

FFOG meeting- Decisions & Actions

Location: Tite & Locke

Date: 10.09.26

Time: 7.00pm to 9.00pm

Attendees: Hilary Short (chair), Graham Brandwood, Dave Brookes, Steve Bullen, David Elliott, Clio Graham, Anne Greenwood, Chris Workman.

Apologies: Rick Gould, Rebekah Mulligan.

ITEM	ISSUE	DECISION	ACTION	OWNER
2. Previous Minutes	Amendment to item 5.2. requested by GB & agreed. Otherwise accepted.			
	Prior to the start of the meeting HS informed the group that Ian Proctor has stepped down from attending FFOG meetings. He would however continue as a volunteer. It was recognised that Ian had contributed a huge amount over the years and the members expressed their thanks for this.			
Matters Arising 3.1.	Pony Wood board: IP had previously led the subgroup for the repurposing the Pony Wood sightings board to an information board and had circulated a quote from promotional Gods for £291.88. The quotation includes 5 hours of work. IP has requested that someone else takes on the responsibility for leading on this. It was noted that the sightings board was been used again, presumably by Jen Woodward.	CW to take over as lead on the information board	CW to liaise with DB & MT on the information board. AG to ask Jen Woodward for her view	CW AG
3.2.	Update on footpaths: Peter Tilley has provided advice on the footpaths and agrees they need widening. To do this, the hedge along Fauna footpath must be cut back. HS has discussed this with Robin, who will arrange for his contractor to carry out the work. If it is not completed in time, Hanafins could be asked to do this work. GB noted that a treeline, including blackthorn suckers, would remain alongside the cut-back hedge and would regenerate. The paths will require regular maintenance. Peter suggested preventing "lips" at either end of the boardwalk by extending the edging a few metres beyond it to keep the path surface in place. He also recommended adding more passing places. Gateways such as Cromwell Rd could be smoothed with concrete, similar to the surface at the top of Towneley Close.	Hanafins to be asked to carry out the work on the footpaths & also the gateposts.	HS to get a cost from Hanafins.	HS
3.3.	Update on bee hives: Keith had provided an update- see report. 6 new colonies have been bought and re-established and will be ready for restocking next April.			

3.4.	Missing/defaced signs: Two of the no cycling signs designed by children had been defaced and subsequently unscrewed. These were at the gate to West Field & the southern end of the Pads footpath The "dogs on lead" sign on Pony wood path has been moved to replace the stolen sign on Fauna path.		RM to task Volunteers to install replacement no cycling signs.	RM
3.5.	Staking the wildflower margins in Fauna Field: This has previously been led by SN. RM requests guidance on where and when to stake. CW said we need to make decisions on the management of the area on the west side of Fauna Field between the ponds and the beehives where the ground is very wet.	The margins to be staked in spring. MS can provide guidance & hopefully a map.	RM to seek guidance from MS	RM
4.2.1	West Boundary of West Field: IP had submitted a paper detailing a proposal for the management of this boundary. The electric fence which has been high maintenance should be removed and not replaced with alternative fencing. The new hedge is established; in the main part of the spinney the remaining plants should be big enough to withstand cattle and will also provide shade for cattle.	It was agreed to remove the electric fence and to use the established hedge as the boundary.		
4.2.2.	Site for this winter's hedge laying: RM requested guidance.	To continue with the Pony Wood path. Any additional proposed sites to be brought to the next FFOG meeting.		
4.3.1.	Update on Lucy Brook project: DB reported LWT had commenced work on 7 th September. Alder Pond bund has been repaired & a U shaped fence will be installed. SB recommended putting a wire mesh over the outlet pipe before spring to prevent moorhens being sucked down. GB asked about the timescale for the work in Upper Sowerholme. He intends to carry out some preparatory work including cutting the phragmites back. DB said LWT intended to be onsite for about 2 to 3 weeks in total.		GB will fix wire mesh to the outlet pipe. DB to speak to Steve Cowell about the timing of the work in Upper Sowerholme.	GB DB
4.5.1.	Issue of expanding rushes in Big Meadow: See Livestock report (RG). HS and RG met with Robin on 11 August. Robin expressed concern that the increasing area of rushes in Big Meadow is reducing the land available for grazing. The Natural England agreement states that rush coverage across the nature reserve should be below 40%, although the prescription is open to interpretation. Rush coverage in Big Meadow is currently estimated at 70%; however, it also provides a valuable wildlife habitat. Steve Cowell advised that any rush cutting should take place in spring, when cattle can help control fresh growth and snipe will no longer be present.		DB to ask LWT for their view on the rush management. CW will ask Nick Godden RSPB at Leighton Moss for his view. Add to the agenda for next meeting.	DB CW AG
4.6.	Area at the bottom of Fairfield Green: HS noted that the hedge near the substation is overgrown and contains a significant amount of blackthorn. Neighbours have offered		RM to inspect the area and decide if cutting back of the	RM

	to maintain the area if it is cut back, after which it could be used by the public for sitting or picnicking. Regular mowing would be needed to control the blackthorn. Fairfield Green is mown by the council although there was uncertainty about the frequency of mowing.		hedge and blackthorn suckers is a task for volunteers.	
5.1.	Volunteer Activities for May & June: see report RM. HS commended the work done by volunteers in clearing the ragwort. There was too much ragwort in Big Meadow so clearing was abandoned. Ragwort was cleared from Lower Sowerholme, The Paddock, West Field, Carr House Meadow & Hay Meadow.	This report was agreed. The Ragwort policy/strategy to be reviewed by FFOG before next year.		
5.2.	Volunteer job report. See report GB. 1. CW asked why the fallen trees in Pony Wood needed “tidying up” with a chainsaw. SB led the discussion on the benefits to the habitat of leaving the fallen trees & GB concurred. 2. A proposed job was the cutting back of small trees on Aldcliffe Rd. The roots of the trees could pose a risk to the structure of the wall. GB indicated the health & safety issues with the traffic. It was agreed that the council should be contacted to undertake the task.	The report was agreed except for points 1 & 2.	To put up a sign to inform the public why the trees are being left in Pony Wood. GB will discuss with RM that the fallen trees to be left in place. DB to contact the council to request they cut the small trees along the Aldcliffe Rd wall	CG/ AG GB DB
5.3.	Proposed tasks for See report RM.	This report was agreed except for removing fallen trees in Pony Wood.		
5.4.	Emergency Contact on the “Volunteer contact details” form. AG noted that the current form requires volunteers to provide an emergency contact before working on the nature reserve. One volunteer was unable to do so. AG had sought advice from MS, who was unable to attend the meeting. DB said he had recently encountered the same issue and advised that a volunteer’s GP contact details would be sufficient.	A volunteer can provide GP contact details instead of a named emergency contact. Michael Sheppard is responsible for Health & Safety and will advise further.		
6.1	Monitoring Report. See report GB. A metal detectorist was seen in Flora Field. He had previously been authorised by SN. DB said that any permission granted should be for a set period and renewed if needed, and that the FA should be notified before the field is entered. CW said that anything found in the field should be documented, which could be done by email.		HS will look a previous documentation to find contact details of the metal detectorist.	HS

6.2.1.	Fairfield Meadow & Arable margin survey 2025. See report Graeme Skelcher. In summary. In summary, the Hay Meadow remains a very good 'semi-improved grassland' but continues to fall short of meeting the criteria for herb-rich 'lowland meadow' The seeded arable margins have generally shown signs of positive development.		HS to ask Graeme Skelcher if we should "try harder" e.g. use plug plants or accept what we have.	HS
6.3.	Livestock report: See report RG. HS & RG met with Robin. There are 17 cattle in total with 8 cows over 2 years old. There were 7 calves born in March & April, 4 of which were male. The bull calves will be removed from the herd this autumn. There is no plan for a bull. GB commented that the report from RG documenting the meeting with Robin was very useful.			
7.2	Standing Items Financial Control: Nothing to report. Jane Parker has asked that a proforma invoice be obtained for any goods ordered if possible.			
7.3	Organised Events: Apple Day 3 rd October 2-4pm.			
7.4.2	Items to report from the FA: Link to the minutes of the last FA meeting below. https://fairfieldassociation.org/meeting-information/fairfield-association-minutes-21-july-2026/			
7.5	Items to report from Trustees (SN) The trustees met in July. Items discussed include: • The FA is becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. • Footpaths & grants. • Attempts to secure the long-term future of land that is currently lease			
8. AOB	GB wished to commend & thank Mark Tanner for the impressive organisation undertaken prior to the Wednesday volunteers repairing the turf in the playground area.			

Next meeting: 29th October 7.00 pm at the Tite & Locke