

FRIENDS OF PUTNOE WOOD and MOWSBURY HILLFORT

Minutes of the General Meeting held on 25 January 2022 via Zoom.

Members present: Jon Bishop, Lynn Caudrey, Martin Fannon, Sue Fannon, Anne Lilliman, Dave Parratt, Diana Readhead, Philip Stathers, John Wallace, Marion Wallace, Chris Wedge, Helen Wilkie, John Wilkie, Allison Wilkins, Andy Wilkins.

1 **Apologies for absence** were received from Mick Lilliman (joined meeting during item 6.2), and Chris Moss.

2 **Minutes of last meeting held on Tuesday 15 November 2021.** Item 6.1 sentence 4 amended to read ‘...Vision Statement for Putnoe Wood ...’. With this amendment, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.

3 **Update from Country Park Guardian**

Jon noted, with thanks, the work carried out in the current coppice plot in Putnoe Wood. He reported on an email from Cllr Headly to James Lynch raising the issue of failing path edging in Putnoe Wood, particularly along the brook edge. The Friends noted that many of the paths require attention to remove a build-up of decomposing leaf litter, cut back encroachments of scrub vegetation, and repair soft spots and hollows caused by wear and tear. John Wallace suggested that the Friends carry out a survey of all the paths to determine their condition and the feasibility of their carrying out the remedial work required using materials delivered to the site by contractors. It was agreed that a date for the survey be agreed at the next day’s task. Jon noted the need for scrub clearance and the removal of small ash saplings in the glades; he would provide brush cutters the next day.

At the hillfort, Jon will assess the need for any additional pruning in the orchard.

4 **Future Tasks and Events**

John Wallace reported.

4.1 Mowsbury Hillfort. Mick and Anne had discovered the remains for an old harrow half buried between the hillfort burn site and the leat. It is of no danger to the public and can be left in situ. The pile of wood near the burn site needs burning. A general tidy up of the hillfort is needed to clear fallen debris from paths. Work may also be required to address the potential danger posed by holes dug on the site by badgers, rabbits and other animals.

4.2 Putnoe Wood. In addition to the work identified under item 3, fallen branches and other debris need removing from the brook.

5 **Financial Matters**

Peter presented figures as at 15 January 2022.

Category	Brought Forward	Current Balances
Money held in bank	320.10	257.86
Petty cash	0.00	0.00
Total	320.10	257.86

Transactions since last report:

Income:

Total Income

£00.00

Outgoings:

Website £62.24

Total outgoings: £62.24

Month Net change - £62.24

Peter reported that he is still waiting for NatWest Bank's approval of himself as an account signatory. Jon Bishop had received an enquiry regarding bank account fees from Friends of Park Wood who pay £5 monthly to Santander. John Wilkie stated that the Friends' Business Account with NatWest Bank currently attracts no fees. Andy noted that fees for the Friends' website are subject to annual increase.

6 Reports from members –

6.1 Update on Hillfort Vision. Dave reported that the Stewardship Scheme is changing and a decision has to be made whether to adopt the new scheme or continue with the existing one. He is in contact with Timothy Hopwell at Natural England and James Lynch at the Borough Council regarding this. Work is needed on the raised walkway; Geoff Saunders will contact Historic England for their advice.

6.2 Green Flag applications. – Chris and John reported that they plan to submit the applications on 3 February ahead of the deadline on 14 February. The Putnoe Wood Management Plan is over 5 years old, and Dave said he would discuss the need for an update and the Council's involvement with James Lynch and Claire Pick. In the absence of a current Management Plan for Putnoe Wood the application will include a Vision Statement which Chris and John Wallace drew up in consultation with Dave. Dave asked Jon if there should be an annual budget for path repairs and maintenance in the woods which have probably not been carried out since the 1990s. Jon will discuss this with the Borough Council.

6.3 Work with local schools. – Marion reminded the Friends that 7 local primary schools had been contacted. The Deputy Headteacher at Brickhill had subsequently met with herself, Chris and Helen in November 2021, but no further communication received to date. The initial contacts may be followed up in due course.

7 Any Other Business

7.1 First Aid Training Course. Allison, Helen, Marion and Martin are due to attend this on 8 March.

8 Date of next General Meeting

Tuesday 22 March 7.00pm by Zoom.