

Northfield Constituency Environmental Forum **December 2011 at the Lickey Hills Visitor Centre**

Present; Amanda Cadman, Penny Moore, Steve Foley, Lesley Pattenson, Maggie Sweet, Clive Sweet, Roland Kedge, Geoff Ray, Ed Cook, SAS Taylor, Sue Amey, Jill Harvey, Adam Noon, Steve Hinton, Lynn Horsnett, Graham Andrews,

Apologies: Richard Burden, MP. Cllr Bedser. Joe Hayden. Daniel Bryson-Pearl.

L.E.W. LAUNCH

Amanda welcomed everyone to the official launch of the Local Explorer Walks leaflet. She thanked Ed Cook, for all his help in producing the leaflet; St. Modwens, who had helped so much in the printing costs; Karen Jerwood for help and support; and of course the members: Maggie, Penny, Geoff, Amanda, Graham, of the NCEF who had actually given their time, researched the routes, had worked so hard on the style, and content of the leaflet.

Amanda asked if all members could help in distributing the leaflet as widely as possible around the constituency. **Action All**

Geoff Ray, then outlined the background to the production of the leaflet explaining that the main purpose was to encourage people of all ages to exercise and enjoy the fresh air and open spaces of Northfield at a pace to suit themselves. Big area maps are always difficult, but with Ed's help we have designed a lovely leaflet that covers the whole area on the large-scale, and also each walk in detail. There are fuller details available on the NCEF website. A big thank you to Penny for designing, implementing and maintaining our website. If anyone has any additional walks, they would wish to add, please contact Penny. <http://www.ncef.btck.co.uk>. We hope that the leaflet will make people more aware of the walks available and go out and try them. The aim in the future is to further expand the leaflet, both inside and outside Northfield. Cycle rides, for example, along the canal paths and cycle ways, and there are lots of options to link up with other walks and other active outdoor groups. Hopefully other constituencies can do the same across Birmingham.

It was noted that "QR code" can be used with a phone.

Ed Cook, was, thanked for all his unpaid time and effort and presented with a small gift as a thank you from all the members of NCEF.

Roland added that at the new Longbridge development the old Rover road will be converted to a cycleway. For more information, please ask local councillors or check the web site.

<http://www.longbridgebirmingham.co.uk/grand-plan.html>

LEW Leaflet distribution.

Amanda asked for all member groups to help distribute leaflets in their locality. Doctors surgeries, community halls, churches, libraries, and any other public places

The website would web link to local schools in the area so, staff and pupils can be aware. It would also be a great help if any members who have contacts with their local schools would put some leaflets into the schools. **Action All**

There is a stock of leaflets available at the Lickey's Centre via the Rangers. Just contact them if you need some more.

Will all members who put leaflets out in the community please let Penny know where they are, and then she will post it on the website. It will save people going to the same place twice.

Action All

Amanda was asked to put out a press release and subsequently we have had good media coverage. News reports have appeared in the media covering the launch of the LEW Leaflet, with a photograph, in the Birmingham Mail, B31 website, and the Bromsgrove Standard.

Sue Amy volunteered to put a link to the Birmingham City Council website. To publicise the leaflet.

Action sue Amey

All present were thanked for attending the launch and making it such a success.

Annual Public Meeting Of the NCEF

Amanda formally opened the proceedings for the NCEF annual public meeting.

The welcome, apologies, and launch of the leaflet had already been covered, and so it was straight on to the election of officers. Amanda asked if anyone was willing or wanted to stand in any of the official roles. There were no volunteers.

Amanda asked if the current officers would be prepared to continue in their roles, and they all agreed that they would. Amanda was asked if she would be prepared to stand as chairman for another year and she said that she would. A vote was taken and the following officers were unanimously elected.

Chair Amanda Cadman	proposed Lesley Patterson, seconded Geoff Ray
Sec Graham Andrews	Proposed Maggie Sweet, seconded Lesley Patterson.
Vice-chair Penny Moore	proposed Amanda Cadman seconded Maggie Sweet

Chairs report 2011

The NCEF has met 7 times this year. 4 times as a formal NCEF body, and 3x informally. The Local Explorer Walks had taken up a lot of the forums time this year, and thanks once again to everyone who contributed. Progress had been made with tree felling at Coleys Lane following great supportive action from local councillors.

There is disappointment that other friends groups haven't taken shape, for example Cofton Park or West Heath Park, or Holly Moor. There were many reasons why this hasn't happened, but it would be nice to see some progress. Sue Amy volunteered to discuss with the Ward support Officer West Heath Park, and whether Bromford Housing may be able to assist in some way. **Action Sue Amey** NCEF had reviewed the park's action plan and made some suggestions about making it more forward-looking and user-friendly.. Sue Amy replied that it was still being rolled out across Birmingham to a new format and this could all be implemented in a few months. Amanda thanked the support she had we had received from the Parks managers and Rangers, and felt they were a much undervalued tool in the city's armoury.

1. Minutes of previous meeting 15 August, held at Oddingley Hall.

Confirmed as a true and accurate record.

2. Matters Arising.

The Northfield Constituency Strategic Partnership has not met for nine months.

Concern is expressed by NCEF on the reduction in numbers of the Rangers. It was suggested that member groups contact their local councillors or contact Birmingham Open Spaces Forum and make this view known.

Funding update: Some expenditure had been needed on the leaflets, but details will be reported at the next meeting. **Action Amanda**

The equipment and knowledge database hasn't moved forward since the last meeting.

Development of Friends groups is still on the agenda

Sue Amy, then talked about Poppi: Poppi is rolling out, and it positively confirms jobs are being completed. Jobs can be managed and monitored by Performance Officers. In rolling out Poppi, the whole team has to be trained in this and it clearly takes time. It's a massive system, and there is a big bedding in process to be completed. Business processes are being recorded, but it's a huge task. Staffing levels; there is an ongoing consultation. **It is recommended members give their views** to BCC, via the website Consultation document. <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/> by Jan 8th 2012.

Action All

Sue explained, while concerns over reductions are valid. The whole of the council budget is being cut and parks must take their share. Sue confirmed that the parks, like every division now has income targets. There will be income available from the Barnes Hill/ ASDA, redevelopment. There are some monies available to parks from corporate finance, so some monies are being made available for fixed assets.

3. Reports from member groups.

Friends of Kings Norton Park and Playing Fields.

Working to improve infrastructure: Playing fields, car park in the spring and play facility are being improved. Funding for the rejuvenation of the Civic Gardens in the park may include a mini orchard. The mowing regime has changed this year, and some tree planting is now taking place.

The AGM is booked on 14 January 2012

Park watch-Neighbourhood watch for parks-is making available key contact numbers for members to phone if there is an issue arises in the park.

Friends of Manor Farm Park.

Funding has enabled five noticeboards to be put up in the park. These have been a noticeable success and member numbers have increased. The Secretary, Daniel, sent his apologies, but he has been working hard on developing the new website, which is now up and running. FOMFP has done a survey of all its members and had a 128 responses its purpose is to identify members priorities. Activities have included a bat walk, tree thinning, stream clearing, and litter picks. Currently discussing a wild flower patch in the great Meadow.

FOMP then led a brief open discussion on how best NCEF members felt subscriptions could be collected. There did not appear to be an easy answer. Suggestions ranged from flag it up in the newsletters to actually sending someone out to collect monies, it was noted that a lot of the Friends groups don't charge.

Millennium Green.

Working with the National trust on woodland clearance. Looking at a national play area similar to what they've done at Clent. Magical nature was very successful.

Lickey Hill Society

This is slightly different set up to a friends group, in that the area of interest stretches from Bromsgrove, via Rubery to the M 40 and not just the Lickey hills.

A community orchard event has been organised with Worcestershire.

Litter pick and style repairs have been carried out on the Lickey Hills.

A booklet of walks around the Lickeys country park is available at the visitors centre.

Rea Valley Conservation Group.

RVCG finally obtained a licence to operate in September for Coleys Lane.

The tree felling took place and opened up an area previously covered by Willow. Willow wood is available for anyone who wants it. There is now a clear way down to the river.

Daffodil Park has had a follow-up litter pick where 22 people turned up. Hopefully they will be able to form a friends group.

The Heritage boards along the Rea are in a poor state. The suggestion is to move them, and replace the information on them. The RVCG are going to try for community chest funding in February.

It has been suggested that a litter pick takes place in Digbeth Brook at the back of Turves green School. The Brook is choked with rubbish. This is a mammoth task and has health and safety implications. RVCG are wondering if Veolia could be involved and sponsor the litter pick

Ballams Wood

The new noticeboards and panels have been very successful so far have not been vandalised.

Safe haven are working with us.

Benches have been repaired and are still in place.

Our AGM is due shortly.

We have been using orange rock core volunteers.

Kings Norton Local Nature Reserve.

An orchard planting is being planned. Two new information panels are being put up and so far have not been vandalised. Members have attended tree felling course at the Lickey's.

Friends of Leyhill Park

The recent AGM went ahead very successfully.

Waterside Care have walked the site and made some offers, for tools, insurance, help etc which other members might be interested in. Subsequently friends of Kings Norton Park have been sent details

Ley hill Café has sadly had to close.

The new bog has been dry all summer, but is now beginning to fill with water. Daffodil bulbs have been planted in the park, with year two of the local school. Litter picks have been carried out with plans to plant more bulbs at the entrances, trim hedges, and carry out general maintenance in the park this spring.

BOSF

The formal usage survey with B- active is available to all members, and quite a few members are already filling in and sending it back. It is felt that it probably grossly underestimates the usage in the park from such groups as schoolchildren in play areas, football teams, transient joggers and walkers etc. However, it is a very good start

4. Any Other Business.

1. Walking Forum.

A presentation from Run England has been seen and is targeting non-runners, who can train as leaders, at a cost of £90.

2 Community Orchards,

Leslie asked if anyone had experience of community orchards? the reply was that best practice seemed to be to get the community involved or it will all fall apart.

The question was asked is a park the right place for an orchard? Experience to date suggests that vandalism and theft is variable across Northfield Parks. Maggie said that the orchard at Millennium Park was planted in a neglected area, and so they cleared the area, pruned back undergrowth and planted the orchard. They had signed up with Urban Harvest, who helped to pick fruit and distributed it around the community. Amanda said she had some concerns over vandalism and theft in their area.

Lickey Hill's said that theirs was more community village orientated and they had linked it with involvement of local people and so far have been a great success .

5. Date of next meeting.

Friday March 30th 1400hrs at the Eco Centre

(53 Church Road, Northfield, Birmingham, West Midlands, B31 2LB)

<http://www.northfieldecocentre.org/home>