

## **Northfield Constituency Environmental Forum**

15<sup>th</sup> August 2011.

Present: Jill Harvey, Lyn Horsnett, Penny Moore, Maggie Sweet, Sue Amey, Amanda Cadman, Geoff Ray, Graham Andrews

### **1. Chairman's Introduction**

Amanda Cadman welcomed Jill Harvey, Chairman of the Lickey Hills Society, to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Luke Pearson, Steve Bedser, Peter Douglas Osborn, the Park Rangers, Sue Barton.

### **2. Minutes of meeting held on 9 May 2011**

The minutes were agreed as being an accurate representation of the previous meeting.

### **3. Matters arising**

No particular matters arising, but there followed an open discussion on youth engagement around Northfield, reflected how much members appreciate the police's hard work in this area and in trying to become an active part of the community. Many initiatives have been launched for example, Safe Haven. NCEF members present were very keen to show their support for this Police community work, but were concerned that the recent cutbacks may well have a negative affect, to the detriment of Northfield.

The national Green Spaces conference, co-hosted by Birmingham Open Spaces Forum, takes place on Saturday 17th September at Austin Court, Birmingham. Tickets can be booked online,

### **4. Financial Report**

No change to the finances.

### **5. Local Explorer Walks leaflet**

Ed Cook is now working for Be-Active. The Forum greatly appreciate all the time and effort Ed has put into working with us on producing these walking maps. Mike Murray, on behalf of St Modwen, had offered to print 10,000 copies, and Ed has sent Mike the final version. However, the Forum did not know what the latest position was with Mike. Penny was asked if she would be kind enough to follow up to ensure they are being printed.

**Action PM**

The link to Ed's final version no longer works from our website. Penny is asked to talk to Ed to see how we might be able to get a copy onto the website.

**Action PM**

7 out of the 10 walks have now been put onto the website by Penny although they are not yet on display to the public. Penny was thanked for all the time and effort she has put into the website.

Penny has asked for more photos of the routes from

**Jeff Graham, Maggie and Amanda**

The website is quite capable of taking additional walks and if anyone has a favourite walk within Northfield or very close to it so that it links in with the existing walks then please submit them, in a similar format, to Penny.

**Action All**

Note Street Maps can be used to show the route. The web address is for our site is

<http://www.ncef.btck.co.uk>. A PR launch for the walks were suggested once the leaflets are printed.

The eco-centre was a hosting possibility, or indeed St Modwen's offices. **PM to investigate**

### **6. Database of Equipment and skills**

Amanda is working on a spreadsheet. Amanda to send the questionnaire to Jill Harvey and Lynn Horsnett.

**Action AC**

## **7. Development of 'Friends of' Groups.**

**West Heath.** All attempts to generate a friends group for West Heath Park have so far been unsuccessful. Oddingley Hall is ideally placed but there is a lot of antisocial behaviour in the park and this may be putting people off.

**Cofton Park.** The Parks Department wish to redevelop the sports facilities, cricket and football, on this park. A consultation process begins soon. **Jill** offered to put it in the local parish magazine such that local residents will be aware of the consultation. Bournville College have expressed an interest in getting involved with the redevelopment of Cofton Park.

## **8. Report of Park Rangers**

**Fairfax Road** play area has been handed over to Parks. **Kings Norton Playing Fields** car park is being refurbished and the refurbishment design of the play area in **Kings Norton Park** is in progress. A new site at **Nimmings Farm Longbridge** has been taken over by Parks, a new play area is being built at **Mill Lane**, and a new play area is planned at **Shenley Fields**. At **Lickey Hills** there is a new bench overlooking Cofton hill. Work has been timetabled for the pools behind the Rose and Crown at Rose Hill. The Group is to apply for funding under "Your Heritage", to bring these pools back up to standard. The travellers have been an issue in Northfield and Edgbaston constituencies all summer and take up valuable funding shifting them and repairing the damage they do. *Phytophthora* is still being monitored, but is not spreading on the Lickey Hills. It is likely that we will never be able to eradicate it, merely keep it under control. The new Victoria Common friends group is looking to plant fruit trees in the lower part of the park. It was noted that across all friends groups there is a scarcity and pressure on the park ranger service which is now having an effect on our groups.

Taking advice from our inputs to the Constituency Parks and Open Spaces Action Plan, Sue Amey is currently revising the document to make it more forward-looking. She agreed to send a copy of the new Plan to Amanda and Graham so it can be forwarded to the group. **Action SA**  
If individual friends groups want their Bill of Quantity it is available from the Parks Department.

## **9. Grounds maintenance and monitoring**

The annual conservation cut should happen automatically at this time of year. If it hasn't happened in the next few weeks, then contact the Parks Department. Grass cutting should not scalp the grass, Cllr Eddie Freeman is taking a big interest in this. If you notice your Park grass is scalped then report it to the Parks Department or Eddie Freeman. PDA s, have now been issued to all parks employees. However, NCEF members have still yet to see POPI in action.

## **10. Items of report from members groups and any other business**

**Balaam's Wood.** The Friends are working with Safe Haven and the police. The cycleway is being changed to help cyclists, and in so doing they have re-sited the notice boards, which seems to have created quite a bit of interest.

**Lickey Hills Society.** The group have had a balsam bash, and they are replacing old stiles. There is a litter pick planned later in the year. The old quarry site now has an information board in place. A booklet explaining the quarry site and its geology is available at the Lickey Hills Visitor Centre.

**Fields Millennium Green.** Trees are being thinned out on the green and coppicing will take place in September. The Friends are planning to hold a Magical Nature event on the Millennium Green on 22 October, and asked for involvement from other groups.

**Kings Norton Local Nature Reserve.** Some benches had been vandalised. The scrapes are dry. New interpretation panels are in place, and there is funding for two more. A training/refresher session on tree felling is being planned.

**Rea Valley Conservation Group.** The Coleys Lane trees are now being felled.

**Kings Norton Park.** Storage space is being looked at in the park and an application for £5000 has gone in. A Parks Watch project is being developed, together with other Kings Norton green spaces – and the organisers are looking to work with local schools in the area. The shrub beds are looking good, and a bog area is being developed with help from the Princes Trust.

**Ley Hill Park.** The fence at the bus stop, requires repairing. **Action SA**  
There is evidence of knotweed in Meadowbrook which has now been reported. The bog that was built in the park is currently not a bog due primarily to the dry weather.

#### **AOB**

It was suggested that we might invite Severn Trent and British Waterways to future meetings to find out exactly what their plans are in Northfield. **Action AC**

Amanda has had a meeting with the Wildlife Trust, who are interested in developing wetland areas across Birmingham, and in particular along the Rea in Northfield.

**11. Date of next meeting: 5th December. This will be the AGM.**

***This meeting will take place in the School Room at the Lickey Hills Visitor Centre.***