

5) Membership Report

Andrew reported on Ruth's behalf, as she is on holiday. Since 22nd of May, there have been 12 renewals and 7 new members. Ruth has sent 8 letters inviting people to renew.

6) **Website** – nothing to note here. Everything fine.

7) Flora Steering Group (FSG) report

Natural England Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) application

Dave Brookes explained that the steering group had been focussing on the higher level stewardship application as any HLS funded works would need to be completed by February 2014. Footpaths will take longer so we'll discuss those later. We are committed to extending our stewardship and this may end up qualifying for Higher Level Stewardship funding. There are two parts:

- 1) Revenue funding based on how we use the land
- 2) Capital funding which allows us to enhance the land for use as a nature reserve.

Plans for HLS have been drawn up by Richard Storton (RSPB) (see plans circulated before meeting). There are three main elements to the proposal:

- 1) Two fields: 9079 (Gleesons) and 7061 (Westfield) are earmarked for wetland and cattle grazing (for some of the year at least). HLF agreement has prescriptive rules about when fields can be grazed.
- 2) Yellow field – earmarked for spring-sown oats (for animal feed only – no Fairfield Muesli, sadly) with up to 3 metre wide wildflower margins. They will be ploughed in Spring with low input fertilizer and sown. They'll be cut and left as stubble over Winter.

If we want a chance to do this, we have to apply now. October is the final deadline for everything to go to Natural England. There is lots of work to be done, so there won't be long for the public consultation. But if the public disagrees, we can always amend the application. Hopefully the public will trust us to know what we're doing. Jane asked why we need arable. Dave explained it's to encourage a different set of birds: lapwings, grey partridge, skylarks – birds that were more common in the past, when these farming practices were prevalent. If arable was objected to, it would be a pity as we'd lose the wide flower margins too.

- 3) Woodland – we can get revenue funding for managing and extending wooded areas. This would require capital – stock fencing, hedges, gates, scrapes and the odd pond.

Other items regarding the HLS proposal:

Dave explained that another option available to us is to be responsible for distributing 1 tonne of birdseed in the Winter – for general bird feeding. Ian raised the issue of vermin-free storage. Dave said we'd buy it for £900 but will check with Richard Storton whether there is any financial benefit to the F.A.

Payments for educational visits – we can have £500 per year and £100 per visit (minimum of 4 visits per year) e.g. cubs, brownies as well as schools and Go Wild activities.

Wild partridges that have been bred elsewhere can be released.

Ian pointed out that Boundary 5 is a former hedge of thorn trees which is an important landscape feature so we should keep it.

Lynchets (terracing from ancient farming practices) were discussed and the importance of preserving them (this means we can't have cattle on them as heavy grazing destroys lynchets.)

Andrew said he thought the proposals were a work of art, and is excited by the changes. He submitted to the meeting that we should accept the three proposals outlined on the last page of the document:

1. Accept Richard Storton's plans as outlined above and as modified by FSG at 12 July meeting.
2. Delegate power to the FSG to make decisions on the outstanding matters.
3. Submit the application to Natural England ASAP, and before the end of July, without delaying for wider consultation.

Management options selected for the different areas:

Fields 7061 and 9079 - HK10 Maintenance of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl To incorporate scrapes and ditch in 7061. Pond in NE corner of 9079, and generally try to increase the wetnesses of the area adjacent to Lucy Brook. To be grazed by cattle at appropriate times of the year. (Heritage breed supplement HR2.)

Fields 7862 and 9662 - HG7 Low-input spring cereal to retain or recreate an arable mosaic; HF6 Overwintered stubble Field margins (or areas within fields)ou HF12 Enhanced wild bird seed mix plots and HF4 Nectar flower mixture. (Note not HF10 as in map.) Existing marshy areas by Aldcliffe Road made wetter. Boundary between the two fields realigned to favour farming and revert to historic position. Potential arable farmers have been identified.

Pony Wood - HC8 Restoration of woodland and HC10 Creation of woodland outside Severely Disadvantaged Areas. New planting to extend Pony Wood on west side.

Once management options have been agreed with Natural England they cannot be altered during the life of the agreement.

They were accepted.

Public consultation – it was agreed that we should aim to have a public consultation weekend on the **6th/7th September**, when Mick, Hilary and Andrew would all be available. Andrew to book Friends' Meeting House or the Storey Institute. The working group would be Andrew, Dave, Ian, Sue, Tony, Mick, Hilary. Dave will ask Glenys if she would like to be involved. We will evaluate responses via questionnaire. We will have information display boards and Georgina Peacock will be asked to provide drawings of multiple options (she did the landscape designs for the orchard and Interpretation boards for Fauna).

Tony suggested Janet as a photographer – she's been taking photos for educational visits. He will contact her to see if she can provide pics for the public consultation. Publicity to include press releases, emails, posters, newsletter, and leafleting Haverbreaks, Abraham heights etc.

8) FOG Report

The Fauna and Orchard group met a week ago. It was a good meeting. Nothing required a decision.

9) FOTT Report

Andrew reported that the fundraising event was splendid. Peter reported that £460 was made and it provided a useful opportunity for a mini consultation. There were lots of suggestions:

- Keep it as a multi-storage space (but not vermin proof!)
- Educational workshop space
- Public art gallery with weekend showings

And Tony suggested a small music venue.

The lease is still in progress. FOTT need permission from the Canals and Rivers Trust regarding the licence which is appended to the lease. FOTT are happy to submit the planning application by the end of July. Dave reported they've done most of the Take Pride work: the workshop has a new door, windows and guttering etc. They will pay it in the next week or so.

They have a £460 buffer to use for the solicitor's bill.

10) Playground Report

Andrew reported that Ken has worked like a Trojan. He has fixed swings and an important spring. Ken said we need to look at the board for the netting – water has rotted a bolt which should be replaced before the next inspection. Andrew said we are just short of £6k which is required to resurface the whole remaining area.

11) Events

Apple Day was discussed at FOG. Elley Bulman has organised it in the past, but can't this year. It's usually held in September, but because of not having a meeting in August and the public consultation early September, it may be difficult to plan for that month.

Community Spaces have written to ask us if we want to spend £2k on a party. As we're obliged by HLF to celebrate winning the bid, it seems to make sense to roll the two things together.

It was therefore agreed to go for **October 5th**, as this is the first week after the public consultation, that Andrew is available. Apples will still be on the trees and they can be picked and stored.

We could have a Jacob's Join augmented by outside caterers.

Tony, Jacqui and Mandy to set up games.

Andrew to investigate having a big marquee in the paddock (access permitting) and to ask Ruth for Elley's plans from previous years.

12) Correspondence

Member Pamela White has written to us about the subject of dog-fouling in the orchard etc. We started to discuss this emotive problem, (e.g from having signs saying CCTV cameras were installed, to inviting the dog warden to a meeting) - but as we were running out of time, this subject has been deferred to the top of the agenda of the next meeting.

14) Items for Website/Facebook

Nothing to report this time

15) AOB None this month

16) Next Meetings

Wednesday September 18th – Robert Gillow pub

Wednesday October 16th – Robert Gillow pub

Both meetings starting at 7.30pm.