

FFOG meeting- Decisions & Actions

Location: on-site

Date: 31.08.23

Time: 4.00pm to 6.00pm

Attendees: Sue Nieduszynska (chair), Graham Brandwood, David Brookes, David Elliot, Anne Greenwood, Rebekah Key, Ian Procter, Hilary Short, Mick Short, Chris Workman.

Apologies: Steve Bullen, Clio Graham,

ITEM	ISSUE	DECISION	ACTION	OWNER
Previous Minutes	Accepted by email			
Matters Arising	Woodlands Trust: Purchase of saplings for the area in front of the laid hedge far side of West field. IP reported that The Woodland Trust have agreed to supply 900 saplings at the cost of £137. The delivery date is provisionally Thursday 11 th January in preparation for a community planting day on Saturday 13 th January '24 In addition IP will make an application to the Tree Council for 135 sapling of 8 different species to provide diversity.		The community planting will go in the newsletter and on the notice boards nearer the time	
	Ash tree in the stump circle: A large branch had snapped off. HS reported that Andy Lee is to obtain an estimate for a platform needed to deal with the Ash. It may take a while to sort out. So far Andy has only found 3-day hires which would also involve a training course and hence cost us a huge amount of money.			

	He will continue looking. It's not urgent and, from experience, he believes that he will be able to find an affordable solution, given time.			
2.1.1	Orchard: Assessment of apples for Apple Day: There are very few apples left on the Orchard trees.	It is not necessary to source apples from the Orchard trees to show the different varieties grown. A supply of apples can be sourced elsewhere	IP will look into alternative apple sources	IP
2.1.2	Mulching of Fruit Trees:(R AG). As an example, AG indicated 2 apple trees that were planted at the same time. One had been mulched with woodchip with an underlayer of cardboard before the spring drought and had thrived better than its neighbour. Andy Lee had woodchip that would be available to us if we could collect.	It was agreed that the young fruit trees would be mulched.	AG to contact Andy Lee to organise collection of woodchips on 13 th Sept.	AG
2.1.3	Re-siting of the medlar tree: (R GF). A medlar tree (74) close to the hedge had died. GF/AG proposed planting a new medlar at an alternative site indicated on a map in the report.	It was agreed that a new medlar would be planted close to the stone fruit circle. (Planting between Nov & Feb) 2 adjacent old tree stumps to be dug out to provide a clear run for the roots. The dead medlar to be left in place to decay.		
	Fauna path fence: IP indicated the broken fence. He will meet Winston next week to discuss repair.			
	Fauna path hedge adjacent to the boardwalk: SN had concerns that the hedge adjacent to the willow was thin and not giving wildlife value. Dan Haywood's map had shown no nests or winter species at this site. The willow was not allowed to grow into the trees, and it was creating a barrier to the expansion of the hedge width. CW thought it was too wet for brambles to grow. Blackthorn could be allowed to spread. AG posed that the noise of footsteps on the boardwalk could be disturbing to nesting birds.	Further consideration to be given as to how to encourage hedge quality & bird nesting	GB will produce a report for Nov FFOG	GB

2.2.1	Ash tree corner: Hedge laying of a short stretch near the wildflower patch. (IP). This may be deferred until next year. Also, the area could be replanted with wildflowers or to become a scrubby area on the shaded side.	It was agreed that the short area of hedge would be laid. ,		
2.2.2	Principles of Hedge Trimming: (R Ian) SN asked if it was the right time to make decisions about hedge trimming as when we move into the new agreement, we will no longer be targeting ground feeding or ground nesting birds and therefore will not have the 2m height limit anymore. It is more likely that we will be targeting passerines (perching birds) that prefer big wide high thorny hedgerows. SN proposed that any decisions on hedge management should wait until we get Calum's report and see what the overall vision is. DB said that the current agreement has been extended to 2027 & the hedges must be managed during this time and to adhere to the 2m height limits.	It was agreed that whilst we are in the current agreement, we would adhere to the principles of hedge trimming as laid out in IP's report.		
2.2.3	DEFRA public Consultation on Protecting Hedgerows: R- IP & SN had produced a response & this had been circulated. SN asked if there was any feedback on the proposals. GB advocated support of the RSBP response	To include details of this consultation in the email due to go out to Saturday volunteers so that they have the opportunity to make a response. To include a signpost to the RSPB.	To add details of the DEFRA consultation to Jonathan's newsletter	IP
2.3	Self-rooting blackthorn between Fauna Path & Hay Meadow: (IP) The blackthorn had grown above the fence. It had been trimmed last year but now requires further trimming & preventing from further invasion into the field.	Blackthorn to be trimmed & height reduced to fence level		
	Cromwell Rd gate: (HS) Cyclists had been gaining access to the Reserve via this gate. This included Deliveroo! On safety grounds, the FA had proposed closing the gate whilst trying to minimise the noise nuisance to the neighbours.	To ask Winston to look at a way of closing the gate that would deter cyclists and be relatively quiet.	IP will liaise with Winston	IP

	<p>Hay Meadow: (IP) Refer to GBs report. Scrub is developing to the east of Cromwell Pond which is fenced off. Cattle usually come into the Hay Meadow in September to graze it down and GB queried whether they should be allowed in to break up the scrubby area or whether it would be better to retain the fencing & continue with scything.</p> <p>The area is becoming very difficult to walk through when doing flush counts.</p> <p>CW thought it was unlikely that the cattle would significantly damage the pond edge now that it is vegetated up.</p> <p>A option was to let the cattle in but fence off the pond itself.</p>	<p>To ask Calum Booth for advice on management.</p> <p>To delay letting the cattle in until GB has checked the fence line to ensure that it is secure.</p>	DB will contact CB	DB
2.4.1	<p>Upper Sowerholme- Clearance of channel & ponds to maintain clean water: (IP) GB proposed that a 2m strip was cut on the south side of the pond and the adjacent channel and that the vegetation dug out could be spread onto that side.</p>	This was agreed		
2.4.2	<p>Bramble to eastern side of Upper Sowerholme:(IP) In the area near the wooden fence where the bamboo had been taken out it had previously been decided to plant scrub. The bramble is spreading & we could allow nature to take its course.</p> <p>However, planting outside the Quicks to go ahead as planned.</p>	It was agreed to let the bramble take over.		
2.5	<p>Hedge between Lower Sowerholme & Flora Field: (IP) Last year part of the hedge had been laid. IP proposed to lay the hedge starting at hawthorn next to the Abigail Rigby copse laying to the left & uphill. A fence would need to be put in to protect the hedge for a year or two. (The current fence needs multiple repairs) HS & SN queried the need to lay the hedge that was planted in 2013 as brambles & nettles were providing low growth.</p> <p>IP, supported by RK, said it was standard hedging practice to lay a hedge that was 8 to 12 years old, and it provided a habitat for small mammals & insects. CW said if the hedge was not laid it would remain thin in the lower part and this would become more of an issue over years as the trees grow.</p>	It was agreed to lay the hedge.		

	SN pointed out that there are areas very successful in attracting wildlife where hedges are left to grow.			
2.6	Bird Friendly Margins of the Arable Field: (R SN). Graeme Skelcher's report is awaited. There are few,if any,plants that provide seeds for over-wintering birds in the Long Pads margin & the margin going up the hill. Across the top is a little better at about 20%. It is possible that birds are eating the seeds after sowing in which case we could ask Aubrey to drill the seed next year.The seed was sown during a prolonged dry spell this year.	Next year to sow seed when rain is forecast. To ask Aubrey if he can drill the seed. Seed will be required on the bird tables over winter (hopefully provided by RSPB)	SN to discuss drilling of seed with Aubrey	SN
	Gate next to sightings board: This gate is noisy on opening & closing and SN was concerned it could disturb the birds.	To position the bird feeding tables further up the field away from the gate	SN to discuss with Dan	SN
	Sightings Board: Graffiti continues to be an issue. A black shiny surface would be the hardest to deface. DB suggested using Osmo black gloss.	The consensus was that the board should be painted black.	RK to action	RK
2.7.1	Fencing the corner off near the sightings board; IP demonstrated the plan to change the line of the fence to create a corridor between pony Wood & Little Wood. This could be done by volunteers. Sue & Peter Tilly could be asked to provide advice & assist.	This had previously been agreed.	To be added to volunteers' tasks (possibly March/April '24)	RK
2.7.2	Laying the hedge between the corner & the top of the slope, adjoining 'Tup field': IP indicated the area			
	Strimming around the benches on Pony Wood path. HS asked RK to add to the list of volunteer tasks		RK to action	RK
3.1	Volunteer Reports for July & August- See report (RK)			
3.2	Work plans for September & October - See report (RK)	No objections to these proposals were received and they are thus approved.		
4.	Maintenance: See report (GB).			

5.1	Organised Events:	Apple Day (23rd September), AGM 17th October and The Green Fair (18th November) Full details can be found on our website and Facebook page.		
5.2	Items to report from FA:	At the July meeting, the trustees proposed a change to our Object. After a small modification was agreed, this was accepted by the meeting. The Object will be reviewed at the September FA meeting before going to the AGM in October. Full details can be found in the FA Minutes which are on the website.		
5.3	Items to report from trustees:			

Next meeting: FMH 4th Nov 2023. FMH 7.00pm to 9.00pm