

FRIENDS OF PUTNOE WOOD and MOWSBURY HILLFORT

Minutes of the General Meeting held on 29 November 2022 via Zoom.

Members present: Lynn Caudrey, Jon Bishop, Mick Lilliman, Anne Lilliman, Dave Parratt, Peter Stathers, John Wallace, Marion Wallace, Chris Wedge, Helen Wilkie, Andy Wilkins, Allison Wilkins.

1 Apologies for absence were received from Martin Fannon, Sue Fannon, Diana Readhead, John Wilkie.

2 Minutes of last meeting held on Tuesday 27 September 2022. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.

3 Update from Country Park Guardian.

Jon noted the on-going improvements on both sites thanks to the Friends' work, On the hillfort, he highlighted the work that had been carried out on the southern boundary, the award of County Wildlife Status, and the success of the Ravensden School visit. Swift action had been taken to remove the effects of incidents of Anti-social behaviour which is hoped will deter re-occurrence. In the woods, he highlighted the repairs to eroded path edges.

Keith Balmer, County Butterfly recorder had suggested the Friends' might consider doing partial cuts of Mowsbury Meadow in the future by alternating rows being mown each year in order to allow some invertebrates to complete their development, and to provide winter shelter for invertebrates, small mammals, etc as done at Cople Pits by the Wildlife Trust . The idea was discussed and members present agreed that the suggestion would allow scrub to re-establish, and the contractor would not be able to collect arisings as at present. Jon suggested a compromise would be to leave a wider margin at the sides or southern boundary of the Meadow which could be cut and raked in the spring. John Wallace noted that various areas on the hillfort are already only lightly cut. It was agreed that a site visit with Keith will be arranged to discuss best options for the coming year, and the Wildlife Trust will be consulted.

4 Future Tasks and Events

John Wallace identified activity for coming weeks.

4.1 Putnoe Wood.

Coppicing of plot 1f will continue. Guy Lambourne of Wassledine farm in Gravenhurst had visited Putnoe Wood while coppicing was being carried out and discussed the possibility of his making use of some of the hazel arisings to produce poles and plant supports for sale through his business. A number of options in terms of selecting and preparing items for Guy were possible, with varying input required by the Friends reflected in how much Guy would contribute to the Friends' funds by way of donation James Lynch approves of the Friends exploring this idea further. Guy would need to satisfy Bedford Borough Council that he has the relevant Health and Safety documentation to work on Council land. It was agreed that this suggestion will be an agenda item at the next Friends' meeting, which will allow for consideration of the proposal and possibly another site meeting with Guy. Jon commented that managers from other County wildlife sites may be interested in using Putnoe hazel poles for their site maintenance work such as hedge-laying. The possibility of layering and striking hazel to form new growth was discussed.

4.2 Mowsbury Hillfort.

Preliminary work in the orchard prior to the Wassail including light pruning.

5 Financial Matters

Peter presented a financial report as at 13 November 2022.

Category	Brought Forward	Current Balances
Money held in bank	257.86	457.86
Petty cash	0.00	0.00
Total	257.86	457.86

Transactions since last report:

There have been no transactions in the most recent period

Income:

Total Income £00.00

Outgoings:

Total outgoings: £0.00

Month Net change £00.00

Comments:

Banking issues have now been resolved and the account can now be accessed. Statements are now sent to Peter.

The Constitution states counter signature is required for payments over £50. Internet banking now requires counter signature for anything above £10. The previous meeting discussed this and agreed that internet transactions should not require authorisation, and accounts will be made available on request for auditing. Cash payments are the only ones to require authorisation if over £10. No changes to the Constitution should be required as a result.

6 Reports from members –

6.1 Green Flag applications. This reported that a mystery shopper inspection was carried out on Putnoe Wood on 28 October, the report from which stated that the site met with the necessary standards and included some very positive comments. Chris will download an up-to-date award certificate, laminate it for display at the entrance to the wood. Wheelchair access was mentioned in the report. Peter suggested that entrances that were not wheelchair accessible should show directions to the nearest accessible entrance. Dave thanked Chris and John Wallace for their work on the Green Flag applications.

6.2 Wassail. Andy suggested the attendance donation should be raised to £3 and this was agreed. Friends present discussed which charity should receive the money and it was agreed to donate it to the Bedford Foodbank. This information will be included in advertisement of the Wassail. Jon agreed to co-ordinate bookings as in previous years, and Friends agreed to be responsible for the same tasks as at the last event.

7 Any Other Business

There was no other business

8 Date of next General Meeting

Tuesday 17 January 2023 via Zoom.