

FRIENDS OF PUTNOE WOOD and MOWSBURY HILLFORT

Minutes of the General Meeting held on 14 November 2017 at Putnoe Heights Church

Members present: Jon Bishop, Lyn Caudrey, Martin Fannon, Sue Fannon, Mick Lilliman, Dave Parratt, Diana Readhead, John Wallace, Marion Wallace, Jane Warner, Chris Wedge, Maggie West, Helen Wilkie, John Wilkie, Andy Wilkins (Chairman), Allison Wilkins

1 **Apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received from Robert Bright, Danny Fellman and Nicky Monsey

2 **Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 12 September 2017**

These were agreed as an accurate record.

3 **Update from Country Park Guardians**

Jon Bishop thanked the Friends for their work over recent weeks. The following points were noted including some items for consideration as future tasks.

3.1 **Hillfort**

- Old Orchard pruning. Removal of any branches obstructing the route of the procession and Wassail ceremony will be carried out before the event. The pear tree needs topping off.
- Mowsbury Meadow. Cutting and bailing had been completed and the results were very good. The burn site in the north-west corner was working well.
- Bramble hedge to western edge of meadow requires knocking back
- Bridle path. Parts of the old fence have broken off and need removing.
- Leaf litter. The importance of retaining leaf litter was noted so that this could provide a source of nutrients for trees.
- North boundary view to water tower. The area just outside the scheduled monument needs cutting back to improve the view.
- Ragwort. A member of the golf club has suggested that a combined group of golfers and Friends should clear ragwort growing on the edge of the golf course to help reduce its spread to Mowsbury Meadow and elsewhere.
- Open Air Laboratories (OPAL) has expressed interest in leading a survey of lichens and orchard trees.
- An Ash Tree on the edge of the Courtyard and moat had blown down in a recent storm, and will be left to rot down in situ.

3.2 **Putnoe Wood.** Coppicing continues. Catherine Miskin may take some of the longer straight poles for use in hedge laying.

3.3 **Wassail 2018.** It was agreed this will take place on Tuesday 9 January 2018 with a contingency to re-schedule to another date before the end of January in the event of bad weather. The format will be as for previous years.

3.4 **Browns Wood**

Jon is trying to set up a Friends group at Browns Wood, Clapham. He invited Friends to a volunteers' session from 11am to 30m on Sunday 19 November. It is hoped that the new group will meet every Sunday until March 2018, except for the weekend before Christmas when it will meet on the Saturday.

3.5 **Renhold Lower School Visit.** Marion reported on the visit which took place on 20 September. Two groups had visited – one each from Years 3 and 4, preceded by an introductory talk by Marion on 18 September. The events went smoothly, and Marion

subsequently received a message of thanks from the school. There are no other school visits being planned at the moment.

4 Future Tasks and Events.

4.1 Venue for future meetings. John W thanked Martin and Sue Fannon for arranging for the Friends to meet at Putnoe Church. Martin warned that the room hire would increase to between £7 to £7.50 per hour in the new year. Various other locations were suggested, and the long-term impact of hiring costs on the Friends' finance was noted. Mick and Andy both offered their homes as an alternative. Jon will speak to the owner of the café at Priory Country Park to see if we could use that space as a venue out of café hours.

4.2 First Aid Training. The qualifications for those who attended the last training session will expire on 18 February 2018. Jon is trying to get funding for a new course.

4.3 Renhold WI have expressed interest in either a talk or walk around the Hillfort in summer 2018. They will get in touch with us in the new year. Alison and Marion will follow up.

4.4 Wassail Money 2018. Friends were asked to consider which charity any profits should be sent to. This will be discussed and agreed at the next meeting.

4.5 Future tasks

Putnoe Wood

- Continue coppicing and strimming brambles
- Trimming edges of footpaths

Mowsbury

In addition to tasks identified under item 3.1 above, the following were noted:

- Cutting down nettles and scrub in the moats.
- Cutting back hedging and scrub along old field boundary on southern edge of site to ensure access by Borough Council vehicles.
- Bridle Path – cutting back brambles
- Ramparts. It was agreed that these would benefit from a twice yearly cut and clearance to deter bramble growth.
- It was agreed to leave the Neglected Orchard untouched.
- Wassail preparation to take place on the Wednesday preceding and the day before the event.

5 Financial Matters

John Wilkie presented the latest figures.

Cash in Bank	£518.90
Petty Cash	£0.00
TOTAL	£518.90

Transactions since last report:

Income	£0.00
TOTAL	£0.00

Outgoings	£0.00
TOTAL	£0.00

7 Any Other Business

7.1 Green Flag Community Award. Andy had been asked if we would like to apply for a Green Flag Community Award. Chris volunteered to examine the forms to see if it was feasible to submit an application.

7.2 Bedford Borough Volunteer Celebration. Maggie, Jane, Alison and Andy had attended this event and had a very enjoyable evening.

- 7.3 Brickhill Parish Council Annual Meeting.** Andy has been asked for input to the end of year review. He will send text and photos.
- 7.4 Bedfordshire Wildlife Trust.** Chris is to lead a walk around the Hillfort for Trust members from 7.30 – 9.15pm on Wednesday 13 June 2018.
- 7,5 Saw blades.** Jon will obtain new blades via the Borough Council.
- 8 Date of next meeting**
7.00pm Tuesday 14 November at a place to be notified.