

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust Rugby Group AGM 22nd February 2011
Minutes

Present:-

Steve Batt, SB; Derek Lill, DL; Phil Parr, PP; Cyril Cleaver, CC; Jan Elliott, JE; Frank Ollerenshaw, FO; Amanda Henshaw, AH; Diana Forbes-Powney, DFP; Hazel Walker, HW; Barbara Saturley, BS; Tony Landless, TL; Margaret Richards, MR.

1. SB welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.
2. Apologies from Michael Drummond, Christine Rundle and Nick Bradley.
3. Committee member reports:-

a. Treasurer's report.

FO gave out copies of the statement of accounts for the Group y/e 2010 and congratulated SB and PP for their success in securing a grant of £4,000 from the Rugby Borough Council (RBC). This is "Section 106" money that is paid to RBC to offset the environmental damage done when new developments take place. The Council must spend this money on local environmental projects. PP and SB said that the money is to be spent on getting contractors in to restore Pytchley Marsh on Ashlawn Cutting and that it would make sense to do this at the same time as RBC plans to do maintenance in the area (sewers etc) so that work access to the Cutting can be shared.

Money has also been spent on new tools.

TL asked if there were any conditions attached to spending the £4,000. SB said that it had to be spent on wildlife and that Chris Worman and Steve Cook from RBC liase with our Group so that they know and approve of how the money is being spent. SB commented on the continuing good relationship between the Group and RBC.

SB said that he will be asking RBC for £500 grant for the year, and seeing if there is any more Section 106 money available.

FO said that £36 would be spent on the new website.

SB thanked FO for his work.

b. PP had prepared a report on the progress of work on the local reserves and passed around information on grassland management. His report is attached. This report is greatly appreciated, and initiated several discussions:-

Ashlawn Cutting.

Motorbikes are a problem; some are stolen, trashed and dumped on the Cutting. The police must be notified.

Disposal of cut timber, TL asked if it could be used by the wood burning boiler at Brandon. SB said that the fuel used is dry wood chips and that the proposal was for a commercial company to take wood from the Trust's reserves with a proportion of that wood to be retained by the company and the rest to be processed and given back to the Trust for the boiler.

Tools. Ian Jelly has said that Brandon needs a list of tools owned by the local groups and their whereabouts in order for them to be insured. SB asked DL, CC and PP to what tools are where and he will pass the information to Brandon. PP said that he has put a code number on each tool in order to identify it. AH added that any electrical items can be PAT tested at Brandon as long as it is known when the item was purchased.

Litter pickers. Keep in mind that near bridges and where kids congregate there is a problem with needles. One of the dog walkers on Ashlawn Cutting even picks up unidentified dog mess. [What a hero!]

Malpass

PP passed round a report he has done on the plans for mitigating the effects of constructing the Climafuel plant. Mike Slater for Butterfly Conservation (BC) is working closely with Cemex who seem to be helpful.

Kilsby Lane Meadow.

PP continues to survey and advise RBC.

Wet meadow at Lower Hillmorton

HW said that she could speak to the farmer about access for surveys etc.

Swift Valley.

Two new volunteers are starting "Friends of Swift Valley" and have been persuaded to do the bird survey on that site previously done by SB who is now free to survey on Ashlawn Cutting.

Hand-out leaflet

JE said that a handout could be put through letter-boxes along with the hand delivered quarterly magazine from the Trust. This A5 sheet would have the potential to recruit new volunteers and should contain work party schedules and website and contact information. It would have to go in the summer (August) edition of the magazine to give time to get the website running well and to have the work party dates fixed.

Website

HW said she would help JE with photographs for the website and could offer help because of her experience in publicity. SB said that Paul Hart has a website for Cawston Greenway and posts regular blogs. Perhaps we can follow his example. There is to be another meeting about progressing with the website.

c. Secretary's report

MR had nothing to report except to say that she has been getting newsletters from CAVA (Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action) and wondered if it would be worth contacting their Rugby office and giving them our contact details so that anyone interested in environmental volunteering can be put in touch. They could also distribute any information

on our activities in their e-newsletter. AH said that she would send information and the e-newsletter about CAVA to MR which she has already done. MR to pursue this avenue for potential volunteers. AH kindly brought induction forms and volunteer leaflets for new volunteers. They were given to CC.

DL gave a report on Cock Robin Wood, CRW. CC asked if Sainsbury's had made a plan when CRW was first set up. DL said that it seems unlikely because like trees are planted in blocks instead of being mixed throughout the wood. The volunteers have to try to thin the trees selectively.

f. SB reminded us of the Gold Rugby in Bloom environmental award achieved in summer 2010 and that he would enter us for this year's award and suggested that Cock Robin Wood should go in for it too. He said that we have had some success in getting new volunteers this year and that our finances were strong.

SB thanked those who work at the Cutting, particularly Cyril, Diana and Phil. The Rugby School sessions on Thursday afternoons and the input from Nature Force are having a big positive impact on restoring the grasslands to Ashlawn Cutting and are greatly appreciated.

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

5. Future Activities and AOB

TL told us about a forthcoming exhibition and activity day put on by the Rugby Natural History Society celebrating its 50th Anniversary. It will be on at Rugby Museum and Art Gallery above the Library in town on the last week of May and the first week of June. There will be talks, exhibits and activities, some thing for everyone. TL said that they could give out leaflets about environmental volunteering for us at this event.

DFP asked if it was possible to herbicide treat at the school sessions at Ashlawn Cutting. SB said that he would look into it.

DFP said that horse riders were riding along the Cutting and in wet weather this causes the path to get badly damaged - is there anything that we can do? SB said that it was the responsibility of RBC not us. DFP said that she would make enquiries on the subject at the Town Hall.

AH said that the Heritage Lottery Fund costed volunteers at £50 a day for an unskilled person and £150 for a skilled person.

Those present thanked MR for hosting the meeting.

As there was no further business the meeting was closed.

Margaret Richards,
Secretary