

FRIENDS OF PUTNOE WOOD and MOWSBURY HILLFORT

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 10 May 2016 at Mowsbury Clubhouse

Members present: Jon Bishop, Robert Bright, Lynn Caudrey, Martin Fannon, Sue Fannon, Jackie Hawkins, Mick Lilliman, James Lynch, Chris Moss, Dave Parratt, Diana Readhead, John Wallace, Marion Wallace, Chris Wedge, Helen Wilkie, John Wilkie, Andy Wilkins (Chair), Allison Wilkins,

1 Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Helen Miller and Alison Myers. Andy welcomed James Lynch from Bedford Borough Council.

2 Minutes of meetings held on Tuesday 16 February and Tuesday 12 April

These were agreed as an accurate record.

3 Update from Country Park Guardians

Jon Bishop reported.

- 3.1 Putnoe Wood** Positive feedback had been received from members of the public following coppicing work which had resulted in an increase in flora in the areas concerned. Consultation regarding dogs on leads will end at the end of May. However, it was noted that Putnoe Wood is not a designated wildlife area and dog control orders are difficult to police in open areas. Future tasks identified included removal of small balsam and path/ride clearance.

Friends reported the following: the metal gates to the south west entrance are rusting and need renewal; the metal gates at the south east entrance (Rugby Club end) need repainting; a concrete fencepost is partially blocking the stream at the north west corner of the wood and causing bank erosion – this and other debris need removal. Jon agreed to make enquires about replacing the rusting gate set with timber, oak was preferred for durability. The Friends agreed to schedule the other items into their task schedule.

Andy mentioned the closure of the new BMX park had blocked the route agreed for occasional guided walks between the Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort. A member of the Borough staff would normally be in attendance for the walks, James to enquire whether the Friends could have access for these walks,

- 3.2 Mowsbury Hillfort** Future tasks included removal of ragwort and creeping thistle, cutting back dogwood and bramble stubble and continuation of butterfly and plant surveys. Scrub clearance tasks identified during the visit by Historic England and Natural England could be tackled once the bird nesting period had ended.

Discussion took place regarding the availability of HLS funding to pay for cutting, baling and removal of grass, work on the pear trees, and producing Interpretation Boards. Dave had drafted a letter requesting clarity from the Borough Council on how the HLS funding might be used to fund the interpretation boards before any design work was commenced. Jon has seen the letter and James was content to take the letter with him for action. It was suggested that HLS funds are used to finance a wider gate to Mowsbury Meadow to enable access by a tractor and baler. James will email Andy with details of HLS funding received to date. Jon will contact Sarah Clarkson and Frances Prince from Natural England, Dave Kenny from Historic England and Geoff Saunders the Archaeology Officer with the Borough Council to

enquire about their plans to carry out archaeological and hydrology surveys and preparation of a management plan for the site. They had suggested HLS money should be used to fund this work.

3.3 Training Jon will send suggested dates for the Friends four trained First-Aiders to receive their annual half day refresher course.

4 Mowsbury Hillfort Vision Document Dave summarised the document drawn up by the working group. Discussion took place and some clarification and additions proposed. It was agreed that, if ratified by the Friends, and in the absence of a Management Plan, the document could be used as a guide to future work on the site and to support the proposed application for Community Green Flag status. Thanks were given to the group for their work in producing this document.

5 To consider ratification of the Mowsbury Hillfort Vision Plan This was
Proposed by Martin Fannon
Seconded by Diana Readman
Agreed by all members present

A copy will be put on the Friends website and sent to Historic England and Natural England.

6 Community Green Flag application That an application is submitted was
Proposed by John Wallace
Seconded by Robert Bright
Agreed by all members present

It was noted that any feedback from the application could be used to guide our future work plan if the first application is not successful.

7 Tasks and events John Wallace made proposals in addition to task suggested under 3.1 and 3.2.

- Demarkation of the southern boundary of the Scheduled Monument site by clearing a one metre margin or insertion of posts.
- Away Days during quiet periods to other hillfort sites. The following were suggested:
 - Tottenhoe Castle and Hillfort
 - Sharpenhoe Clappers
 - Sandy Hillfort
 - Danesborough Hillfort, Woburn Sands.
 - Manorial earthworks, Little Staughton.
 - Ravensburgh Castle Hillfort, for which access in winter and spring must be sought via the Hexton Manor Estate office.

John Wallace had received a request from Alison Myers, Ravensden Parish Councillor, for a Friend to join the Ravensden WI walk round Mowsbury Hillfort at 6.39pm on Tuesday 14th June. Chris W, Lynn and Andy agreed to attend and were happy to talk about the history of the site and its features.

8 Ex-curriculum A request had been received from Scott Lower School and Brickhill Lower School for assistance in planning work for Years 2, 3 and 4 visits to the Hillfort. Marion agreed to liaise.

9 Update on defibrillator installation James will organise a meeting for him, Paul Pace and others to meet Marion and Andy in order to progress this matter. Funding for the project is in place

10 Financial Matters John Wilkie presented the latest figures:

Cash in Bank	£820.36
Petty Cash	£0.00
TOTAL	£820.36

Income

Tea sales	£34.99
TOTAL	34.99

Outgoings

Sharpener	£9.99
TOTAL	£9.99

Liabilities

Unused Ward Funding	£63.24
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Jon Bishop confirmed that the Hemlock Morris did not support any specific charity and it was therefore agreed that £66, representing 50% of the profit from the Wassail, will be donated to BeCHaR to support the Prebend Day Centre.

It was agreed that an estimated £250 of the cash in hand will be used to purchase replacement loppers and more rakes. The old loppers will be donated to the Work Aid charity.

11 Any Other Business None

10 Date of next meeting

7.00pm, Tuesday 12 July at Mowsbury Clubhouse.