

MINUTES 2016 Oct

Friends of Halsey Field

Present:	Action by:
<i>Christine Ridley (Chair), Mike Ridley (Treasurer), Steve Lings, Suzanne Watts, Paul Harris, Diane &amp; Steve Wilson, Grant Thorne, Barry Watson, Carolyn Nicholls</i>	
<b>Apologies:</b>	
<i>Dennis Furnell, Penny Cockerill, Di Pickover</i>	
<b>Minutes of last meeting</b>	
<i>Accepted as correct</i>	
<b>Matters Arising</b>	
<i>None</i>	
<b>Treasurers Report (Mike Ridley)</b>	
<p><i>£156.23 In Bank. Also £100.00 donation from Phil Byford towards tools for field management, currently held as cash.</i></p> <p><i>Liabilities include £14 cheque for hall, not yet cleared.</i></p> <p><i>£50 approx expected as a donation from Dennis Furnell for cost incurred in restoring bench.</i></p> <p><i>Donation expected in spring from Mike &amp; Chris's friends, in lieu of a meal out together.</i></p> <p><i>£1908 Donation from Boxmoor Trust due, for new signs, tools and laminator; payable on presentation of receipts. (Scythe already bought).</i></p>	<i>MR</i> <i>MR</i>
<b>Signage</b>	
<p><i>Boxmoor Trust must be acknowledged in publicity, and on signs, as donor.</i></p> <p><i>Steve Lings said sign can be printed onto 6ply board, by a printer he knows in Hertford.</i></p> <p><i>Dennis Furnell would like to do artwork. Chris thanked Steve Lings for his offer to do the same. Steve said he would design a logo for the field.</i></p> <p><i>The following were suggested to Chris for inclusions on the sign:</i></p> <p><i>A simple map; a contact telephone number; name of the site; illustrations or reference to things to be seen there (except Roman Snail, which is to be kept secret) such as flowers, insects, birds; QR Badge and website for it to refer to, or somesuch (Steve Wilson); blog site address. Sign to have POSITIVE messages for the public, not negative.</i></p> <p><i>Preference was shown for a steel lectern, as this would be the most vandal proof.</i></p> <p><i>More research needed into the design of the sign, then report back to committee.</i></p> <p><i>Action: CR</i></p>	<i>MR</i>  <i>DF</i> <i>CR</i>  <i>SW</i>  <i>CR</i>
<b>Butterfly transect results</b>	
<p><i>CR Has been walking a weekly butterfly transect for the second year, and putting the results on line for Butterfly Conservation.</i></p> <p><i>She reported a general drop in butterfly numbers seen in the field this year, although some species had been particularly successful, and an increase in numbers of Holly Blues, Ringlets and Brimstone (this spring) had been recorded. All the species seen last year had been seen again this year (23 species), with some additions to the day flying moth species (6 species in total). Butterfly numbers generally reflected those observed in the country as a whole.</i></p>	<i>CR</i>

<b>Management Plan</b>	
<i>Steve Lings spoke to us about the need for, and content of, a management plan. This is a summary of what he said:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important to record what the site is like, and spp. present now, to provide a baseline for measuring progress. (CR has listed details of moths and butterflies seen, and has been marking major flower and tree species on a map of the site.)</li> <li>• A map of the site, showing all important features in detail, is needed. Google &amp; other photos, e.g. from a drogue also valuable. Action SL</li> <li>• There is little of conservation value on the site now (i.e. unusual spp.) except roman snails. But as a 'brownfield' site has great potential for wildlife; site benefits from nearby woodland. The playing field, could also become valuable in the future if it could be managed for wildlife too.</li> <li>• With positive management, the site could be re-designated "open mosaic habitat on previously used land". For this to happen, every opportunity should be taken to create a variety of heights of vegetation, from almost bare ground (25%) (to some trees (Max 10-15% of site), to provide as many different habitats as possible. Shrub layer 'Redil' should be about 25%, for overwintering species. Shrubs on the boundaries and some in the middle should be retained for cover and shelter.</li> <li>• Solitary and mining bees and spiders should be encouraged by creation of fairly compacted bare ground, which heats quickly and encourages breeding.</li> <li>• Plants which provide pollen, nectar, food for invertebrates are of most value. Next are plants which can be used by larvae. Plants could be grown from seed and when robust, planted out as plugs. Plugs can be bought also from a firm in Cambridge.</li> <li>• Volunteers and Leaders could benefit from visiting brownfield sites (EG College Lake, Pitstone)</li> <li>• There is no open water on site, unfortunately for wildlife, but maybe some nearby.</li> <li>• It is acceptable to poison Ash stumps to prevent re-growth.</li> <li>• Grass should be kept very short in some areas. Cut grass should be collected to avoid soil enrichment, to compost areas. Yellow rattle (a semi-parasite on grass) should be introduced, to reduce grass dominance, and provide a food plant for the grass veneer moth.</li> <li>• Sloping banks should also be cut on a 25% rotation each year. Chalk slopes would be ideal. Path sides need to be mown too (just one side each year).</li> <li>• Soil samples should be taken on the slope, with an auger. Soil may be alkaline.</li> <li>• A strategy for communicating with and involving the community, press etc should be developed.</li> <li>• A meeting to continue planning how to manage the site is needed. CR to arrange this, with SL and volunteers.</li> </ul>	SL & CR
<b>Any other business</b>	
<i>None</i>	
<b>Date of next meeting</b>	
<i>To be called when needed by CR</i>	CR

NB Next meeting date has now been fixed for: Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November at 10am. Meet by bench on Halsey field