

Friends of Keston Common (incorporating Ravensbourne Open Space and Padmall Wood)

7.30 pm
20 September 2017

Jubilee Room, Keston Village Hall

Present

Please refer to secretary of details

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

LH welcomed everyone to the meeting

2. Apologies for absence

Please refer to secretary of details

3. Matters Arising from the AGM in March

5.4 re. fallen tree by the Victorian gate : attention to this has been delayed since the necessary vehicular access was not possible during the summer months

7. management plan for the Common awaited

4. Chairman's Report (LH)

4.1 Committee News

- spent some time preparing for Countryside Day and raised about £600, a record - about £170 from the adult tombola, £65 from the children's tombola, £85 from plant sales, £20 from cakes and cards, £ 35 in donations and £ 220 from stall holder donations
- successful in submission for a Green Flag Award; the assessor mentioned a lack of information on the site; a report is awaited
- various articles have been submitted for the Keston Parish Magazine
- have continued to update Facebook and the website
- the committee agreed to purchase a tree popper – the middle sized one

4.2 idverde/forum update

- a lot of staff changes recently : Pherenice Worsey-Buck and Stephen Tickner have left; Sue Holland has become Senior Community Manager and Ian Wright Community Manager; Steven Lofting has taken over from IW as Biodiversity Advisor. FH asked for clarification about SL's position - LH confirmed that he is on a secondment from the RSPB
- idverde will run two training courses : 9th November on dead hedge laying and another on 16 January on living hedge laying

Action: see LH if interested

- LH reported that Friends Forum has been active during the last six months : has produced bags; leaflets distributed to BEECHE and libraries for the general public; a First Aid training course has taken place and another is planned for 2 November

Action: see LH if interested

- social media and IT courses also in planning stage; have monitored renewal of insurance policies which run from June to June

- particular issues have been addressed :

Biggin Hill group had raised concern about *idverde* strimming around railings and tress with subsequent damage; issue resolved for Biggin Hill and Friends Forum pursuing the matter for the rest of the borough

Hoblingwell Wood Recreation Ground had a picnic bench stolen and the Forum is looking at how picnic benches can be installed more securely in parks

Friends group not happy about a planning application with regard to Library Gardens and potential loss of land

Whitehall Recreation group unable to proceed with new playground equipment, for which they have raised money, as they would also have to meet the cost of maintenance

Volunteer Development Plan produced by *idverde* to be reviewed

Memorial Bench procedure document also under review; concern expressed that the bench by the middle pond does not look sufficiently rustic

Involved in the Biodiversity Partnership which has produced posters to inform the public about rare and declining species

4.3 Questions / Answers

- FH raised the issue about vehicular access when the tree by the damaged gate is removed and stressed the need to avoid the orchid meadow

Action: LH to make sure that access is by the top meadow

- AGr asked whether memorial benches come with a maintenance grant; LH confirmed that this is managed by *idverde*; members were surprised to learn from FH that at BEECHE one of the tasks for the Friends was to be involved in sanding down memorial benches

5. Treasurer's Update (TD)

- TD reported a balance of almost £1500; he drew attention to three significant areas of income :

a legacy of £160 from someone who was very fond of Keston Common; this will fund the purchase of a tree, probably oak or beech

£250 from a film crew for use of the Common

£595 from Countryside Day

- AP suggested using one of the sapling trees we take up from the Common ; TD said this would have to be a healthy tree with a sufficient rootball
- expenditure has included a cheque to Cancer Research in memory of Alan Filby, a British Legion poppy wreath and a donation to the Parish Magazine
- pleased to report on three new members

6. Site Report (LH)

6.1 Completed Activities / Tasks

- activities have included six weeks on bracken pulling, five weeks on general maintenance, two on Keston bog and two on post and rail; the tree popper has been useful, especially for cherry laurel; have also done work on the valley mire, pond 3, hedgerows, coppicing, the timber yard, heathland and interpretation boards
- the meadows have been mown recently

6.2 Future Plans and Projects

- the Green Flag to be displayed on the flagpole, hopefully in the Westerham Road Car Park in the flower bed area; will need the consent of English Heritage. **Post meeting note:** the flag pole has been sited on the roadside by the entrance to the Westerham Road car-park, which is outside of the SAM.
- there is a proposal to put a granular footpath by the war memorial to allow wheelchair access, together with further traffic calming marks in Heathfield Road; a copy of the plan (dated 23.11.16) was distributed but it was agreed that further information is required
- work has been done to put revetments round the culvert in Fishponds Road but without the knowledge of idverde, FOKC or KVRA; this work was completed without permission from Natural England, is contrary to their rules for biodiversity and must be removed and the ground returned to its former state
- further remedial work is required between Ponds 2 & 3
- waterfall at Pond 1 also to be repaired
- a memorial tree to be arranged
- new whips required for the playground

7. AOB

- TH suggested the purchase of a remote camera to capture wildlife

Action: Committee to investigate

8. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 21 March at 7.30pm

9. History Talk

TD was warmly thanked for a most interesting talk on Sir Henry Heydon and Wickham Court