

Forest Town Nature Conservation Group

Review of 2011: Highlights and Achievements

The Forest Town Nature Conservation Group was first constituted in February 2011 (Constitution available from: [http://foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG_Constitution\[1Feb2011\].pdf](http://foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG_Constitution[1Feb2011].pdf)). The six original Committee Members developed a “Business Plan” (available from: http://foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG_Business_Plan_2011.pdf), opened a bank account, and began to build our membership (which, at the end of 2011, stood at more than 30 members). During 2011 the Group held 7 minuted meetings, and several outdoor events, that were open to members of the public, and we regularly updated the Forest Town Community Council regarding the Group’s progress. We hosted guest speakers, including the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust’s Andy Lowe and Ruth Testa, Chris Jackson of the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group, and the Sherwood Forest Trust’s Wayne Ball.

We launched and developed a website at: <http://foresttown.net/nature/> that provides an events diary and houses documents. The site also features several photo galleries with shots of local wildlife. The FTNCG attracted dozens of local people for a guided walk around Forest Town’s Spa Ponds Local Nature Reserve. FTNCG members and supporters also joined forces with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust volunteers for several Himalayan Balsam pulls at Spa Ponds, and for gorse clearance and litter picking on the Rushpool Open Space. The Rushpool Open Space activities were preceded by a public awareness-raising leaflet drop for near neighbours, and a public meeting where plans for the site were discussed alongside the delivery of a presentation about the history of the site and plans for its future management.

Throughout the year, the FTNCG raised funds through membership, donations, and through receiving contributions from all four of our local Councillors (from their District or County constituency funds). Some of this money was used to purchase insurance, and some was ring-fenced for purchasing tools.

The Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG) was formally recognised as a “Friends Group” by Mansfield District Council (MDC), and we sent representatives to the MDC’s Friends of Mansfield Parks & Open Spaces Network in November. FTNCG also made active contributions to the Sherwood Forest Nature Improvement Area bid, and our representatives were subsequently invited to join the Sherwood Forest Regional Park Funding Working Group.

During 2011 the FTNCG became members of the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, BTCV and the Friends of Greenwood Community Forum. FTNCG formally joined the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group early in 2012. Several FTNCG volunteered to become Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust wardens, and they received appropriate training from the Trust. The FTNCG devised a system of reporting local wildlife sightings, and the reporting template is available from our website, at: http://foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG_Wildlife_Sightings_Report_Form.pdf