

Natural Basingstoke.

Minutes of the Committee Meeting. Monday 15th September 2014.

Location: Council Offices. Time: 7.00 – 9.00 pm.

1. Attendees & Apologies

Apologies were received from Kevin Parker (KP) and Chris Rose (CR)

Attendees were Ken Mackenzie (KM), Marion Wolstencroft (MW), Steve Goodwin (SG), Davis Glover (DG), Paul Beevers (PB), Jeffrey Northam (JN), David Flint (DF) and Sarah Moore (SM).

2. Minutes of the last meeting in June had been circulated and were taken as correct.

The action items arising there from were as follows:

Item	Action	Action by	Action
2.2.1.1	Contact Head of Countryside Services re HCC Sites Agreement	MW	See below
2.2.1.3	Ken MacKenzie to consult with Peter Hitchens on possible advisor on birds for Advisor Board	KM	Agreed see below
2.2.3.2	Invite all associate groups to 13 th October Mtg Meeting	MW	tbd
2.2.7	Sarah Moore to pick up Speckled Wood Rd residents as potential Group	SM	tbd
3.2.3	Meeting with BDBC staff re Strategic Management of Green Spaces 8 th July	MW /KM/DG/JN	Reported below
3.6	Working Group on website & social media to be set up	SG	tbd
3.7	Invitations to form Grassland Management Working Group to be sent out prior to qtlly mtg	SG	tbd
4.1	Application to join Nat Forum of Green Space Comm Forums	MW	Done
5	All committee members to review draft business plan & send comments & suggestions on CONTENT to admin by 7 th July.	All	Done
6	Jeffrey Northam to sound out Dung member re minutes of qtlly mtgs	JN	Diane White contacted
7.2	Meeting with Portfolio holder to be requested early	MW	Done
7.4	Working papers on walking trails to be forwarded to SM	MW	Done
7.7	SM to speak with June Balcombe re finance June - October 2014.	SM	See below

Re 2.2.1.1 Head of Countryside services - Andy Smith - contacted, but about to leave HCC for Natural England. Alternate contact name requested.

Re 2.2.1.3 Peter Hutchens has agreed to become an Advisor re birdlife, announcement to be made at AGM & training course possibilities for 2015 to be discussed.

Re 3.2.3 July co-ordinating meeting useful and reported to committee members in July - follow up on management of LNR s includes mtg on 18th Sept on LNRs Policy with Ed Rousell, and mtg with Steve Featherstone of Environmental Care on better ways to coordinate management and actions on green spaces - see below. Next joint meeting to be scheduled for November/early December

Re 7.7 Interim funding request to be submitted to SM for attn June Balcombe (done 16th Sept).

3. Items arising since last Committee Meeting

3.1 Draft Tree Policy – circulated to committee in July, two specific comments submitted in July, final draft issued end August which reflected only very minor changes to text and some softening of criteria and targets.

Final draft to be circulated to committee members for comment - final comment on draft to be submitted in early October.

3.2 Green Week Programme

Arrangements for Sat 20th Sept event coordinated with Sarah Moore, including leaflet design and printing. Strategy for presentation on Monday 23rd evening networking meeting discussed.

3.3 Manydown Estate

In preparation for future development Manydown Project Managers are planning to survey and collect seed material from field edges originally designated as SINC's. Local volunteers for this project could ensure quality of work and local knowledge. Members of local groups to be invited to participate - contact Paul Beevers.

3.4 Hampshire Countryside Access Form

Membership is invited. Ken Mackenzie to discuss with a member of the form known personally - for frequency of meetings, agenda content etc.

3.5 Keep Britain Tidy

Parks Tidy Up Campaign in October. Some community groups supporting this with events, Member Groups to be invited to participate.

3.6 Tree Seed Collection Project by Woodland Trust

Invites participation in collecting tree seeds for Millennium Seed Bank - involves training course and directed collection criteria. Not being pursued at this time.

3.7 North Wessex Down AONB AGM 15th October

Paul Beevers will attend.

4. Meeting with Steve Featherstone, Mngr Environmental Care, August 2014

Committee was updated with the planned changes to management structure and work groups within the department in coming months. The issues and options for better coordination of Environmental Care activities and conservation group activities in parks and wildlife areas was discussed.

The development of updated site management plans for key parks was an opportunity to address this longstanding co-ordination problem afresh in the coming months - see **appendix 1** for summary of actions for Natural Basingstoke members.

At this point the Chairman left the meeting and discussion continued, chaired by Secretary .

5. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer was in process of finalising accounts for the period 4th June 2013 - 30th June 2014.

It was expected that the next funding request would be made in November after the AGM.

The interim funding requirements discussed in June were being implemented. - (request submitted 16th September).

While significant planned capital expenditure had been completed by August this was a couple of months later than originally forecast. However, the opportunity arose to purchase equipment for summer events - 2 gazebos - for £95 which had been used at 4 events in the summer and would have a useful life of 3 – 4 years. As this was an unplanned purchase the Treasurer requested approval of the purchase in retrospect.

It was confirmed that the normal process for significant capital expenditure was to provide for such items in the annual budget approved by committee and to confirm specification and cost details before purchase.

6. Agenda for next quarterly meeting - AGM

It was agreed that the Agenda would be:

1. Minutes of last meeting, amendments and adoption.
2. Chairman's Report to Members
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Election of Officers - Chairman, Treasurer & Secretary

As per the constitution the Chairman serves for an initial 2 year period and therefore there is no election at this meeting.

There will be elections for Treasurer and Secretary .

Secretary indicated that she would not be standing for re-election and as the role is quite onerous suggested that the role be split with a Minutes Secretary being appointed as well.

5. Election of other members of Committee - it was suggested that the elected of up to 6 other committee members included election to specific roles:

Training Co-ordinator
Branch and Group Support Co-ordinator
Events and Publicity Co-ordinator

7. Strategy Areas for the coming year

Discussion was postponed to the next committee meeting.

8. AOB

Hatch Warren - Paul Beevers raised points about the green spaces which newly created Hatch Warren Nature Group were considering. Agreement with Environmental Care on how these were to be managed and development etc. would be mediated by Sarah Moore.

Love Parks Week / Bio-blitz 2015

Sarah Moore suggested that NB members might like to consider a coordinated series of events in several parks for Love Parks Week at the end of jult 2015. This might include a Bio-blitz.

Action Items arising from the meeting:

Item	Action	Action by
2.2.3. 2	Invite all associate groups to 13 th October Mtg Meeting	MW
2.2.7	Sarah Moore to pick up Speckled Wood Rd residents as potential Group	SM
3.2.3	Next coordinating meeting with Bio-diversity team to be scheduled for end Nov/early Dec	MW
3.6	Working Group on website & social media to be set up	SG
3.7	Invitations to form Grassland Management Working Group to be sent out prior to qtlly mtg	SG
8.3.1	Draft Tree policy to be circulated for comment - summary comments to be submitted by early October.	MW
8.3.2	Leaflets and display matl to be collected from BDBC before Friday, timetable for manning stand to be agreed Display Matl and presentation to be prepared for Monday 23 rd 6.00 meeting	SM & MW
8.3.3	Those interested in Manydown Seed Collection project in 2015-2017 to contact Paul Beevers	All
8.3.4	Ken Mackenzie to contact colleague on forum for more details.	KM
8.3.5	Big Tidy Up Events October - details to be circulated to all groups	SM
8.4	Proposed means of better co-ordinating Environmental Care team activities on conserved green spaces to be circulated to all members and discuss before Spring 2015	MW

Appendix 1 - Notes on co-ordinating Site Management Plans, Volunteer Conservation activities and Environmental Care team activities

The question of how the over-arching borough site plans and conservation group action plans are to be dovetailed and communicated needs to be worked on by all 3 parties.

The resource and management implications of these plans needs to be thought through by Environmental Care – at the moment this is an unknown quantity.

Operational effectiveness in carrying out these plans raises issues which have existed in the past and not resolved:

- the knowledge and skills gap at all levels and how to address this,
- how to communicate and accommodate constant gradual change in the operational requirements on conservation grade sites.
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High quality conservation sites such as LNRs are normally not routinely serviced by Environmental Care teams other than for litter, bins, graffiti and access issues. Environmental Care biodiversity staff deliver conservation work by agreement and to site plan.

The issue of coordinated routine green space maintenance is most acutely experienced in multi-use neighbourhood parks and other green spaces which benefit from conservation group activities.

Specific actions for the way forward:

1. Environmental Care management is being provided with a list of green spaces which have conservation groups working on them
2. This will be expanded to include all high quality green spaces with a site management plan in position, being developed, or planned.

This is then the beginnings of the conservation grade sites management database from which all biodiversity management, environmental care and voluntary conservation activities will be coordinated.

3. All voluntary conservation groups have been in the habit of creating their own site plans for their activities - we need to agree a standard format in which these can best dovetail with borough site management plans where and when they exist.
3. A method of refreshing environmental care staff awareness, on an annual basis if necessary, needs to be developed, along with practical on-site prompts.

So the actions for conservation groups where Environmental Care carry out routine grounds maintenance

1. Conservation groups need to agree a format for detailing the activities required of Environmental staff Care that dovetail with conservation groups' activities.
2. Conservation Groups need to be prepared to review their plans and the instructions to Environmental Care on site each year to ensure Environmental Care staff understand the plans on the ground.