

Northfield Constituency Environmental Forum



Oddingly Hall, Friday 28th March 2pm.

Present: Graham Andrews (Chair), Penny Moore (Secretary), Amanda Cadman (Vice- Chair) Jill Harvey (Lickey Hills Society), Adam Noon (Ranger, Lickey Hills Country Park), Sue Amey (District Parks Manager), Chris Blythe (TCV), Maggie Sweet (The Fields Millennium Green & BOSF Chair), Clive Sweet (The Fields Millennium Green), Karen Creavin (BCC), Leanne Youngson (Active Parks Co-ordinator), Lynn Horsnett (Friends of Kings Norton Park), John Rumble (FLAG), Ian Baker (Bournville Beekeepers), Daniel Bryson-Peart (Friends of Manor Farm Park), Anne Dasgupta (Northfield EcoCentre), Denise Meredith (Friends of Cofton Park)

Apologies: Cllr Steve Bedser, Norma Boyd (FLAG)

Welcome:

Graham welcomed everyone to the meeting

Minutes:

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

Matters Arising:

(i) BOSF Insurance

Maggie was pleased to inform everyone that friends group could now access free public liability insurance through the Birmingham Open Spaces Forum. Each member group could take up the offer, which would start this spring, by contacting Sarah Royal. Groups can also take up optional extras such as cover for larger events or the use of power tools for a fee.

(ii) Pocket Handkerchief Spaces

Roland said that it was possible some of these small spaces around Northfield its town centre and bypass may be added into the wider redevelopment of Northfield.

(ii) North Worcestershire Golf Course

Graham informed the meeting the course had now been sold, the developers are saying they want to keep it as a golf course; whilst they seek planning permission and consult.

(iii) Waterside Care

Graham is to meet Lee Copplestone to look at the River Rea feeder streams. Graham also mentioned the 'Great Litter Count' he said data was being collected concerning brand names and how big brands are represented in litter.

Roland said he would like to see sponsored litter picks, with sponsorship by the tonne collected.

Clive commented how the queues at Lifford Lane tip had increased with householders sitting for up to an hour waiting to take their green waste.

As groups did considerable amounts of litter picking Chris said in some areas free green waste sacks were available. Karen felt BCC should supply rubbish sacks to friends groups and asked we write asking for them to be supplied. Graham agreed to do this.

Waterside Care offer free insurance and everyone felt it was expedient for groups to continue to take advantage of the WsC insurance as well as the BOSF insurance.

Finances

Amanda reported our financial situation remained the same with around £650 in the bank.

Local Explorer Walks

Amanda and Lynn set a date for their Kings Norton Local Explorer Walk, Friday 25th April, this would have a history theme and start from St Nicolas Place.

Building numbers on the walks was discussed. Karen said this was a universal problem and things that seemed helpful were tapping into existing groups and organisations and adding something extra such as afternoon tea to appeal to the wider community. She also suggested we visit GP surgeries, schools and become part of local networks.

Denise suggested involving libraries and facebook networking. Roland asked do walks need an objective? Karen offered to put us in contact with a walks co-ordinator.

Be Active Parks

Karen and Leanne gave an update on how Active Parks was being rolled out to 50 parks and open spaces. Karen said the roll of leisure centres was changing and those that remain (12 in total) will be run by the private sector as a business.

The pilot project had been very well received and attracted a ministerial visit and there was also now a dvd showing the project in action. Karen said the project may be about to get sponsorship.

Lynn asked if the activity had to be delivered in the park, Leanne said as long as they were in the park area or visited the park it was ok.

Leanne said the Active Parks launch would now take place on 31st May

Big Birmingham Bikes

This is a new initiative to get more people cycling again. There were to be a substantial number of bikes for long-term loan and a network of cycle hubs across the city. Leanne said that affording a bike was a big barrier for disadvantaged residents, being able to have free loan of a bike was a big step forward in getting more people active. The project would also include led rides and bike maintenance sessions.

Roland asked what the implications would be of many more people cycling on our roads.

Anne informed the meeting that the cycle hub at the Northfield EcoCentre is now up and running. Amanda asked if the bikes would all have bells as there were still cyclists who didn't use one, yes all bikes would have bells.

Penny asked if people would be encouraged to get bikes they weren't using out of the shed and get active or even have a bike amnesty and hand in these bikes for public use. Karen said this may happen in the future.

Bournville Beekeepers

Ian kindly came along and gave the meeting a fascinating talk about bee keeping. He and his fellow beekeeper Colin had hives at home, on an allotment and were now working with the Bournville Village Trust; who had given them an area of land to place colonies.

Roland asked if BCC planted the right kind of trees for bees. Ian said that trees such as ornamental cherries provided no nectar. The good news was the community orchards our groups were planting helped provide nectar.

Maggie asked if they were in touch with Trees for Life.

Ian was thanked and invited to come to future meetings. More about Bournville beekeepers was online

<http://www.bvbeeks.co.uk/>

Group News:

The groups then gave updates of activities, events and news.

Lickey Hills Society: Jill reported the society were at present involved with Active Parks, litter picks and walks.

Balaam's Wood LNR: Penny reported the friends had finished planting their community orchard, been FIN (Freshwater Invertebrate Network) training and had an Easter Egg Hunt on 19th April.

The Fields Millennium Green: Maggie reported they had planted hedging trees from Woodland Trust, had been coppicing, were working with the National Trust and had received an NIA (Nature Improvement Area) grant.

Friends of Kings Norton Nature Reserve: Amanda reported that they had also been FIN training, that they were creating pathways at Wychall, that the meadow had been sold to a local stables and the group would be holding a 'Welcome to Spring' event on 17th May.

Friends of Cofton Park: Denise reported that they would be holding their AGM on 17th April and were also involved with Active Parks, had held a Woodland Trust trees planting and were having a balsam bash!

Friends of Ley Hill Park: Graham reported the group were meeting Waterside Care, holding a litter pick and had been dead hedging.

Friends of Kings Norton Park: Lynn reported there had been lots of link ups for the friends groups and that they had a new notice board, picnic benches and were taking part in Active Parks. They had also been FIN trained.

Friends of Manor Farm Park: Daniel reported that they were trying to establish forest schools, were planting areas for vegetables, the orchard was now improving and no more trees had died. The swales had been landscaped, the group were holding a dawn chorus walk and their AGM was on 13th July.

Northfield EcoCentre: Anne reported that the cycle hub was now active and there were group cycle rides, some of them themed rides taking place. They were also involved with forest schools.

Rea Valley Conservation Group: Roland reported they were still working at Coley's Lane twice a month, but the group was quite small. Adam offered to try and arrange a corporate volunteering group to do a workday to help with the maintenance and practical work.

Sue Amey (District Parks Manager): Sue gave the meeting an update regarding local open spaces. She had been working on joining up the cycleways between, Leyhill Park, Bournville and Manor Farm Park. Sue had also been working with Lynn on a waterway festival planned for 2015 in Kings Norton.

Denise had a contact that did flowers and castles painting. Maggie said food and drink were definite money spinners and Roland suggested they contact Tony Fox and Cannon Hill Park friends who had organised something similar.

Adam Noon (Lickey Hills Ranger Hub): Adam reported he had become involved with the Brum Bats project to survey bats all over the area. He would be checking many of our sites for bat numbers and activity, but there was still a need for more volunteers. If anyone was interested they should get in touch.

Any Other Business:

BVSC

Graham reported that the BVSC had grants available with the priorities being children's health, smoking and homelessness.

Graham thanked everyone for coming along. Meeting closed at 4.30pm.

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday 24th June, 6pm, Lickey Hills Country Park

* An informal pot luck picnic will take place at 5pm. Please join us and bring something to share.

