

FRIENDS OF PUTNOE WOOD and MOWSBURY HILLFORT

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10 February 2015 in the Function Room at Mowsbury Club House

Members present: John Bishop, Lynn Caudrey, Martin Fannon, Sue Fannon, Helen Miller, Jane Moore, Dave Parratt, Diana Readhead, John Wallace, Marion Wallace, Christine Wedge, Helen Wilkie, John Wilkie, Andy Wilkins (Chair),

1 **Apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received from Ed Burnett, Margaret Fisher, Chris Moss and Jane Warner.

2 **Minutes of last meeting held on 9 December 2014**

These were agreed as an accurate record.

3 **Update from Park Rangers**

3.1 Walking Route between Putnoe Wood and the Hillfort. Jane reported that Ed Burnett has been in discussion with Ray Horner. It will be necessary for the Friends to liaise with the Golf Club to ensure that walks do not clash with Club events. Ed will obtain signs to warn of the danger of flying golf balls along the route.

3.2 HLS update. Jane gave notice that members of a forthcoming Chain Saw course would be felling some large ash trees in and along the banks of the moats at Mowsbury Hillfort. These trees were at risk of damaging the banks and taking up too much water from the moats if they continued to grow. Other ash trees may be coppiced at some point in the future as used to be the practice when the land was part of the Duke of Bedford's estates. Jane has obtained a quote for the reduction of the pear trees in the orchard by 20% to encourage fruiting.

3.3 Proposed Walks and Talks. Jane gave notice that Colin Carpenter, Project Manager at the Community Tree Trust and also County Bumblebee Recorder, will lead an event during blossom time on restorative pruning and bee identification. Keith Balmer, County Butterfly recorder, will give a talk about identification and habitat in or around June.

3.4 Nature Reserve Sign at Hillfort. It is hoped that this will be installed this spring – possibly in March.

3.5 Installation of additional dog 'poop' bin at north entrance to Putnoe Wood. John Bishop reported that he had sent costings for the purchase of an additional black bin (£250) and re-siting of dog 'poop' bin (£160) to Cllr Headley. The black bin will have signs stating it can be used for disposal of dog 'poop'. He will place an order once he has received approval from Cllr Headley.

4 **Update on recent activities and events.**

4.1 Wassail 2015. Andy thanked John Bishop for leading the Wassail, and members of the Hemlock Morris and Redbornstoke Morris for their dancing. Comments posted on Facebook had been very complimentary. A total of £96.76 had been raised from donations taken that evening, and it was agreed that a cheque for £50 be given to Andrew Miller on behalf of Hemlock Morris as a donation to the charity they support. John Bishop proposed running another event on Tuesday 19 January 2016, and has requested that the Borough Council give permission for up to 100 attendees. Marian proposed that a Mowsbury Dance be choreographed in conjunction with the Hemlock Dancers in time for the next Wassail. It was

agreed that future events would benefit from two spot lights to illuminate the dancers, and two serving points for refreshments.

- 4.2 Ward Funding.** John Wallace had made an application for £500 which had been awarded. He had subsequently obtained two quotes for 4 TriFlex signs and clip-on banners to advertise the Friends' activities while they are at work. A quote for £465 has been approved, and an order will be placed as soon as funds have been cleared in the Friends' bank account. The balance of £35 will be used towards the cost of the new black bin.

5 Future tasks and events.

- 5.1 Work plan.** Danny had sent thanks to the Friends for their work in Putnoe Wood over the winter. Coppicing work on Wednesday 13 February will conclude winter activities. It was noted that where footpath edging has rotted away, some of the upright stubs remain and constitute a potential trip hazard; these need removal. At the Hillfort, pruning in the orchard has been completed, and work on the following tasks will continue: removal of elder from slopes of ditches and moats; creation of vista strips towards courtyard; removal of rotten fencing adjacent to footpath; removal of brambles.
- 5.2 Hillfort Information Pamphlet** Jane will speak to staff in the Borough Council Graphic Design department with a view to enabling the Friends to obtain help in designing the pamphlet using supplied text and graphics.
- 5.3 First Aid Training.** Jane and John will check on training requirements; it is hoped that a one day course will suffice. Jane will enquire of other volunteer groups to see if a joint training course could be arranged and get a price for this.

5 Financial Matters

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| Cash in Bank | £397.57 |
| Petty Cash | £38.35 |
| TOTAL | £435.92 |

Transactions since last report:

Income:

| | |
|---------|--------|
| Wassail | £96.76 |
|---------|--------|

Outgoings:

| | |
|---------|----------|
| Web fee | (£23.76) |
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John Wilkie proposed that the Friends apply for internet banking so as to enable on-line checking of balances and swift payments. This would necessitate a change in the authorisation of transactions. Currently two signatories are needed for cheques over £10, but an internet account would require only one approved signatory for on-line transactions. The proposal was agreed by all members present.

- 7 Friends 4th Year Celebrations.** No plans have been formulated to date. Discussions will continue during Wednesday afternoon tasks and via email. Marian suggested enquiries are made at Mowsbury Park Café to see if they could cater for a group meal.
- 8 Any Other Business**
John Wallace informed the group that Margaret Fisher is to marry Clifton Ibbet on 27 February. Members were invited to sign a congratulatory card which he will send to her.
- 8 Date of next meeting**
7.00pm Tuesday 14 April 2015 at the Mowsbury Club House.