

**Friends of Halsey Field**

AGM Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Present: Mike & Christine Ridley, Roger Prue, Steve & Diane Wilson, Steve Lings, Dennis & Ann Furnell, Maureen Flint, Grant Thorne, Barry Watson

Apologies: Suzanne Watts, Anthea Lovatt, Paul Harris, Gruff Edwards

<b>Discussed</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>Chris welcomed everyone and opened the meeting by asking for approval of the inaugural minutes. These were agreed, signed and dated. No matters arising.</p>	
<p><b>Chairman’s Report:</b></p> <p>Chris advised that a copy of this would be attached to the minutes, so the following notes are a brief summary only.</p> <p>It has been a busy year and quite a bit of work has been done. Anthills are more visible now (woodpeckers like them).</p> <p>The moth survey with David Kirk was successful with a showing of more than 40 species. A further moth survey will be carried out, possibly in June, and David Kirk has advised we can use his moth traps. There followed a general discussion on moths found on different soil types at different times of year.</p> <p>Chris has been carrying out a butterfly transect once a week, including Warner’s End woods, and sending information on her results to Butterfly Conservation. This has meant that Halsey Field is “on the map”. Chris impressed on the meeting that records are vital to inform further management.</p> <p>The bench has been installed and there have been some good comments about it</p> <p>The information board looks really good – and Chris thanked Steve Ling for his input.</p> <p>Chris &amp; Mike with the help of the Osborne Property Group, have been trying to get schools involved with the field project, but there has been no response as yet.</p>	<p><b>Chris R. to arrange with David Kirk, Steve Lings and Roger Prue</b></p> <p><b>Chris R to continue transect this year</b></p>

<p>Chris has been keeping the Facebook diary page up to date with lots of photos, and the Halsey field now has a sub-section on the Dacorum Environmental Forum website. Steve L has also been keeping a diary of the field.</p> <p>Please see Chairman’s report (attached) for further details</p>	<p><b>Chris R and Steve L to continue diaries</b></p>
<p><b>Management Plan:</b></p> <p>It was generally agreed that the work carried out on the site so far has brought improvements. However, there was some considerable discussion on the way forward; how best to deal with the ash saplings and brambles etc. The benefits, or otherwise, of using brush cutters, scythes, hand scythes, power trimmers etc. brought out differing opinions. Barry asked “Why is brush cutting a problem?” Steve L replied that for initial clearing it is good, but it is not selective enough for further work. He explained that many insects stay close to their food plant and lay eggs on the tips of leaves. Dennis seconded this opinion. Much of value can be destroyed by brush cutting which can mash everything to a mulch.</p> <p>Mike mentioned that the largest ash saplings had been treated (very carefully) by way of herbicide painted onto the stump.</p> <p>Chris has been tying ribbons on those trees that we want to keep, but need trimming.</p> <p>Steve Ling suggested that, following the work done so far, we “wait and see” for the next few months during spring and summer and try to establish just what there is in the way of insects, molluscs, plants, grasses etc. It would give us important guidelines as to what we should do next, and help in forming a future management plan based on the needs of the wildlife already present and wildlife that might be encouraged to the site.</p> <p>Steve also mentioned some trial intervention management on a small scale, taking an inch of topsoil back to bar earth. There may well be very old seeds, which will jump up with a flush of new growth.</p> <p>It is understood that the site is large and the volunteers few and unable to carry out heavy work; but it is important that future management be subtle and undertaken with care. “Gently managed neglect.”</p> <p>It was suggested that certain areas be managed differently to allow grasses to grow to different heights, accommodating a variety of wildlife – bearing in mind the “friends” responsibility for the Roman snails., which breed in summer.</p>	

To refer back to the question of brambles and how to manage them. They are, of course, a valuable habitat. Mike mentioned that they had been cutting them back, to prevent further spread, but leaving large clumps that have been used for cuttings; brambles having the ability to grow over almost anything.

The edge of the footpaths need to be managed in respect of the trefoil, which needs a certain level of disturbance to thrive. Possibly just rake as this stimulates seed dispersal. Steve L mentioned the violets which are unusual in that they seed only in summer, not when they are in flower.

It would be good to enlarge Chris' "walkabouts" with photographic evidence. This is already happening, but could be expanded. The more evidence we have of what is on the site, the better protection we shall be able to gain for it.

Dennis mentioned the damp area (possible spring or seep). It is on the other side of the fence, but does affect the site itself. There are black poplars and lovely catkins) and willow – good for bees, siskins, redpolls etc. There are also self-set apple trees and the fallen apples attract fieldfares and redwings.

Would it be possible to have a pond? Dennis to speak to BXT about liners etc. Take into account possible Health & Safety issues.

The wildlife Trust mainly monitored the plants in their survey.

Should we have a log pile? Where do we get the logs from?

Chris said she has put two sheets of corrugated iron in different places on the field, and checks under them regularly, in order to monitor for slow worms, snakes and small mammals. No slow worms or snakes have yet been found, but wood mice, field voles, shrews and toads were seen.

There was some discussion about a mammal survey to be carried out by Christ and Steve L. Steve L has experience in trapping and the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust has offered to lend us traps. Dennis will see what BXT can loan us – These traps would need to be monitored often, as shrews will die if left without food for even a short period

Generally speaking, it was felt that we need more information and details before proceeding and further management should be put on hold until September / October – possibly August for dogwood. The management plan as it stands needs modifying – Chris is already doing this.

This is long-term project.

Please see notes on managements sessions this year (attached.)

**Dennis F to investigate pond liners**

**Dennis F to investigate. Chris R to negotiate with HMWT**

**Hold meeting after bio-blitz to discuss management and tools**

<p><b>Treasurer's Report:</b></p> <p>Mike reported that as at today's date (28/3) there was £639.72 in the account. However, there are liabilities owing to Mike and Christ, and Steve Ling for the sum of £605.65 leaving an excess of assets over liabilities of £134.07. This includes a gift of £100 and Mike is waiting until we have the ability to utilise Gift Aid before banking this.</p> <p>Still £388.51 left from the BXT grant of £2,000 (not included in the above figures as BXT have stipulated that their grant should be used for tools, equipment etc.) What should this be spent on. Some discussion on this, but no conclusions.</p> <p>The treasurer's report is attached.</p> <p>Mike and Chris meet up with university friends annually, but instead of going to a restaurant, they are going to cook at home and their friends have offered to donate to the "Friends" fund.</p> <p>We should look at all possible ways of obtaining grants. The Locality Budget would be a good one to apply for, and the Co-op give grants to local community projects. However, we need to know exactly what we want in order to apply for another grant.</p>	
<p><b>Change of Constitution</b></p> <p>It has been decided to change the constitution of the Halsey Field in order to be able to claim gift aid when we are given donations by tax payers. A previous application for Gift Aid was rejected by HMRC as the wording did not satisfy their requirements</p> <p>The proposed new constitution is attached. Mike pointed out that the text is taken directly from the Charity Commission Website, with the exception of the items in <b>bold</b>, which the CC leave to be completed by each charity. The CC also offer advice on the wording for Charitable purposes, upon which the <b>bold</b> items were based.</p> <p>After some discussion these amendments were agreed, proposed by Dennis Furnell and seconded by Maureen Flint.</p>	<p><b>Mike R to reapply to HMRC for gift aid registration</b></p>

**Election of Trustees for the year 1017-18**

It was proposed that these were kept much the same as last year. The following trustees were proposed, seconded and elected *nem con*

Position	Name	Proposed	Seconded
<b>Chairman</b>	Chris Ridley	Mike Ridley	Steve Wilson
<b>Secretary</b>	Dennis Furnell	Mike Ridley	Di Wilson
<b>Treasurer</b>	Mike Ridley	Steve Wilson	Grant Thorne
<b>Member</b>	Steve Lings	Mike Ridley	Dennis Furnell
<b>Member</b>	Steve Wilson	Chris Ridley	Mike Ridley

Other trustees may be added at future meetings.

**Grand Opening of the Halsey Field:**

It was thought that some sort of event would be extremely useful in promoting Halsey Field. **When should it be done? What sort of event should it be?** Committee members were asked for their ideas/suggestions.

Steve Wilson suggested we invite people like Janet Marshall, County Portfolio Officer and other officials; it would establish our credentials. The event could run over a Saturday and Sunday enabling people to come and go as convenient – although Chris would like the officials to be there at the same time for a photo opportunity. We could arrange a bio blitz (we have not yet done one), display table etc. drawing, sketching, photographing etc. for children and adults and these could be at set times of the day to look at finds/results.

The Grand Opening should take place during a weekend in July before the schools break up for the summer holidays.

Can 3 committee members form a sub-committee to deal with this event?

**Steve Wilson and Steve Lings offered to look into this and Christine Ridley also offered her support**

Suggest contacting schools again – science project for children and parents – not necessarily teachers unless they want to. Chris has already met with the local Brownie leader and, of course, we have Gadebridge Cubs on the doorstep. What other contacts do we have?

**Steve L, Steve W, and Chris R to meet about this event. (Steve W will phone Steve L to arrange a date.)**

<p><b>Plans for the coming year</b></p> <p>Chris handed out a questionnaire (attached) with a list of possible activities/meetings for the year 2017-18, and asked members to mark 1,2 or 3 stars according to their preferences. She will use this list for a future events list.</p> <p>A blank questionnaire is attached for people who were not able to attend the meeting to add their preferences. Please send back to CR.</p>	<p><b>Chris R to note preferences &amp; arrange some activities for the year, with members' help &amp; advice.</b></p>