

FFOG Minutes: 02 May 2024

- Location: On-site meeting.
- Date: 02.05.24
- Time: 5.00pm to 7.00pm

ATTENDEES

Sue Nieduszynska (chair), Graham Brandwood, Steve Bullen, Clio Graham, Anne Greenwood, Rebekah Mulligan, Ian Procter, Hilary Short, Chris Workman.

APOLOGIES

David Brookes, David Elliott, Sue Pope, Mick Short

PREVIOUS MINUTES

Accepted.

MATTERS ARISING

Arrangements & person responsible

AG had assigned each action in the arrangements for May & June to the person responsible. All the allocations were accepted.

AGENDA ITEMS

2.1.2. Feedback from the FA.

HS stated that the charity commission have turned down the submission to change our object on the grounds "The current objects appear to allow the trustees to undertake all the proposed activities". Therefore, the object remains the same.

2.1.3. Proposed Sapling planting for winter 2024/25

See report from IP. The subgroup had suggested potential sites, and this needs agreement from FFOG to confirm. IP said that the measurements & quantities were correct. However, the species suggestions were those of IP with input from SN. IP was open to amendments from others in the group. HS said that the proposal had to be costed before it could be agreed. IP to provide costs using 2 nurseries previously used i.e. Thorpe trees near York & Cheviot Trees near Berwick. and then submission of applications for funding to the Tree Council & Woodland Trust.

RM had raised the issue of the broken up concrete base in the playground area that might limit the success of sapling planting. HS suggested trying a few initially. SN suggested a few standard trees, preferably with blossom, e.g. damson & crab apple rather than a lot of shrubs. IP suggested wild cherry.

It was agreed that 12 trees/shrubs to be planted in the playground area including 2 wild cherries, crab apple, Gelder rose, wild privet & spindle. 40 Gorse saplings to be planted in the northeast corner of Flora Field, adjacent to Howson's gate, on the bank leading up to Aldcliffe Road. Planting in other areas were approved. All proposals subject to costing.

2.1.4. Toro Mower

IP said that the mower has broken again & reiterated that it should be sold. There may be the possibility of purchasing some equipment/ tools from Westfield Village (information from DE) .SN will ask DB to sell the Toro Mower. RM to liaise with DE about equipment that could be purchased from Westfield Village. RM to put the back packs used for herbicide spraying on Freegle (see AOB in minutes of 02.05.24)

2.2. Orchard -Update on stepping logs

Andy Lee to be asked if he can provide some balance logs & beams. GB said that the Ash tree at Stump Circle was due to be reduced in height & this could provide a source of wood to create the logs. IP said that the surface of the proposed site was a mud bath in wintertime. Surfacing options were discussed including woodchip, rubber mesh with grass growing through & recycled tyres. GB said this should go via the trustees for safety/legal reasons. Volunteers to be tasked with setting up the stepping logs. HS to take the question of how to surface the site & maximum height of logs to the FA.SN to see if there are existing safety recommendations.

2.3. Willow Screen

SN proposed to allow some of the older willow to grow into mature trees. GB said there was a good mix of species growing in the hedgerow and that the willow was another environment in its own right. It was agreed that willow in the old hedge line would be left & allowed to mature. Willow in the screen would be managed over a 2-year cycle cutting half one year & half the next year.

2.4. Fauna Path

GB suggested keeping the north gate in School Pond open & the south one closed, as snipe were found nearer to the pond edge, rather than by the hedge line at the northern end. This will help with poaching around the southern gate. The scything group should cut some rides particularly at the north end.

Trimming the Hedge. The path is about 2m out from the fence & provides a good habitat & this should be balanced with keeping the path clear. To do a light trim of the hedge running from school pond in the direction of Cromwell Road & cutting back of nettles on the path side. Cutting back to the fence on the Hay Meadow side including blackthorn

2.5. Hay Meadow

GB had proposed an experiment to install an electric fence in Hay Meadow to section off an area that would have a restricted grazing regime, possibly once a year, to see if there is a difference and an improvement in wildflowers. (See item 2.9. in previous minutes) IP said it would take several years to see a change and a built fence would be better. Agreement from the graziers would be required for the exemption. HS suggested the experiment could take place in a northern corner of Carr House Meadow as it is a more uniform area. An area the size of 20m x 20m was proposed.

After the meeting CW paced out Carr House meadow & found that 20m by 20m area would be too large an area to take out of the meadow for zero or very controlled grazing. "I paced 20m as from the gate across to Hay Meadow to nearly the bend in the path. The width of CHM is only about 20m from the path at the path bend to the top hedge. For a significant

trial to take place the area does need to be not smaller than that size, 400m². Discussions with the graziers need to be had to discuss the whole of the need for grazing of CHM and if the area could be used for experimental grazing or cutting. It would not allow for grazing to be free and open.” Decision not made. Further discussion required.

2.6 Cromwell Road gate.

Winston has installed springs to ensure that the gate returns to the closed position. HS will contact Glenys to ascertain if cyclists can still access the gate without dismounting.

2.7. Howson’s Gate: Tamper-proof fastenings.

The padlock on the gate had been broken into by the owners of 2 horses that had been illegally placed in Flora field. There was concern that there could be other incidents of illegal entry now that the field “was known”. Winston to be asked to look at a tamper proof fastening for the gate.

2.8. Arable Field.

Aubrey has ploughed and drilled the field over the weekend of 20-21st April. GB suggested field walking prior to ploughing in case hares & leverets present and it was agreed that this would be carried out by volunteers. We pay for the field to be topped in late summer to create a stubble but there is no spilt seeds for birds & SN queried whether we should continue this practice. Bird seed had been sown by volunteers the previous Wednesday 24th April and at a time when rain was forecast in the following days.

3.1. Organised Events

- Sunday 16th June- NLWG Wildlife Fair
- Saturday 13th July - Fairfield festival on Fairfield Green.
- AGM on Tuesday 17th September 7.30pm FMH

3.2. Financial Control.

£264 to Hoyles for work done last year.

AOB

Notice Boards: SN had previously raised the issue of access to the notice boards. There had been a rotten step that had been a safety hazard. In GB’s monitoring report it was noted that the notice board at the northern end of the Orchard needs some TLC and the notices replacing. SN said that issues to do with the notices & the boards themselves are not a matter for FFOG but a business meeting matter & that monitoring reports should focus on actions for FFOG. GB stated that he does not intend to change the content of his reports. HS requested that Winston should look at the notice board at the Sunnyside end of the Orchard as it is letting water in.

SN reported that a stock dove has been sighted in Pony Wood, therefore we should not be accessing this area until end of July.

Bird Sightings Board. After the meeting IP & RM discussed the sightings board. The cover is broken. RM to request Winston to repair.

NEXT MEETING

11th July 7.00pm to 9.00pm FMH