

## W W T Rugby Group

### AGM Minutes - 23rd February 2010

Present:- Steve Batt, SB; Derek Lill, DL; Phil Parr, PP; Cyril Cleaver, CC;  
Jan Elliott, JE; Frank Ollerenshaw, FO; Margaret Richards, MR.  
Apologies from Roger Jackson, Christine Rundle and Amanda Henshaw

#### Conservation Report

##### Ashlawn Cutting.

Contractors brought in with WREN Grant money have done much work to reclaim lost grassland. We need to plan future management to benefit from this. We have got some tidying up to do before 2010 season. We need a clearer overall plan at the start of each year's work parties on what we hope to achieve and improve communication with Michael Drummond, MD, (Rugby Reserves Officer) so that WWT at Brandon can put more resources in. We do the grassland at the south end, but it is a big reserve, the wetlands could be improved, perhaps Nature Force could do more willow clearance and clear out the drains by the station.

Perhaps we could work more in the summer when herbicide treatment would be more effective, a work party every 4-6 weeks?

We were fortunate that the WREN and B & Q provided money for new equipment.

CC said that work with Rugby School children on Ashlawn Cutting is expanding the grassland on the NE side of Ashlawn Road towards Hillmorton Road by scrub removal; another group is going the other way felling trees to let the light in. Last year more work was done by the school than ever before.

The Forester moth was not seen when we looked for evidence, but D. Brown (Butterfly Conservation, BC) thinks it's likely they are still there.

However, common blue, marbled white and small copper are there. Crickets seem to have moved in (movement of species due to warming?)

##### Newbold Quarry

Good diversity on site, white-clawed crayfish, toads, dragonflies, and there is a proposed reintroduction of grizzled skipper butterfly. Nature Force has done much useful work in reclaiming grassland.

PP has tried to encourage grizzled skipper butterflies to lay eggs on cinquefoil in pots hoping to be able to transfer eggs easily from another site. The pots dried out so no success yet.

##### Meadow, Kilsby Lane

This is a Rugby Borough Council (RBC) field set aside below the junior football field off Kilsby Lane.

It has been left for 10 years and now the grass is coarse and scrub is taking over, we have provided some advice and RBC have started to cut an area to keep as grassland. They have put in two ponds, but it would have been better if one of them had been dug where there was a pond originally as shown on old Ordnance Survey maps. The field is not open to the public. Some fruit trees (good food plants for insects) may be planted to provide shelter from winds that persistently blow up the Rainsbrook

Valley. The rest to be grassland with areas of scrub allowed maturing to woodland. The site has great potential and communication with RBC is gradually improving.

### **Malpass**

CEMEX have had the go-ahead to build the Climafuel plant on this site, no news yet on when building will start. This is a key site in Rugby. There is great potential for planting on the edges of the Western Relief Road close by, and Butterfly Conservation has been talking to Warwickshire County Council and their contractors.

### **Windmill Spinney**

Contractors have taken trees out, a plan to encourage hedgehogs has not happened and JE said that the whole place looks forlorn. She said that the fence is down, laurel is encroaching and composty rubbish and rotting logs abound. DL said he did a litter pick in the summer and put a new gate on.

He also said that there were buzzards there last year. Someone opens the gate each morning and closes it at night. It was thought that it could do with a local group to take it on.

### **Cock Robin Wood, CRW**

DL produced a fine report, a copy of which is attached.

Ian Jelly has asked for Probation Groups to work on CRW but so far there have been none. DL feels that Windmill Spinney or Ashlawn would be better sites for them.

It is felt that better communication is needed between the Conservation Group, Michael Drummond and RBC. DL keeps MD informed and he talks to RBC, but the group can provide more continuity than staff from Brandon who often change, so opportunities to speak to such as Steve Cook from RBC if and when he appears on site should be taken.

There is a manhole cover close to the pond the use of which is uncertain. Is it something to do with the pond or is it a sewer? Perhaps RBC will know.

### **Treasurers Report**

SB said that he will contact Chris Worman in April and is confident that he will give us more money and that RBC is grateful for the work that we do on Ashlawn and Cock Robin. When Lee Schofield was Reserves Officer he got B&Q to give us £2,000 to spend in their store, SB and DL used it to equip the Ashlawn and Cock Robin work parties. All equipment can be shared.

SB thanked FO for his work.

MR had nothing to report except it was felt that we should have invited MD to the meeting and that an updated contact list should be made available.

MR made notes to do these things.

SB reminded us of the First and Gold Rugby in Bloom environmental award achieved in summer 2009 and that Chris Worman had congratulated us and that Brandon were delighted about it.

SB thanked those who work at the Cutting, particularly Cyril, Diana and Phil.

The council was pleased with our success and does try to be supportive, personal contact is important.

There is a group from Cawston Grange keen to adopt and work on part of the old railway line that goes to Leamington between CEMEX and “Home Rule for Crick” bridge. They may want guidance. Sustrans want to put a cycle track in.

There have been no nominations for new committee members and so the existing members will continue as before.

**MR** thanked **SB** for his fine Chairmanship.

### **Future Activities**

Amanda has asked about a guided walk on Ashlawn Cutting. Perhaps we could contact The Observer with notification of a guided walk on Ashlawn Cutting.

There are no dates at the moment for a Forester Moth hunt.

**PP** said he'll contact CEMEX for just a few members of the group that want to go on a guided walk on the Malpass site.

### **Any Other Business**

**CC** mentioned that clearing work around Sainsburys made use of a chipper for processing trees and brash that had been cut down. It was decided that it would be difficult to persuade the Trust to buy one and that hiring one, with an operator, would be the way to go perhaps from the council.

**PP** said that a web designer has shown interest in local conservation work, but he is not available on Sundays. It was thought that a website for the group would be a good idea, maybe accessed through a link on Brandon's website.

Those present thanked **SB** for his hospitality in hosting the meeting. As there was no further business the meeting was closed.

Margaret Richards, (Secretary)