeding overnight amongst the stubble of Flora Field.		SN to arrange drilling. To remind Aubrey to send his contract back	SN SN
4.2	Woodland & Hedges: R (SN) R (GB): GB produced a paper on the rationale for coppicing. SN stated that she appreciated the value of coppicing hazel for our own use but that it was not required for environmental reasons. SN suggested that in addition to the coppiced area, we should allow other hazels in the woodland to mature to improve biodiversity. GB stated that rotational hazel coppicing and it's use above & beyond the supply of materials should be part of the Woodland Management Plan (refer to item 4.7) Ian had received Andy Lee's annual Tree Safety Survey. CW expressed concern about the horse chestnut in Pony Wood. (This tree came down in strong winds the same night!). In addition, a Birch in the play area is to come down.	To defer discussion of Hazel & include in the Woodland Management plan.	Coppicing to be added to the arrangements calendar for November. To circulate the Annual Tree Safety survey. All members to study the document a& feedback if they notice areas of concern	AG IP/AG ALL
4.6	The Contacts List and Field Access List have been updated.	Updated lists and policy agreed.	To contact Peter Tilly to ascertain if he has a key for field access. PT has retained keys to access the shed for repairs & work on surveys	AG

	SN has updated the Fields Access Policy		Updated Field Access Policy to be send to those on the list	AG
4.7	<p>Future Planning. R (Ian). This proposal included the need to update existing plans and in addition to draw up plans for the future development of The Reserve. ELMS projects may become much more widely available, and we need to be ready for any application process.</p> <p>Hilary stated that in 2010/11 an expert was recruited to help produce the plan that was successful in applying for Stewardship. She envisaged that this would be the way forward this time round. Currently, an environmental expert may be joining the trustees and part of this role will be to assist in drawing up future development plans. Consultation with other bodies, including the local community (who paid for the fields), will need to take place.</p>	<p>The Woodland Management Plan to incorporate Hedges and to be revisited & updated.</p> <p>The Pond Management Plan needs to be reviewed</p> <p>Wet Pastures & Reed Beds planning</p> <p>The trustees have responsibility for future planning and for any income that can be generated and will take this forward with the help of an expert. FFOG will be one of the organisations that contribute to the process.</p>	<p>Ian to draw up a small group of people to revise the Woodland & Hedges Management Plan & report back to the May FFOG meeting.</p> <p>CW will lead on Pond Management. DE will contribute</p> <p>SB & CG will lead on this and involve GB who already includes this in his monitoring report</p>	<p>IP</p> <p>CW/DE</p> <p>SB/CG/GB</p>
4.8	<p>Gritting of paths. In the recent sustained icy spell the paths became treacherous. Grit is very expensive particularly the pet-friendly & environmentally friendly varieties. Another option would be the use of notices to advise the public. There was discussion about the legal situation and liability.</p>	<p>Gritting is prohibitively expensive.</p> <p>The trustees to investigate the legal situation re the use of warning notices.</p>	<p>HS will take to the trustees and bring back to the next meeting.</p>	HS
5.1	<p>Volunteer reports: (R Ian).</p> <p>November Report- The servicing of the equipment including mowing machines & chain saws is being done by Peter Tilley. We wish to thank Peter for this.</p> <p>.</p>			

5.2	Work plans for January & February: R (Ian) Sapling Planting in Pony Wood & The Orchard to take place this Saturday 14 th January.	Agreed.		
5.3	Update on Emergency Services Access: There has been excellent co-operation with NWS. (Rob Deeble). A map with Field names and access points marked with post code and W3W has been provided. There are 5 notice boards in The Reserve. Each one will have a key word to indicate the site.	To add this information to any future Fairfield Leaflets	NWS to be informed that they should direct members of the public to the notice boards for details of the site and postcode	IP
6.1	Maintenance: R (GB). Cattle Crossings have been checked and are fine. Gate between the Gun range & Carr House Meadow is closed. The gate between Big Meadow & Hay Meadow needs closing to keep cattle out of Hay Meadow. SN queried what was on the grazing calendar?	Following discussion, it was agreed that in the north end of the orchard a hazel fence would replace the dead hedge that prevents access to the scrub/wild area	HS to liaise with Fraser re gate closure HS to send Grazing Calendar to AG who will send to FFOG members	HS HS/AG
6.2.1	Surveys: Graeme Skelcher Annual Monitoring Report The meadow satisfies the target criteria for 'semi-improved grassland' but falls short of the target criteria for 'lowland meadow' However, the total number of six lowland meadow indicators in July was the highest recorded in the 12 years of survey. Mick questioned if there was anything we could do to improve? In previous years, green hay from donor sites has been used to increase biodiversity. The bird food margins have not done well this year. The wildflower margins are satisfactory Sycamore regeneration was widespread, being recorded at nine of the ten sample points (dominant), though only sparsely scattered	To enquire about Green Hay to from Heysham Nature Reserve Sycamore management by selective weeding to ensure that chosen species thrive. To be discussed further in the Woodland & Hedges Management Plan	SN to action this	SN

6.2.2	<p>Breeding Bird survey- Dan Haywood: This is the first year that neither Shelduck, Oystercatcher or Lapwing have not attempted to breed on site. And this may imply that the linkage to the Morecambe Bay SPA / Lune Estuary SSSI is lessening. The Reed beds are thriving. The ongoing thickening of hedgerows should be beneficial.</p> <p>SN stated that the number of Linnets are significantly decreased.</p>	To ensure that this information is considered when we enter a new agreement.		
	<p>Bats: Will Walton has inspected the bats in pony wood and some of the boxes are occupied. Some boxes in the orchard are in poor condition and there is too big a gap. He has agreed to lead a bat walk in summer.</p>	To ask Will to ask for proposals as to how many new bat boxes are required & where to site them	SN to follow up on Will's proposals and his offer to lead a bat walk.	SN
6.2.3.	<p>Wildlife Surveys planner: CW & Hil to discuss survey planning including Methodology & standardisation of mammal & pond surveys</p>		CW to provide an update at the next meeting	CW
7.1	<p>Arrangements for January & February: No need to advertise for associate volunteers as there are good numbers of volunteers on Wednesdays & Saturdays.</p>		<p>To produce a brief review for the next meeting of AV's and their roles</p> <p>To remove 'review of cyclists and dogs' from February arrangements</p>	<p>IP</p> <p>AG</p>
7.2	<p>Financial control:</p> <p>Graeme Skelcher Meadow survey: £650.00</p> <p>Dan Haywood Breeding Bird Survey: £90.00. This survey is one of those used when applying for grants. Discussion that there should be a professional payment for this survey.</p> <p>Saplings: £374.00</p> <p>Huddleston bill (gate & gate posts) of £988 + VAT needs to be revised to include the post over Lucy Brook</p>			
7.3	<p>Organised Events: Wassailing 14th January 3.00pm</p>			

7.5	Items to report from FA: Ian's safety notices submitted to the FA			
7.6	Items to report from trustees: Intention to recruit a new trustee.			
AOB	AG proposed moving the evening FFOG meetings to an earlier time of 7.00pm to 9.00pm	This was agreed		
	HS. The shed roof is to be replaced with a corrugated metal roof. And will include a solar panel and water collection. The main issue for the stored equipment is dirt when the roof is taken off & this will be minimised by using a sheet on the rafters. Some of the equipment.e.g. mowers will need to be stored elsewhere such as the allotment shed and the storage building at the Triangle			
	SB. Half of the nest boxes in Pony Wood have been used this year. Four need replacing. £16.00 each	Purchase agreed.	Purchase of 4 nest boxes	SB

Next meeting: onsite 2nd March 2023. 2.00pm to 4.00pm