

Forest Town Nature Conservation Group

Notes from the Executive meeting of Wednesday 3rd August 2011, 7 – 8:30 pm,
at the Forest Town Miners Welfare

Present (6)

Alyson (Acting Membership Secretary); Dave (Acting Vice Chair); Shlomo (Acting Secretary); Josh (Acting Treasurer); Lorraine (Acting Chair); and Andy (NWT)

Membership

Alyson noted that membership of Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG) is fairly stable, holding steady at just under 30 members. Lorraine suggested that some Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT) members and volunteers could join the FTNCG. Andy noted that most of Mansfield's established Friends Groups tend to have between 30 – 40 members.

Saturday's Balsam Pull at Spa Ponds

David and Alyson explained that they would be unable to attend on Saturday 6th August, due to other commitments. Andy intends to miss the Titchfield Park (Maun Conservation Group) event in order to support the FTNCG with the balsam pull at Spa Ponds. Andy was thanked for his ongoing and essential support for the emerging FTNCG. Lorraine explained Val's involvement – Val is a person who connects the Forest Town Youth Club (that meets at Kingsway Hall), the Forest Town Community Council, and the FTNCG. This balsam pull came about through the enthusiasm of Val, and her hope that the event could attract some members of the Youth Club.

David's NWT Training

David shared his plans to work with NWT's Ruth Testa on Sunday. David anticipates taking part in further NWT training in October, and becoming qualified to supervise work parties. All agreed that this would be a welcome and valuable contribution to strengthening the FTNCG. David also reported that he is considering volunteering to become a Wildlife Trust Warden for Spa Ponds. Andy explained that NWT is in the process of reviewing the support that they offer to Wardens.

Quick review of the notes from the 29th June meeting - with the latest updates

The discussion included a Financial update from Josh, who reported the FTNCG had a total of £342.30 in our bank account. Martin Wright has been thanked for his £250 contribution (made from his Nottinghamshire County Council allocation). The Nottingham Post coupon initiative netted the Group £14.51 and a certificate.

It was agreed to continue to wait until a programme is developed before exploring the prospects of paid and/or unpaid advertising in the local One Stop magazine.

Shlomo and Lorraine shared their unsuccessful experience of attempting to access Lottery Funding for an ecologist report of Forest Town. Andy said he would raise the issue of funding this project with NWT's Rob Fitzsimons.

Lorraine gave an update on the ongoing situation relating to the Rushpool Open space, and explained the reasons behind the forthcoming meeting between FTNCG representatives and Mansfield District Council (MDC) Head of Parks, Tim Downes. The meeting will be hosted by Jeff and will take place on Tuesday afternoon 9th August.

Co-opting a member onto the Executive

Shlomo's proposal to co-opt Jeff Smith onto the FTNCG Executive, to act as Rushpool Representative, was seconded by Lorraine and unanimously endorsed fellow Executives.

Forward Plan

Wayne Ball of the Sherwood Forest Trust, and Chris Jackson of Nottinghamshire County Council are scheduled to be guest speakers at the 21st September. They will talk about how to record nature conservation sightings. Discussion for future FTNCG meetings focussed on the need to formulate a winter programme. Meetings could include presentations by Andy Lowe and John Smith. The prospect of holding some meetings on Wednesday afternoons, at either the Methodist Church Hall and/or St Alban's Church was also discussed.

Forthcoming meeting with MDC Environment Portfolio Holder

Shlomo and Lorraine are scheduled to meet with Mansfield District Councillor Philip Shields on Monday 8th August to discuss nature conservation, green infrastructure and also waste matters. There will be an opportunity for Shlomo and Lorraine to report back on the meeting with Councillor Shields at the FTNCG meeting on Wednesday 10th August.

Closure

David noted how enjoyable it was to be getting to know each other better through involvement in the FTNCG and NWT. All agreed with David. Volunteering should be a fun social activity, and it is good to meet other people who share an interest in nature conservation, and who are happy to work together to make a success of the Forest Town Group and to protect and improve local nature conservation sites.

Actions

- All: record ideas for capital items, etc. (e.g. waders, wellies, plants for Rushpool, etc.) to pass on to Andy for inclusion in an Awards For All funding bid.
- All: consider winter programme dates, times, and events (guest speakers, topics, etc.)
- David and Alyson: keep up the good work with the NWT training, and be prepared to share something of your experiences to members at the next FTNCG meeting
- David: ask Ruth if NWT volunteers could be made aware of FTNCG meetings
- Lorraine: ask Tim Downes about litter pickers (as FTNCG volunteers will be helping MDC keep Mansfield tidy) – possibility of benefiting from MDC's ability to bulk buy
- Lorraine and Shlomo: draft an agenda for the FTNCG meeting of Wednesday 10th August
- Shlomo: inform Jeff of the decision to co-opt him and confirm that he is willing to join the FTNCG Executive as the Rushpool Representative
- Shlomo: Draft and circulate notes from this meeting
- Andy: ensure Forest Town NWT members are aware of the FTNCG
- Andy: discuss funding for the Forest town ecologist project with Rob Fitzsimons