

FRIENDS OF PUTNOE WOOD and MOWSBURY HILLFORT

Minutes of the General Meeting held on 22 March 2022 via Zoom.

Members present: Jon Bishop, Lynn Caudrey, Martin Fannon, Sue Fannon, Anne Lilliman, Mick Lilliman, Chris Moss, John Wallace, Marion Wallace, Chris Wedge, Helen Wilkie, John Wilkie, Allison Wilkins, Andy Wilkins.

1 Apologies for absence were received from Dave Parratt, Diana Readhead and Peter Stathers. In Dave's absence, John Wallace took the chair.

2 Minutes of last meeting held on Tuesday 25 January 2022. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.

3 Update from Country Park Guardian.

Jon reported that he had ordered the materials needed to repair path edges in Putnoe Wood. Jon also reported on developments following from the expression of interest by the County Wildlife Sites (CWS) panel to expand the footprint of the CWS status at Mowsbury Hillfort. This had resulted in Bedford Borough Council hiring Lizzy Dobbie from the Wildlife Trust to carry out the necessary surveys and write reports. The revised CWS status will cover the area that the Friends currently manage.

Afternote: Jon provided a plan of the proposed revisions to the CWS status area – appended to these minutes.

4 Future Tasks and Events

John Wallace reported.

4.1 Mowsbury Hillfort. Future activities will be adjusted to reflect the start of the bird-nesting period. Clearance of the scrub to open up the rough grass meadow south of the hillfort continues. Jon will identify individual saplings which will be allowed to grow but trimmed annually to control size. Elsewhere future tasks include: management of nettle growth; scrub clearance along paths; scrub management to the north of the Hillfort to maintain views. If the latter is likely to disturb nesting birds this will be delayed until late September.

4.2 Putnoe Wood. Following a survey of footpaths seven areas of concern were identified along the brook path to the north of the woods. These were assessed as being within the capabilities of the Friends, but would be all-day tasks to allow time for the transport of materials and tools to the sites, as well as the work involved. Mick has prepared a list of the materials needed which Jon will order. Mick has crafted some steel pins to secure path edging at various points. Other future tasks in the woods include: clearance of scrub along footpaths; removal of debris from the brook and the western boundary ditch; removal of debris to open up views of snowdrops, an autumn task after bird nesting season.

5 Financial Matters

In Peter's absence there was no financial report.

6 Reports from members –

6.1 Update on Hillfort Vision. John Wallace conveyed a report from Dave concerning the Ravensden Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan. This document identifies the Hillfort, Mowsbury Meadow and wooded area along the western boundary (but excluding the Bridle Path), and the scrubland along the southern boundary of the Hillfort including the Butts, as within the Cleat Hill/Mowsbury Special Policy Area with restrictions to any future development.

6.2 Green Flag applications. – Chris Wedge has received emails confirming receipt of both applications. Putnoe will be subject to a ‘Mystery Shopper’ inspection in June/July, and the Hillfort will receive a full inspection by a judge, the date for which will be notified in June.

6.3 First Aid Training. Helen reported that Allison, Marion, Martin and herself had successfully completed a one-day training course on 8 March. Their qualification will last for 3 years.

6.4 Work with local schools. – Helen reported that Ravensden Primary School had confirmed their wish to visit the hillfort between the 16th and 26th May and requested the Friends help with this. Details to be developed including how many Friends will be needed to assist with visit.

7 Any Other Business

7.1 First Aid Boxes. Martin asked Jon if the Borough Council would fund up-dating of the Friends’ first aid boxes. Jon will speak to James about this.

7.2 Future meetings. Jon will ask Cloverdale Café if they would allow the Friends to meet at the café in the future for ‘live’ meetings. In the meantime, it was noted that meetings via Zoom will continue, to enable anyone in self-isolation to participate.

8 Date of next General Meeting

Tuesday 24 May 7.00pm by Zoom.

CWS proposed revised boundary at Mowsbury



Red lines denote area already agreed as County Wildlife Site (CWS). Suggested perimeter for the revised CWS area is shown in yellow.