

Notes from the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group Meeting of 23rd March 2011, held in the Sherwood Room of Forest Town Miners Welfare

Introduction to the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG)

Lorraine introduced the Committee: Alyson (Acting Membership Secretary); Dave (Acting Vice Chair); Shlomo (Acting Secretary); Josh (Acting Treasurer); Lorraine (Acting Chair); (5)
Others present: Betty; Alan; Malcolm; Colin; Helen; Jeff; Geoff; Val; Jackie; Christine; Margaret; Rose; Ann; Michael; and Paul (15) (and Andy Lowe) (1) [21]
Apologies were received from: Pauline; Jodie; Heather; Dianne; and Megan (5)

Personal introductions

All present introduced themselves, and said something about their interests, which included:

- Particular interest in Spa Ponds
- Particular interests in birds and conservation
- Interested in the future of the local cemetery and associated wildlife corner
- Raise funds for bird boxes
- Garibaldi Forest (Wood)
- Concern about destruction of wildlife in and around Spa Ponds / Garibaldi Wood, including rubbish and motorbikes
- RSPB membership
- Concern about fly-tipping along Stinting Lane (between ASDA and caravan park)
- Enjoy walking (locally – e.g. around Spa Ponds, Clipstone) – important to keep walks and trails open, incl. disused railway lines, etc. – scope for more, e.g. Crown Farm Way
- Values the history of Spa Ponds, interested in learning more
- Worked with Terry marsh (animal rescue)
- Interested in wildlife and taking care of the animals and their habitats
- Frightened by motorbikes at Spa Ponds
- Would like to see kingfishers (Spa Ponds)
- Gorse habitat behind ASDA – in danger of development, worked with neighbours to oppose development, not satisfied with MDC's attitude, sees need to organise to be heard – gorse is now thriving, although kestrels have mostly gone, goldfinches and bullfinches also gone, sandmartins far fewer now Holly Wood has been developed, also concerned about foxes
- Wildlife photographer
- RSPCA member
- We can learn from Americans about protecting "wildernes"s areas, and promote tourism
- Feeding birds in the garden – notice sharp decline in numbers and types of birds – hawk cannot be the only reason
- Community garden and allotments – would benefit from more involvement from community to ensure allotments are used to full potential – make best use of the land (cultivation)
- Works with local young people
- Interested in keeping footpaths clean
- Remember how things used to be – concern about over-development, positive potential to connect with Center Parcs and ensure good walks and wildflower meadows for future generations, pride in village (village was more proud in the days of the pit) – Forest Town needs green and open spaces to retain "village feel"
- Loves nature – creatures, flora, fauna – concerned about over-development, new estates have chased skylarks away – a real concern for future generations (How will they know what the natural world is like?)
- Used to walk easily from Forest Town and Clipstone to Rainworth
- Enjoys walking to Vicar's Pond
- Wonder about connection between local schools and allotments – raises health and safety issues?
- New interest in walking, renewed interest in the local community

- Suggestion that we promote the Group via a One Stop magazine article!
- Nowhere to park car near Spa Ponds (apart from Whitegates)
- Locally “Spa Ponds” is know as Garibaldi Wood

Format of meetings

Lorraine explained how we anticipate a rhythm of open (public) meetings (which are intended to be loose, friendly, and open to all), and Committee meetings (intended to be “tighter” – agenda-led, still friendly, and open to members).

Constitution / Website

Copies of FTNCG Constitution were circulated. Electronic copies are now available from: http://foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG_Constitution%5B1Feb2011%5D.pdf. There are more FTCNG documents available from: <http://www.foresttown.net/index.php/nature/>, including Membership Forms at: http://foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG_Membership_Form_2011.pdf.

Committee Meeting Minutes / Business Plan

Copies of Minutes of inaugural meeting (1st February 2011) were circulated (now available from: http://foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG_Inaugural_Meeting.pdf); as well as Business Plan (now available from: http://foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG_Business_Plan_2011.pdf).

Fundraising

Lorraine called attention to the greetings cards that are available to help raise funds for the Group.

Guest Speaker

Andy Lowe introduced the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT) and spoke about Nature Conservation sites in and around Forest Town

- Nearly 2,00 members in Mansfield and Ashfield
- NWT in service level agreement with MDC to form Friends Groups
- One “Friends Group” to cover the whole of Forest Town
- Forest Town – lots of nature conservation interests in FT, e.g. Rushpool, Maun Valley, Spa Ponds, conical tip,
- Interested in involving Allotment Group and other groups to help strengthen the voice of the FTNCG
- NWT has experience linking young people and allotments
- FTNCG, once up and running, can connect with other Friends Groups in the area to share knowledge, experience and resources, e.g. fund raising experience, involving schools
- As a Group we can do as much or as little as we wish – from talking to hands on work
- NWT can offer free training opportunities
- Hope to draw in younger people
- NWT can learn from local people – NWT listens
- Potential for water meadows along the Maun
- Water features all the more special because of bunter sandstone / limestone
- Sustainable development must involve local people
- FTNCG can command more respect – with more members comes more influence
- NWT has plans for extending Spa Ponds
- FTNCG is a useful place to exchange information
- Raise awareness of Hedgerow Act – hedgerows have been undervalued
- NWT employ two planning officers, and local people can ask them questions and feed them local information, e.g. damage to hedgerows
- Lorraine noted that a new map of all Forest Town green spaces (existing and potential) would be very useful – MDC (Kira Besh) moving this forward
- New map to link with Sanderson’s Map, e.g. for hedgerows

Update

After a comfort break Shlomo gave a brief update arising from a discussion with Nick Crouch (Senior Nature Conservation Officer at Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC)) regarding: Common Lizard Translocation; Section 106 Agreement re: Little ringed plover; NCC landscape character data to inform planting; and the “New Desert” near Spa Ponds.

Brainstorming / Questions & Answers

Funding was discussed, and the following points were made:

- £35+ has been raised from members so far
- Where would funding come from? e.g. Lottery Awards for All
- What do we want funding for? e.g. about £40 for BTCV membership (and insurance) and about £35 for NWT membership for FTNCG; and we could access more money to enable us to fund projects, e.g. tree planting, c. £6-£8k for ecologist report that engages the community and helps identify areas for tree planting and types of trees, shrubs, etc. – based on report currently being produced for NWT focussing on Spa Ponds

Ideas for next / future meeting(s) and events

It was agreed that the Group would meet roughly every 6 weeks or so, and that members would be encouraged to communicate between meetings.

Next meetings

Posters are available for next (public) meeting (11th May) and 4th June guided walk

See: http://www.foresttown.net/nature/nature_poster_mayjune2011.pdf