

FRIENDS OF PUTNOE WOOD and MOWSBURY HILLFORT

Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 January 2017 at Mowsbury Clubhouse

Members present: Robert Bright, Martin Fannon, Sue Fannon, Danny Fellman, Mick Jennion, Dave Parratt, Diana Readhead, John Wallace, Marion Wallace, Jane Warner, Chris Wedge, Maggie West, Helen Wilkie, John Wilkie, Andy Wilkins (Chairman), Allison Wilkins, Mick Lilliman.

1 **Apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received from Jon Bishop, Lyn Caudrey, and Helen Miller

2 **Minutes of meetings held on Tuesday 8 November 2016**

'*Annual General*' deleted from title. With this amendment the minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

3 **Update from Country Park Guardians**

There was no report from Jon Bishop. Danny Fellman reported on Putnoe Wood and extended thanks to the Friends for the past year's work. Welcome signs had been erected on the Entrance Gates, and John Wallace asked that thanks be conveyed to Nicki for hand-carving these. A survey by the tree surgeon had identified the need for £3.5k of remedial works.

4 **Friends' Vision and HLS management tasks list.**

John Wilkie tabled a short paper setting out 4 principles intended to aid the achievement of the compromise discussed in the Vision document between the varied interests of the Friends for the management of Mowsbury Hill Fort. He emphasised that they were not intended to be rules, but to provide a basis for the evolution of a management style. The proposed principals were discussed, including in relation to comments on the management of the site made by representative of Historic England and Natural England when they visited on 9 February 2016. John Wallace thanked John for the clarification offered by his document, and members present agreed to accept the four guiding principles listed as follows:

- 1 Timber, scrub etc may be removed and burnt from areas that are to be managed as meadow, or are being kept clear to preserve the archaeology.
- 2 Timber, scrub etc from areas of woodland should be left in situ to maintain the natural cycle of growth, death and decay.
- 3 Dead hedges should be maintained at a sufficient height to deter the use of the area by mountain bikers or scramble/trials bikers.
- 4 Dead wood, in piles, hedges or individual pieces should be left in place to rot thus providing habitat for invertebrates etc and returning nutrients to the ground.

John Wallace commended Lyn on her work drawing up a monthly task list for the hillfort, and Dave for his report on Higher Level Stewardship and Friend Vision overview for 2016, both of which had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that the 2017 task list for March included cutting dogwood sprouting on Mowsbury Meadow and applying weed killer to stems. Danny confirmed he had access to amenity strength weed killer suitable for the task, and was qualified to apply it.

Andy thanked the Friends for their work to achieve the successful Wassail held on Tuesday 10 January. Many very positive comments had been posted on Facebook which had received 3500 hits. Diana reported that £170 had been collected at the event, and it was

agreed that the net profit, £145, should be donated to the Sue Ryder St John's Hospice, Moggerhanger. John Wilkie will send a cheque on behalf of the Friends.

5 Future Tasks and events

5.1 John Wallace outlined proposed tasks at the hillfort for the coming week. These include trimming back the hedgerow and scrub either side of the path adjacent to the old parish boundary to ensure the 'corridor' between the shrubbery is wide enough for the Rangers' vehicle to pass through. Other tasks include burning arisings, clearing the leat, including removal of stumps between pond and bridle path (which will require a chain saw) and ground clearance in south orchard.

5.2 Friends 6th Birthday Party.

It was agreed that John Wallace will approach the Four Seasons Café to enquire if they will provide a meal for us as before.

6 Friends Updates

6.1 Green Flag Community Ward. Andy said the application process for this had proved to be complex and therefore the idea was dropped.

6.2 Freeman's Common

Andy had been working with Gerry Sampson, CPRE Bedfordshire, on shared concerns about Freeman's Common. The 'Freeman's Common Charity' which held the land in Trust has passed ownership to the 'House of Industry'. This means that money arising from the land may no longer be restricted to items not usually funded by Bedford Borough Council. The CPRE and Andy have posed questions about the future of the Common, but still await any response.

5 Financial Matters

John Wilkie presented the latest figures.

| | |
|--------------|----------------|
| Cash in Bank | £515.35 |
| Petty Cash | £10.00 |
| TOTAL | £525.33 |

Income

| | |
|------------------|---------------|
| Sale of notelets | £32.00 |
| Tea sales | £28.42 |
| TOTAL | £60.42 |

Outgoings

| | |
|--------------|---------------|
| Manure forks | £39.98 |
| Website | £24.96 |
| Wassail | £25.46 |
| TOTAL | £90.40 |

7 Any Other Business

7.1 Work with Bedford Schools.

Marion had not yet received any responses from local schools to the offer to develop a programme of work and visits similar to that for Scott Lower School. She will pursue this.

7.2 Bat Survey and Bat Walk.

Danny is planning to carry out 3 bat surveys in Putnoe Wood between April and September where up to 6 people could assist, and also offered to lead a guided bat walk for up to 20 people. These offers were welcomed and Danny will propose dates.

8 Date of next meeting

7.00pm Tuesday 7 March at Mowsbury Clubhouse.