



The Friends of

Putnoe Wood & Mowsbury Hillfort

Newsletter

Issue 7 November 2012

60% Cut In Funding

The Borough Council has released its cost cutting proposals for public consultation. If implemented it will mean a 60% reduction in financial support for community led green space projects that do not specifically relate to the Boroughs parks and green spaces. The Friends Group should not be adversely affected by the proposed Modernisation Programme. At this time we will not be making representation at the Public Consultation but we will of course monitor the situation in case further developments impact on our group or the Borough departments with whom we work. We have been assured that everything possible will be done to protect and sustain existing budgets and to maintain the support that we receive from the Priory Park Rangers and the Parks department. More information can be found on the Boroughs web site, Modernisation Programme 2012-16 (Public Consultation).

Green Borough Fair

For the second year running the Friends will have a stall at the Green Borough Fair, this year it is being held in the Harpur Suite in Bedford on Saturday 24th November. In addition to selling hot Laxton Fortune apple juice, our notelets, bird boxes and hazel obelisks, it is an ideal opportunity to promote the Friends

Rights of Way Training

A second training session for ROW is being held at Bromham Mill on Saturday 10th November. For further information on this event and other Rights of Way issues please contact Phillip.Fox@bedford.gov.uk.

Putnoe Wood Coppicing and Obelisk Demo



The Priory Park Rangers and the Friends were assisted by a group of young adults from Youth Inspired C.I.C. with a coppicing task at Putnoe Wood. Freshly cut hazel was used for an obelisk building demonstration and the remainder used to construct a dead hedge. The Youth Inspired members were so enthusiastic and enjoying themselves that they were reluctant to stop for their lunch.

Next Friends Meeting

Mowsbury Golf Club,
Tuesday, November 6th. 19.00

Next Tasks

Mowsbury Hillfort. Wednesday 7th November.
1.30—4.00pm. Working in neglected orchard.
Please check website diary for further times and dates.

You can help to protect healthy oak trees and prevent spreading Acute Oak Decline:

Avoid contact with trees showing symptoms such as stem bleeds and dead or dying branches.

Do not touch the bleeding areas on tree stems.

If you have been walking or cycling in an area where there are diseased trees, clean soles of walking shoes and bicycle tyres before entering areas where trees are not yet affected.

Do not remove dead wood, branches or infected bark from the wooded area.

For the latest information please go to the Forestry Commission web site at:
www.forestry.gov.uk/



Chairman: *Andy Wilkins* Secretary: *Chris Wedge* Treasurer: *John Wilkie* Events and Tasks Coordinator: *John Wallace*

Double Jeopardy

A devastating and little-understood deadly disease is putting Britain's ash trees at risk, the cause is a fungus, *Chalara fraxinea*, which kills the trees. The disease



causes progressive leaf loss and severe die back in an affected tree and eventually kills it completely. The disease has already taken hold in many countries across Europe. It was first discovered in the UK in February of this year in a consignment of saplings sent from a nursery in the Netherlands to a nursery in Buckinghamshire. Scientists have recently confirmed a number

of cases in established woodland in East Anglia, the infected ash trees do not appear to have any association with recently supplied nursery stock. It is now being treated as a quarantine pest under national emergency measures and all suspected cases of the disease must be reported. Spores are thought to be carried on the wind or by animals, although the transmission of the fungus is still not fully understood. There is as yet no known cure or vaccine. With the increase in reported cases of Acute Oak Decline and now the presence of Chalara Ash Die-back, our woodlands, parkland and even the trees in our gardens are under huge threat. Initial precautions are the same as for Acute Oak decline. As many as ten different organisms and diseases are threatening our trees and shrubs including the horse chestnut, the larch and the rhododendrium. The world trade and import in saplings and plants into this country is thought to be the cause for the significant increase in the diseases attacking our trees and shrubs. These days it can be cheaper to import a sapling than to grow it from seed in this country. For further information go to: www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara.

Mission Possible

Not long ago the Hillfort was considered mission impossible. However, the Friends have shown that with ambition, a never-say-die spirit, toil, a few cups of tea and the occasional biscuit it is a mission now-possible. Have a walk round the Hillfort to view the results of recent activity. Be careful, the rabbits are digging pot hole trip hazards to deter us.



Green Space Strategy

As discussed at our last meeting, the Friends Group were asked to participate in the Borough's consultation for the Draft Green Space Strategy. A completed questionnaire with additional comments was submitted on the Friends behalf. One of the comments included asked that the outer hillside meadow, which lies to the west and adjacent to Mowsbury Hillfort, should now be considered an integral part of the Hillfort. The meadow is an important part of the Hillfort's biodiversity and supports a wide diversity of plants and wild life as well as being a recognised and well used recreational area. The outer meadow which we have been working on for the last two years is not included in the draft strategy.

For further information go to www.bedford.gov.uk/



Badgered into remission

The controversial badger cull has been delayed until June 2013. A statement by the Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs confirmed the postponement of the proposed badger cull, the size of the badger population was partly behind the decision. Approval had been given for a cull in two areas, Gloucestershire and West Somerset, as part of efforts to control bovine tuberculosis (TB) in cattle. Natural England, the environment body, estimated there were 3,600 badgers in the West Gloucestershire area and 4,300 in West Somerset. The delay will hopefully provide time for reflection on the control of TB.



The results of a nine-year trial suggested the spread of the disease could be slowed if more than 70% of badgers in a control area were eradicated. The alternative solution of vaccination was considered to be less effective. A disadvantage with vaccinating badgers is unless they are marked or tagged, it will not be possible to distinguish a vaccinated badger from a diseased one. A debate on the badger cull was held in the main chamber of the House of Commons on Thursday 25th October 2012. In a non-binding vote, MPs rejected the policy by 147 votes to 28, calling instead for vaccination, improved testing and bio security. The motion was tabled by backbenchers so is not binding on the government. For more information go to: www.badger.org.uk/



Litter Problem

Litter is not normally a problem at the Hillfort but there was one instance lately when cans, glass bottles, plastic cups and a holdall were strewn around at the main entrance to the Courtyard meadow. The people concerned must have been reasonably well off because they left several full cans of Fosters, or were they just discerning drinkers.



Down In The Woods

Autumn may be upon us and with winter hard on its heels, but there is still plenty to see and enjoy at both Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort. Not everything hibernates during the colder months of the year.



Rights of Way Volunteers

The Borough Council has an obligation to survey each year at least 10% of the Rights of Way (RoW) within the Borough, they normally survey 5% in May and a further 5% in November. In view of the staff cut backs, the Borough is seeking help from Parish Councils and Volunteer groups, like the Friends, to help them with these surveys. A training session was held on Monday 29th October, which was attended by Andy Wilkins and John Wallace. The survey work involves walking along the legally recorded route of a specific RoW, which can be a footpath, bridleway or byway and completing a standard survey form with additional annotations on a map, both provided by the Borough. Each RoW is given an individual number and they can vary in length from 100m to over 1000m. It is interesting to note that FP32 is a RoW which runs in a loop through Putnoe Wood and does not seem to follow the well trodden rides and paths in the Wood.

Following the training, Andy and John agreed to survey a RoW adjacent to Mowsbury Park and another one beside the Wentworth Drive and Church Lane roundabout.

A further training session is planned for Saturday 10th November, please let Andy know if you are interested. Clarification is awaited as to how many places are available for Friends who wish to attend.

Christmas Spirit

Sloe Gin

The Sloe Berries should be picked after the first frost. If collected before this time they can be placed on an open tray in a freezer over night and then thawed. Prick the Sloes and then half fill a bottle with them. Top up with Gin and stand the bottle in a cool place for approximately two months.



Word Search Quiz

Answers for October Word Search Quiz.

C	H	A	R	L	E	S	A	B	B	O	T	
Y	A			D	O	M	E	S	D	A	Y	
R	W		R	O	B	I	N		L			
R	T		T	A	E	L				O		
E	H		N	E	T	T	L	E			E	
B	O		R	O	T	P	A	R				
K	R			R		U						
C	N			C		T					I	
A	E			H		T		H	E	N	R	Y
L				I		A			L		O	
B				D		M	U	G	D		N	
					N				E		A	
				E					R		G	
	M	O	R	I	N	S	B	U	R	Y	E	
		R						F	L	O	R	A
	A			F	O	R	A	G	I	N	G	
W	B	U	R	C	S							

Raptor. Putta. Morinsbury. Elder. Flora. Henry. Warren. Charles Abbot. Domesday. Hawthorne. Sloe. Blackberry. Orchid. Leat. Iron age. Robin. Scrub. Foraging. Mug. Nettle.

The Friends of
Putnoe Wood & Mowsbury Hillfort

A6 Notelets (4 pack)



ONLY £2.00
Donation

These 4 great images taken from Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort in Bedfordshire are available as A6 Notelets in a unique 4 pack gift set complete with envelopes.

To purchase your pack of notelets please contact Rebecca at rebecca.wilkins@bedford.gov.uk or for more information about Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort please visit: www.putnoemowsburyfriends.org.uk

Your Guide To Mowsbury Hillfort

