



THREE BROOKS NATURE CONSERVATION GROUP
Minutes of General Meeting
Held on 26 November 2008 at the Ramada Grange Hotel, Winterbourne

Present:

Members

Hannah Watts (Chair)
Rachael Ann
Dave Baker
Emma Creasey
Richard Cridland
Naomi Davison
Robin Jones
Sara Messenger
Andy Moon
Ceri Pritchard
Rob Williams
Karen Winyard

In attendance:

Les Brooks, Patchway Conservation Group
Paul Humphreys, BTCV

Apologies received from: Rachel Callow, Steven Callow, John Morris.

1. Minutes of the last meeting (30 April 2008) and matters arising

The minutes were approved.

A note had been received from Steven stating that after committed monies had been paid out the group would have approximately £35 left in the bank.

2. Workday and event planning

The following workdays were agreed for 2009:

January 3-4 - Hedgelaying weekend, to continue laying the hedge opposite Tesco that was begun 2 years ago. The exact stretch was to be picked – Les suggested starting at the Primrose Bridge end. **Action: Paul/committee to pick stretch of hedge.**

February 7th – Coppice and general tidy in Webb's Wood.

March 7th – Either continuing in Webb’s Wood or go on with felling in plantation – to be decided at end of February workday.

April 4th – Plant/seed wildflowers in the grassy patch by Sherbourne’s Brake.

Action: committee to order plants/seeds.

May 2nd – Tree/plant ID walk. **Action: EC to contact Rupert Higgins.**

June 6th – Stream Clearing.

Action: EC to draft flyer and send publicity text to John and Bradley Stoke Matters.

In considering future workdays, members agreed they would like to go back to the marsh, perhaps to dig a large hole to retain water – this was a possibility for September.

3. Breathing Places Grant

The committee updated members on the grant. This had been a successful project for the group – tools had been purchased and paths resurfaced. Four new leaflets had been produced (on trees, flowers, birds and the lake) which were available in the library and had also been distributed to local schools. An orienteering trail and accompanying materials had been developed – Rob had attended the launch day and it was proving very popular with other groups. The only outstanding item was the purchase of a noticeboard to site at the lake, which Sara was following up.

4. Other activity around the reserve

Green Gym

- A group from the Environment Agency had joined the group to remove Himalayan Balsam.
- There had been lots of scything in Bowsland Meadow, where the planted wildflowers had taken well.
- Sara, Dave and Quentin had taken the necessary training courses, including first aid, to lead groups.
- Dave suggested that a key to the gate off Brook Way should be kept in the first aid box, in case an emergency vehicle needed to get into the reserve. **Action: Dave to approach John.**

Paul’s groups

Pond work – A chestnut post & rail fence with stock netting will be put up round the pond, which would allow planting to be put in and left undisturbed. A bench, dipping platform and interpretation board would also be added. Paul needed to get a letter from the contractors stating that they required the 10% of grant from SGC. **Action: Paul.**

Other work had included:

- Putting a new bridge and gate in at the corner of Savage's Wood by the school fence (DB noted that fencing was still needed by the side of the new gate)
- Scything in Bowsland meadow and planting wildflowers.
- Installing the posts for the orienteering trail.

Future work might include: siting benches (**Action: Committee to make final decision on this!**) and adding fences/gates to the older newt ponds.

Local history group

- Historical plaques had been put up round the reserve.
- There may be some flagstones from the Living Landmarks which still need to be laid, either the Green Gym or 3BNCG could do this. **Action: Dave to look into this.**

Create project

John had sent a message about the Create project. A group of residents from a residential care centre near Winterbourne, managed by a company called Castlebeck, would work on the reserve under a team leader. This would happen on a regular day, probably a Tuesday. Members agreed that they were quite happy for this group to work on the reserve but that it would make most sense for them to work with the Green Gym – it was therefore proposed that the day should be moved to Thursday. **Action: consult with John.**

Sharepoint system

John had asked whether the group would use a web site that would allow them to see who else was working on the site and when. As well as 3BNCG and the Green Gym, groups might include NVQ groups, business teambuilding days, school trips etc. The site could also include risk assessment, management plans etc.

The group agreed that this would be useful as long as all the groups involved undertook to update the site regularly. It would be very useful to add planned SGC work as well (the Council had flailed brambles near Savage's Wood just after the group had worked in the same area!) Schools, however, should only have read-only access to the site as they only needed to check whether work was being done in an area planned for a school trip.

Robin and Ceri commented that there were many systems that would allow joint access in this way. It should be possible to integrate with the existing 3BNCG website, including the interactive maps.

Involvement with other groups

The committee had been approached by other organizations, such as businesses and the Scouts, to ask about joint working. In general the committee tried to assist where possible but had agreed to maintain a focus on the group's own monthly workdays. Members agreed that they were content for the committee to continue to make decisions on an individual basis without needing to refer back to the wider group.

Dave commented that it would be worth linking up whenever possible to the North Fringe network of South Gloucestershire conservation groups.

Members discussed whether there would be any mileage in setting up a “youth group” section of the conservation group. The main group would act as advisers, but any youth group would need a trained, dedicated work leader. **Action: DB to sound schools out on the idea.**

Any other business

Key to tool store: one of the keys held by BTCV had apparently been lost. EC/SM to continue to chase. If it was really lost then the group might need to consider purchasing a new padlock and set of keys. *Update: key now found! EC to ask Jenny to pass her key to DB, since she is stepping down as GG officer.*

It was also noted that the tool store was very full of leisure centre property. **Action: EC to email leisure centre manager about this, cc John.**

Dave reminded everyone to ensure their tetanus jabs were up to date.

DB asked that a survey of the top newt pond should be done. **Action: EC to email John.**

The group agreed that it would be worth finding out who was responsible for the triangle of Savage’s wood left by the Tesco car park.

The committee had applied for an annual Service Level Agreement with Bradley Stoke town council to pay for ongoing costs. *Update: we have now heard that this has been approved – £1500 per year has been agreed, starting in the next financial year.*

EC had asked for a list of wildlife reported on the reserve, from the Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre. This had just been received and as well as a full list of reported sightings, various survey reports had been included. **Action: committee to think about how to put this into a manageable format!**

ESC

10-Dec-2008