

Friends of Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5th March 2013 in the Trophy Room at Mowsbury Club House

Members Present - Larissa Clarke, Sue Fannon, Martin Fannon, Margaret Fisher, Danny Feldman, David Fowler, Helen Miller, Jane Moore, Marion Wallace, John Wallace, Chris Wedge, Andy Wilkins, Andy welcomed everyone to the meeting

1. **Apologies** – Chris Mackay, John and Helen Wilkie, Alison Wilkins

2. **Minutes of last meeting**

Minutes of 8th January 2013 agreed as correct

3. **Management Plan for Putnoe Wood (copy at end of minutes)**

Danny had written a summary of the Management Plan and copies were available. Danny went through the key points.

There are cases of Acute Oak Decline and Chronic Oak Decline in the wood but as yet no signs of Chalara affecting the Ash trees.

Different types of trees are being planted as part of an experiment to see how they grow.

The aim of all management is to protect the wood by improving structural and species diversity.

We discussed the list of possible tasks for Spring 2013 and the following events were suggested.

Wednesday 13th March–Tree planting at Putnoe Wood followed by planting Hazel if time allows

Wednesday 20th March – continue with Hazel planting at Putnoe Wood

Wednesday 23rd March and Saturday 27th March - Survey of Spring flowers at Putnoe Wood

(It was suggested that flower surveys of both sites should be done at least monthly on a 'look and record' basis)

Danny is going to put in some posts for some routine 'fixed point photography' to help give information for management.

4. **Update from Park Rangers, officers and members**

The 'on-going' saga of 'poo bags' was discussed. There is a problem with the bins being full to overflowing. Investigations are underway to possibly have an extra bin at Putnoe Wood (or a larger bin)

The management Plan for the Hillfort is being done. We agreed it was a good idea not to rush this.

We need to check permission from English Heritage before the replacement apple trees can be planted in the orchard at the Hillfort.

Jeremy Oetgen is going to suggest some dates for an archaeological walk.

Katharine Banham and Laura Downton are willing to lead a flower survey/biodiversity walk at the Hillfort in May

5. **Interpretation Boards for Putnoe Wood**

David Fowler introduced himself to the group. He has a great deal of knowledge and experience in overseeing a number of interpretation boards in town and he very kindly offered to assist us in co-ordinating, offering advice, liaising with Formica etc.

He recommended we have Formica faced boards as they stand up well to the weather, birds and vandals!

We have funding for 3 bases and £1500 for the boards. It will be approximately £1300 for the design and printing, leaving some for installation. This may not be enough but we will make a start.

It was suggested we have a board at each of the two main entrances and possibly two smaller ones at each end of the main ride.

It was suggested that a small group get together to start planning what to include on the boards (This will happen at 2-30pm at 5, Dunvegan Way on 21st March)

It was also suggested that we have a cabinet style notice board at the main entrance so we can inform the public about management issues and let them know what is happening and why.

6. Footpath between the two sites

This is an on-going investigation. Andy does not think it is feasible to go across the Golf Course. There is another route shown on some older maps that we will have to investigate and talk to Phil Fox about

7. Second year Celebration Event

This will be at Priory Park Visitor centre on 9th April starting at 7-00pm.

As before, it will be a 'Bring and Share' event.

Friends of the group will be invited.

There is apple juice etc. available.

8. Future tasks and Events

See above

9. Financial Matters

We have £196-08 in the bank, £23- 06 in petty cash, £54-63 in Friends tea fund, £10 from notelet sales making a grand total of £283-77

10. Any Other Business

The date for the talk to the WI will be 18th June.

11. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 14th May 2013, hopefully in the Trophy Room again.

Putnoe Wood

Management Plan

A management plan is a working document that describes the importance of a site, what aims and objectives there are for the site and how it will be managed to achieve them. The plan provides a prescription for the management of the site over a period of time, usually five years, is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis and updated as required.

Management Objectives

- Maintain and enhance the ecological diversity of the wood.
- Enhance the structural diversity of the wood to allow natural succession for the trees within it.
- Maintain the amenity value of the wood for local people.
- Enable ecological continuity to be sustained both in and around the wood.
- Promote a positive experience of the wood to all those that use it.
- Facilitate the use of the wood as an educational resource.
- Generate an income from ongoing management of the wood, where appropriate.
- Maintain the woodland grant scheme for coppice management.

Analysis and Evaluation

Strengths

- Rich variety of wildlife
- Local public are protective of their wood
- Nationally rare species present
- Friends group is now established

Weaknesses

- Limited age structure in trees
- Lack of survey information to feed into management plan
- Many unofficial paths in the southern half of the wood

Opportunities

- Improve woodland age structure and species diversity
- Introduce more education into the wood
- Improve on interpretation within the wood
- Improve path surface and re-route where necessary
- Improve vehicle access to allow easier woodland management
- Improve bio-security measures for people working within the wood

Threats

- Unruly dogs (chasing / killing wildlife)
- Inconsiderate members of the public leaving litter
- Invasive species (including small balsam)
- Pests (including Acute Oak Decline and Chalara)
- Budget limitations
- Limited personnel available
- Cyclists using the wood

Management of the Wood

Spring 2013

- Tree planting
- Hazel planting in coppice plots
- Survey spring wildflowers – species list update
- Manage path edges – cut back vegetation overgrowing paths
- Install permanent posts for fixed point photography
- Perform routine fixed point photography
- Install new benches

Summer 2013

- Survey summer wildflowers – species list update
- Survey trees – species list update + look for Chalara
- Survey butterflies / dragonflies – species list update
- Perform routine fixed point photography
- Manage path edges – cut back vegetation overgrowing paths
- Cut back small balsam before it seeds – invasive species control (Jun – Sep)
- Manage area around newly planted trees / water if too dry

Autumn 2013

- Perform routine fixed point photography

Winter 2013

- Ongoing coppice - 2013 plot 1f + 5m scallop to south of main ride
- Bramble management in whole southern half of wood
- Path works – look a clearing back area for re-routed path on northern edge
- Perform routine fixed point photography

Non Season specific

Interpretation boards – replace plus new ones?

Additional benches make / install