

## Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG) Committee Meeting

12<sup>th</sup> October 2011 from 6pm at the Forest Town Welfare

**Committee Members Present:** Lorraine (Acting Chair); Dave (Acting Vice-Chair); Shlomo (Acting Secretary); Josh (Acting Treasurer); Alyson (Acting membership Secretary); and Jeff (Rushpool Representative) [6]; accompanied by:

**General Members:** Helen; Ron; Betty; Alan; and Barry [5]; Denise and Adrian [2] joined us around 7pm [6 + 5 + 2 = 13]

**Apologies:** Rose; Megan; Pauline; Malcolm; Mick (Cllr Barton)

- Jeff, Pauline and Malcolm were thanked for recent photo contributions for the website.
- Josh gave a brief finance update. Lorraine explained £300 of our current £500 balance is ring-fenced for next year's basic expenses (insurance, organisational membership)

### • Plans for the Rushpool site

- Jeff kindly explained the background to this agenda item
- Confirmed Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November as the date for the Conservation Volunteer event (probably from about 9:30 am – about 4 pm)
- Discussed priorities and aspirations for the site. The November event was described as “a toe in the water”. Questions raised about future plans included: How “open” should this space be? What is the process for replacing the out-dated site management plan with an improved plan (e.g. shift from gorse removal to gorse management) recognised by Mansfield District Council (MDC)?

**Action:** Jeff and Dave to organise site visit to detail short-term plans (Ron and/or Helen and others (Ruth Testa?!) may join if possible). This can also inform plans re: the number of roses we wish to request from MDC.

**Action:** Dave to find out about legal aspects of “No Drinking Zone” designation.

Shlomo to ask Tim Downes/Andy Lowe about rubbish and dog litter bins and notices.

- Contacting near neighbours to invite them to the 23<sup>rd</sup> November FTNCG meeting

**Action:** Shlomo to draft a simple flier and circulate for comment; Helen volunteered to print some copies and put them through doors along Rosedale and The Ridings, focussing especially on properties that back onto the Rushpool Open Space. Jeff volunteered to do similarly along Rushpool Close. It was suggested that The Chad should be contacted for an article and photo-shoot.

- In preparing a presentation to deliver at the 23<sup>rd</sup> November FTNCG meeting photos of the site before the houses were built should be used

### • Spa Ponds site management

- Ruth to be asked about progress re: Spa Ponds wardens, and about progress with NWT's site management plan for Spa Ponds

### • Our Winter Programme

- A4 and A5 sized posters were distributed
- Programme to hopefully include opportunity to learn more about how to simply record wildlife sightings – need a volunteer (Helen?) to help manage a spreadsheet to record sightings to pass on every 3 – 6 months.
- Members welcome to suggest other themes
- AGM to take place 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012 at the Welfare if possible – members welcome to volunteer to join the Committee

- Shlomo gave a brief update on funding bids, etc.
  - Currently working on a (draft) Lottery Bid for under £10,000 to buy tools  
Note: These tools will need to be stored securely.
  - We are participating in a NatWest scheme that could attract £6,000, but we need more votes at <http://communityforce.natwest.com/project/116>
  - Liz's sponsored run is expected to raise about £100 for the FTNCG!
  - Shlomo described the two project ideas that have been included in the Sherwood Nature Improvement Area (NIA) bid, alongside many other project. Shlomo explained that this funding process is very slow, and we should be moving forward with our ideas without waiting for the result of the funding application.
  - Movement on one of these projects is already beginning, with Jo Hull (MDC Parks Development (Nature Conservation) Officer) in the process of organising a gathering of Mansfield's Friends Groups, provisionally arranged for Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November (1:30 pm – 3:30 pm)  
Note: Denise and Adrian asked to be kept informed re: Friends Group gathering in light of their interest in supporting a Friends of Fisher Lane Park group (in Adrian's Sandhurst ward).
- Any other business
  - Jeff suggested we add more about the Harlequin Ladybird to the website
  - Andy asked us to consider hedge laying at the Maun Valley site – Dave and Alyson signalled their interest
  - All agreed that there is a need to clarify proper procedures in relation to wild animal welfare issues arising, for example, regarding helping injured animals. Further information to be sought from the RSPCA, local veterinary clinics, the Kirkby Centre (animal sanctuary), etc.
  - Betty raised concerns about hedge destruction in Forest Town. There is a need for FTNCG, possibly in conjunction with the Forest Town Community Council Planning sub-Committee, to learn more about the level of protection afforded hawthorn hedges (and indeed ancient and non-ancient hedges of all kinds). Questions arise, including: How could a destroyed hedge be adequately replaced/repaired? What sort of planning permission is required before hedges are allowed to be removed? What mechanisms exist to protect hedges? How can enforcement be monitored and encouraged (demanded)? What actions can be taken once a hedge has been damaged, e.g. small claims court, criminal damage, etc.?

### **Next meetings**

- Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011, from 2pm Forest Town Methodist Church includes discussion about Spa Ponds with Notts Wildlife Trust's Ruth Testa
- Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011, from 7pm Forest Town Welfare includes presentation and discussion about the Rushpool open space