

Northfield Constituency Environmental Forum



Annual Public Meeting

Northfield Ecocentre, Friday 12th December, 1pm.

Present: Graham Andrews (Chair), Penny Moore (Secretary), Amanda Cadman (Treasurer/Vice- Chair), Roland Kedge (Rea Valley Conservation Group), Daniel Bryson-Peart (Friends of Manor Farm Park), Maggie Sweet (BOSF Chair and The Fields Millennium Green), Clive Sweet (The Fields Millennium Green), Anne Dasgupta (Northfield Ecocentre), Chris Blythe (TCV), Leo McKevitt (Woodgate Valley Country Park), Jayne Lawrence (Willows Hedgehog Rescue), Sue Amey (District Parks Manager), Adam Noon (Lickey Hills Rangers), Lynn Horsnett (Friends of Kings Norton Park), Sarah Royal (BOSF)

Apologies: Jill Harvey (Lickey Hills Society), Denise Meredith (Friends of Cofton Park)

Meeting started 1.10pm

Welcome:

Graham welcomed everyone to the APM and accepted any apologies.

Annual Public Meeting:

a) Chairman's Report

Graham read the chair's annual report (copy attached) looking back on a successful year for the NCEF.

b) Treasurer's Report

Amanda read the annual treasurer's report. The forum's financial position remained the same with around £650 in the bank.

c) Election of Officers

As no one else wished to stand as a committee officer and Graham, Penny and Amanda were willing to serve for the coming year all were proposed by Roland and agreed by all those present.

Graham was thanked for his work guiding the NCEF in the last year.

The APM was closed.

Minutes:

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted by the meeting as a true record.

Matters Arising:

(i) Turves Green Dingle

There had been no change with the situation at Turves Green Dingle and the Turves Green Brook. There was a considerable amount of rubbish and fly-tipping on site.

Sue suggested exploring the possibility of accessing community funding for the local area. Amanda said as a tributary of the River Rea it was important the brook was in good condition, especially as the river needed to re-colonise following the recent pollution incident. Chris said he was already working with Turves Green Boys School and perhaps this could help with local community involvement. Lynn suggested that the Wildlife Trust (B&BC) could be approached.

(ii) Fruit Trees on Allotments

Chris and Penny had both followed up on Maggie's question about fruit trees on allotments. Allotment holders were not going to be prevented from planting fruit trees, but there was a possibility that the number of fruit trees, on dwarf rooting stock, planted on each allotment could be limited.

Willows Hedgehog Rescue

Jayne from Willows Hedgehog Rescue joined us and gave a very interesting talk about hedgehogs their history, habits and sadly threats to their future.

You can find out lots of information on Willows website www.willowshedgehogrescue.co.uk

Roland asked about a hedgehog family he had visiting his garden for the first time, Jayne said numbers had increased due to a mild winter last year.

Penny was asked to add a link to Willows from the NCEF website.

Graham thanked Jayne for coming along.

Local Explorer Walks

Roland is going to lead our Christmas walk this year. The 'Winter Mystery Boulder Walk' will start on 14th December at 1.30pm at Selly Oak Park.

New Friends Groups

It was reported that a new friends group was starting at Bromwich Wood. Roland lives quite close to Hill Top Park and thought there was scope for a new friends group.

Ranger Service and District Parks Manager Reports

Parks Manager

Sue informed the meeting that the funding bid to build a new community/ changing room facility in Cofton Park had been re-written and submitted, in the hope it would now be successful.

The work being undertaken in Manor Farm Park is underway and the Merritts Brook Greenway is nearly complete.

Graham asked if it would be possible to get together and do some work on updating the Constituency Open Space Action Plan, Sue was happy to do this.

Lynne asked about the planned cycle hubs. Sue said this is still ongoing and there may be a need to recruit volunteers to get the hubs running.

Roland asked how parks were cleansed. Do they have a litter/rubbish blitz from time to time? Sue said no they should have regular care. Lynn suggested Roland get friendly with his local parks team as talking regularly really helps.

It was suggested that BPN be invited to an NCEF meeting. Graham agreed to pass on an invitation.

Penny thought it might be a nice idea to recognise all the hard work our parks team do with a district parks person award.

Rangers

Adam was pleased to say there had been no new cases of Phytophthora ramorum at the Lickeys, but there were now cases of ash dieback (chalara fraxinea) in rectory Park.

There had been lots of corporate groups at the Lickey Hills since the last meeting the number of school's groups visiting were growing too.

Due to the financial restraints being imposed staff had received 188 notices. It was thought cuts were most likely to ground maintenance; chiefly sports fields, pitches and greens.

Roland asked if the funding coming from Coca-Cola was able to be used indirectly in parks. It was explained that this funding was only part of the Active Parks initiative.

Friends Groups and BOSF Updates

BOSF:

Sarah encouraged everyone to sign the ongoing parks petition. She also asked NCEF members if they would join her at the Northfield district committee on 30th January, to support parks and their importance to everyone. To show how much friends groups added to the parks budget, Sarah asked groups to let her know how much funding they were attracting.

The idea of young friends groups was being explored

Sarah and Sue mentioned 'The Big Hoot' an arts project placing owls around the city next summer.

Leyhill Park:

Graham said the group were looking forward to the completion of the new Merritts Brook Greenway. Were awaiting construction of the new cycle hub in the park and continuing with both Active Parks and general conservation work.

TVC:

Stefan said they were looking at more growing spaces there are at present 9 and there will be 2 more soon. They are now working with the Helping Britain Bloom project and have an orchards officer. There will be 6 orchards planted this winter and 6 next, it is hoped that this will lead to training opportunities.

Rea Valley Conservation Group:

Roland said the group continued to work on the site at Coley's Lane. He had seen roach on this section of the Rea sometime ago and hoped they were going to survive. They also had a couple of fallen trees.

Balaam's Wood LNR

Penny said the River Rea project was going well and the group planned to apply for more funding. They were holding their first Wassail in January at the community orchard and continued with Active Parks. The 'Woodland Workout' had made a great difference to the amount of holly in Balaam's Wood.

Kings Norton Park:

Lynn thanked BCC Parks, Trees for Life and the local school for helping the friends group replace the avenue of trees in the park. Lynn said they were looking forward to the canal festival this summer and were interested in setting up some events and activities that were connected in the build up to the festival. Chris suggested a 'blue gym' the Canal & River Trust's version of a green gym.

The Fields Millennium Green

Maggie said they continued to work with the National Trust. As part of this project they were holding a session on 20th December to recruit young rangers.

Friends of Kings Norton Nature Reserve

Amanda said work continued at the nature reserve and there were new volunteers. They had sadly lost a few trees; however they were developing the wetland area and had a new scrape which Adam said was an ideal habitat for Great Crested Newts.

Northfield Ecocentre

Ann said they were looking for new tree planting areas. They had also been granted funding to do forest schools with families on their Masfield Road site. The urban harvest had gone very

well and the juice and other harvest products were available in local shops. Cooking workshops had also taken place.

Graham and Lynn both asked if Northfield Ecocentre would come to local events.

There was no other business, so Graham thanked Northfield Ecocentre for hosting the meeting and wished everyone a Merry Christmas. Meeting Closed.

Next Meeting:

Friday 20th March, 2pm, Lickey Hills Country Park

Meeting Dates 2015:

Friday 20th March, 2pm, Lickey Hills Country Park

Friday 19th June, 2pm (venue to be arranged)

Friday 18th September, 2pm (venue to be arranged)

Friday 11th December, noon (venue to be arranged)