



## **Minutes of the Meeting of FoH&RV**

**Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023 – 7:30pm**

**Held in the Council Chamber - Hollinswood Neighbourhood Centre**

**In Attendance:** C Turley (CT), S Unwin (SU), K Baker (KB) G Johnson (GJ), L Seabury (LS), C Prescott (CP), S Fisher (SF), S Vaughan-Hodgkinson (SVH), J Creed (JC), R Hunt (RH), D Deakin (DD).

### **23/014 Chairman's Welcome and Apologies:**

CT, Chairman, opened the meeting on time and thanked everyone for a good attendance. Apologies were received from: R Shaw (RS), C Furnival (CF), H Unwin (HU) - later attended

### **23/015 Chairman's Report**

The Chairman (CT) made the following observations

- The Green Spaces are Go grant application (see [Introduction - Green Spaces are Go - Telford & Wrekin Council](#) for info) has been filled in and submitted. The original grant offer was £1500 but this has now been extended to £2000 thanks to good negotiation by our Parish team. It does require us to incorporate the Bench to Bench trail (see "Future Projects") within our plans. We await the final award.
- The meadows in the valley are looking good – orchids are doing well now.
- The monthly Rambler Wellbeing Walks are still running, but the walk towards the end of May had not attracted any "customers".
- RS has organised for CapGemini to spend a day on 14<sup>th</sup> June, building some dead hedging to help make the area by the dew pond safer, as often the surface of the water is indistinguishable from the surrounding solid land. They may also be removing surplus willow. RH advised that wood from the adjacent ash plantation could be used to help build hedges. For Information, CT advised that Granville CP had a similar pond excavated and have now mainly filled this with logs for creature habitats!

### **23/016 Financial Report**

The Treasurer (KB) has produced a financial report as of 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023. This report will be attached as Appendix A. The significant items are the awarding of a £1000 grant to assist with waymarking in the valley, and the purchase of waymarker posts to be erected in due course.

## **23/017 LNR / Environmental Officer's Report**

The meeting welcomed LS as the new Environmental Officer. He has produced a report which is attached as Appendix B, and outlined the following items of ongoing and future work:

- Lots of work has been done in the valley recently, most notably the last of the ash dieback clearances, finalising of the pathway surfacing including ramps, and a handrail next to the long flight of steps.
- There have been recent visits from TWC, Smallwoods, RSPB and Idverde who are all interested in different aspects of the valley.
- GJ and LS are both now fully trained up to be able to lead the Wellbeing walks , and have also completed Outdoor First Aid courses
- More wildlife oriented events to be organised in the valley

## **23/018 Future Events for 2023**

SU outlined the plan for events this year and also requested a Saturday Volunteer day during term time before the summer holidays – 15<sup>th</sup> July 10:00-12:00 was agreed. Other events

- A bug hunt
- A Teddy Bears Picnic & walk in the summer holidays with the John and the SNAC members.
- Summer holiday natural crafts
- Halloween
- The annual Winter Walk ( in Jan 2024 )
- Half Term crafts & walk ( Feb 2024)

Diane West of T&W will be approached to promote our events in the valley

The Wellbeing walks will continue, taking place on the last Wednesday of the month. To coincide with these walks, the Tuesday Volunteers day will be moved to the last Tuesday of each month (see AOB)

## **23/019 Future Projects / Bids:**

### **Bench to Bench Project**

CT confirmed that within the next 7-10 days we should be receiving funding from the Green Spaces/ Bench to Bench project – ( see 23/015 above and [Bench-to-Bench Project | Live Well Telford](#) ) This will provide new benches to be sited within the valley and a trail linking them . An associated leaflet should also be useful in highlighting our other waymarked walk trails.

SF confirmed that the colour coded trails will use Red and Green bollards and the intention will be to incorporate the benches along these trails. The number, type, and location of benches to be installed is for us to decide and he provided more information regarding the types of bench available and relative costs. A backless bench costs around £ 200 and a backed bench around £350 each. We are probably looking at 4 backless benches and one backed with arms (for Mo's Bench - see below)

KB confirmed that TWC will provide new welcome signs (there is a standard design for the Local Nature Reserves). Our new Interpretation boards will be produced once all the new route work in the Valley has finished. There will be 3 boards as direct replacements for the old and will include the LNR "branding". These may take some time to arrive however – it was noted that Apley woods have only just had theirs!

### **Mo's Bench**

SF confirmed that in conjunction with the bench there will be a suitable plaque erected in the subway which Mo had voluntarily policed and kept litter-free for many years. SF will sort the purchase, engraving and installation (including application of anti- graffiti varnish) of this plaque. The viewpoint at the top of the field next to the subway was thought to be an ideal spot to site her memorial bench.

## **Other Projects**

Nothing specific that isn't in progress already, though Ricoh had expressed an interest in helping in the valley on a specific piece of work. This work will be co-ordinated by RS.

## **23/020 Any Other Business:**

Following a recent ramblers walk, CT had a thought that these could be improved if distinct paths were mown across the meadows following the natural paths. This would need investment in a "ride-on" mower though. KB said that co-incidentally, a couple of potential contracts for maintenance were pending and if these come to fruition then such a piece of kit could certainly be justified. Discussion then turned to Mr T Bates as another possible source of equipment on loan. CT to investigate.

GJ requested that the monthly Tuesday volunteer day be moved to the last Tuesday in the month rather than the first. This was to reduce rework (mainly strimming paths) in preparation for the monthly ramblers walk. This was agreed by usual participants.

JC apologised for not attending valley meetings and events recently, this had been due to increased work commitments.

More publicity is needed for the Wellbeing walks. GJ is due to publish a "Friends" newsletter in the near future and will include details in there, and also ensure prominence on web pages.

RH asked about the stile and steps into the meadow which have needed improvement for some time and which require constant clearance of vegetation. Their use has been mostly superseded by a new path 10 metres away and he suggested future efforts should concentrate on the new path. JC suggested not to trim or cut back the old path at all and see if regular users complain.

RH also suggested that the stile by the gate on Stirchley Ave. needs blocking up as it is broken and also not in regular use. Some trees also need clearing next to the kissing gate beside the bus stop on Stirchley Ave.

RH asked about the Bridleway. CT advised he is due to have a walk down there with RS and discuss improvements and how to deal with the spring/pond area. This is an important area in the valley having a natural water feed and needs controlling properly.

## **23/021 Date of the next meeting:**

The date of the next meeting has been set for Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> September .There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:30pm.

## **Appendix A – Financial Report**

## **Appendix B – Environmental Officers Report**