

MINUTES OF ECONET MEETING

Thursday, 27th February 2014 at 19:30

Parks Department Offices, Prospect Park, Reading

Present

David Booth, John Lerpiniere, Alan Stevens, Tricia Marcouse, Denise Howarth, Toby Ford, Kit Brownlee, Judith Oliver

Apologies

Steve Ayres

Minutes from Previous Meeting

Presented, read and accepted.

Matters Arising

None

News and Updates

CROW (Conserve Reading on Wednesdays)

Good attendance continues and a complete weekly programme despite some adverse weather which has, however, caused some tasks to finish at lunchtime.

Friends of McIlroy Park

Numbers have picked up again now averaging six.

Friends of Clayfield Copse

Usually six or more volunteers.

There is some consternation over a proposal to build on part of the land but it is thought that the land has enough protection to deter this.

The management plan is in operation and the major task to take out a number of larger trees should take place later this year. The Friends would like to be involved in this mainly for public relations to explain the reasons for the actions.

Friends of Cemetery Junction

TCV have cleared scrub at the Cemetery.

Friends of Waterloo Meadows

Volunteer numbers have improved although the average is only four because of lower turnouts for evening tasks. Site is currently suffering flooding.

Friends of Mapledurham Playing Fields

The orchard trees are not growing well, holes have appeared between trees and will be filled in. A pruning demonstration took place led by Jan Lambourne head gardener at Caversham Court which was attended by ten people.

Volunteers are grateful to RBC for wood-chipping muddy areas.

Newbury & Thatcham Green Gym

Attendance at a local fair attracted interest and volunteers now number seven or eight normally.

TCV has organised a grant to support the Gym and offer one day a week for ten months to include particularly training. There was much discussion of what this would lead to and how the Gym would stand after this period, e.g. its relationship with TCV and/or ECONET. Decisions will be made when more information is known about the grant. There was no objection in principle to the group remaining as part of Econet or returning to Econet at some future date should circumstances dictate.

TCV (The Conservation Volunteers)

Two main projects are currently underway -

Bray Nature Reserve plantation, coppicing and replanting to increase biodiversity

Goring Heath, scrub clearance and planting to enhance an old orchard with traditional fruit trees.

Friends of Fobney Island

TCV and RBC led a large group of volunteers to plant 800 trees but it is feared the trees may not survive as they have been permanently under water ever since.

Health and Safety

There were no issues

Treasurer's Report

Funds stand at £8,400 including £2,000 restricted funds for information board at Reading Old Cemetery. Unpaid invoices for completed tasks and charges on future tasks to end of year (April) amount to £360, outstanding expenditure including estimated website costs amounts to £345.

Information required by insurers was much more complicated this year but a thorough reply by the treasurer (AS) was accepted without query.

Difficulty contacting the website provider has continued and still no payment has been requested. Apart from a short period off line the site continues to operate and the space was increased in response to request.

Christmas Tree Sale

Was a great success once again with close to £1,400 received before expenses. Hire of a small lorry was successful costing around £100.

Potential traffic worries proved unfounded.

Redevelopment at Caversham Court may bring storage problems next year.

Hiccups organising tree cutting at Wishmoor were more serious and we may have to obtain trees from other sites this year.

Bean Pole Day

All contributors will be present again. Reading Gardeners are undecided. A gazebo was considered a good idea but before purchasing one we will see what RBC can provide. (DB, JO)

Transition Reading have offered to run a tools maintenance workshop. Ok if they have suitable insurance (TM).

Tools

Green Gym may need further support, at present they need some small hand forks. (AS, DH)

A.O.B

Split trees at Kings Meadow need removing but the RBC Tree Gang are busy with many such tasks after the bad weather.

GREN (Greater Reading Environment Network) invited ECONET to their 1st March meeting.

Date of next meeting

Monday 8th September at 19:30

www.econetreading.org.uk