

Northfield Constituency Environmental Forum



Minutes

Meeting Held:

Greenlands Social Club, Friday 18th September 2015, 2pm.

Present: Graham Andrews (Chair), Penny Moore (Secretary), Amanda Cadman (Treasurer/ Vice-chair), Roland Kedge (Rea Valley Conservation Group), Penny Marriott (Lickey Hills Ranger Hub), Amy Watson (ExtraCare), Sarah Nokes (LPAP), Lee Copplestone (Waterside Care), Jenny Peevers (LPAP), Phil Beardmore (Northfield Ecocentre)

Apologies: Denise Meredith (Friends of Cofton Park), Sue Amey (Constituency Parks Manager), Maggie Sweet (The Fields Millennium Green), Clive Sweet (The Fields Millennium Green), Daniel Bryson-Pearl (The Friends of Manor Farm Park), Chris Blythe (BCV), Jill Harvey (Lickey Hills Society), Cllr Peter Griffiths, Sarah Royal (BOSF).

Meeting started 2.10pm

Welcome

Graham welcomed everyone to the meeting and accepted apologies.

Minutes:

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

Matters Arising:

(i) Turves Green Dingle:

Roland said due to the length of time fly-tipping had been building up on site it could cost a six figure sum to clear! However he had been talking to some interested locals and they planned to highlight the plight of the dingle with leaflets and a facebook page. Amy offered help with leaflets and Lee also offered support.

Financial Report

Finances remain the same around £650. Roland is now working with a Cambridge professor and progressing towards placing a plaque on the boulder (next to the Great Stone Pub). We are helping with the cost of the plaque.

Longbridge Public Arts Project

Sarah informed the meeting that since its inception in 2013 there have been nine artists in residence and many different art works around Longbridge including the very successful Longbridge Light Festival.

Jenny explained she is working on a project that fits in very well with our aims, to get the open spaces around Longbridge well used and busy with activities. We have long expressed a wish to start a friends group for Austin Park.

Amanda felt we should encourage residents to make the most of parks on their doorstep. Graham thought Longbridge should be selling itself as the gateway to Birmingham. He suggested an LPAP sculpture trail with an emphasis on Longbridge's history; which he felt would have a particular interest to older residents.

Graham and Amanda both commented that all friends groups are different with no set model, they suggested Jenny contact BOSF. Penny suggested a few activities take place to build up a working relationship with St Modwen. Ranger Penny offered her help with any relevant activities. Jenny said she was planning to do pop up activities; which was supported by all.

Walks

King's Norton Library has asked for some more Local Explorer Walks leaflets, Amanda kindly agreed to deliver these.

Living Streets are holding a walk in Digbeth on 21st September.

As Longbridge is now changing quickly it was felt it would be nice to have a new Longbridge walk on the NCEF website. Penny will look into this.

Sarah said there was an alternative history walking tour taking place around Longbridge on 30th September.

Development of New Friends Groups

There had been no further progress with setting up a group for Daffodil Park. Denise has taken a break, but she hopes to reform the Friends of Cofton Park in the new year.

Update Ranger Service

Ranger Penny said work was underway to improve the old mill site. The site will have a new open classroom and raised beds, other than this new project the rangers were carrying on with business as usual. There is also a new burner at the Lickeys that disposed of cut down timber.

Roland asked that we record our thanks to Adam Noon as he is leaving the ranger service to join Solihull Council. Adam has given so much time and support to our groups everyone present echoed these sentiments.

Future Plans, Activities and New Partners

ExtraCare

Amy Watson came along from Extracare who are building a new retirement village next to Austin Park. Amy gave an overview of the new village that will be completed by 2017. The apartments are a mix of private accommodation and rented properties. The village is one of five

being built by the charitable trust in partnership with Birmingham City Council. Amy's aim is to create links with local groups and make the village a thriving part of the wider community.

The new village will have small green spaces and Amy would like to see these accessible to non residents too. Phil said that Ecocentre would support creating a green infrastructure, they would be happy to help with sensory gardens and wildlife projects.

Amy will have an office on site next spring in the meantime you can find out more about the retirement village on youtube.

Keep Britain Tidy

Graham informed the meeting about an initiative called "Clean for the Queen"; which takes place next year to celebrate her majesty's 90th Birthday. You can read about this and register an event online with Keep Britain Tidy.

Park Watch

Graham raised the issue of vandalism in our parks and how low priority this is seen by our neighbourhood police teams. Graham felt it important that something be done to change the situation ie setting up Park Watch schemes. It was suggested we invite a police representative to the next meeting, Graham to action this.

Friends Groups Updates

Leyhill Park:

Graham said sadly that there had been some vandalism in the park this summer. There had also been a problem with dog poop and even worse trees had been damaged by despicable dog owners hanging there dogs from tree branches to supposedly strengthen their jaws!

Unfortunately 300 new whips had been mown down by BPN (Birmingham Parks and Nature). On a happier note the friends group are at present setting up their winter conservation programme.

Rea Valley Conservation Group:

Roland said the group continued to work on the site at Coley's Lane and had now replaced their evening meetings with afternoon teas.

Balaam's Wood LNR

Penny said the group had sadly lost one of their much loved founder members, Roy James, recently. As a memorial the friends had built a new bridge in the woodland 'Roy's Bridge'. The group are also buying a bench for their community orchard and building an entrance archway.

Friends of King's Norton Nature Reserve

Amanda informed the meeting that FKNNR member and NCEF friend Phil Evans was recovering from major surgery; everyone sent him their best wishes.

The friends were continuing with their 'Tuesday Workout' and may be helping out at The Fields Millennium Green in future. The group were concerned about the state of the trip rails on Wychall Road and there had been a fire on site in the summer.

Waterside Care

Lee informed the meeting that Waterside Care has a new officer, Les Warren, he will join Lee and Louise making three officers in the Midlands.

Waterside Care is also working with local groups to see how their management plans are working on the ground. Roland asked about the changes to WsC insurance, Lee said it remained the same the changes just cut down on bureaucracy.

Northfield Ecocentre

Phil said that Urban Harvest was taking place. Graham asked if it was well supported. Phil said more volunteers were needed to pick fruit. Anyone can donate fruit from their gardens etc; Amanda asked if they needed volunteers to help with the cooking, yes but they weren't needed as much as fruit pickers. Ranger Penny asked if they were on twitter and offered to spread the word through the Lickey Hills twitter feed.

Ecocentre are also looking for a venue to continue their cycle instruction sessions through the winter. They need somewhere that is floodlit. Roland commented that Birmingham's cycling infrastructure is not good! Phil said that they were to be consulted on a plan for green travel districts.

Any Other Business

No other business was raised.

Graham thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Next Meeting:

Annual General Meeting:

Friday 11th December, 12 noon, LPAP space (opposite Longbridge Station, next to Queen's Fish and Chips)