

## FRIENDS OF PUTNOE WOOD and MOWSBURY HILLFORT

### Minutes of the General Meeting held on 14 May 2024 at Cloverdale Retreat Café, Priory Park, Bedford

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

1 **Apologies for absence** were received from Diana Readhead, Chris Wedge and Christopher Linton-Willoughby.

2 **Minutes of last meeting held on Tuesday 19 March 2024 and Matters Arising.**  
The minutes were agreed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.

3 **Update from Country Park Guardian.**

**Putnoe Wood** Jon noted that it may be helpful to reduce the size of copping plots and revert to a 10 year rotation. This would give time for the Friends to thoroughly complete work on each plot in the period between the end of leaf-fall and before ground conditions force them to stop. Mick suggested that reverting to working until 4pm would give more time to do work.

**Hillfort** Jon commented that a few trees in the Orchard had been pruned rather hard. Helen noted that these were trees that had missed being pruned last season. It was agreed that hard pruning should be avoided in the future. Jon will try to arrange for a pruning refresher training session, as it was some years since the last one. He commented on another successful Wassail event in January. He reminded Friends that volunteers from Aylesbury Vale will visit the site on 5 June.

4 **Future Tasks and Events**

John Wallace presented his report and work to be addressed in the near future.

#### **Putnoe Wood**

- Managing small balsam
- Clear debris and overhanging growth from brook
- Repair bench on central ride
- Erect new bench using ash planks from Helen and posts from Jon. If required, Peter said he would ask the Airedale if some of their donation towards new benches on the hillfort could be used for benches in the wood.
- Cut back spring growth over-hanging paths.
- Bridge over ditch on south side of wood. Mick is waiting for wood to make a permanent repair. In the meantime the temporary repairs are sound.

#### **Hillfort**

- When water level in the moat has reduced, inspect path flooded by overspill from moat and repair if necessary
- Clear debris from moat and ponds when suitable.
- Install new benches on hillside meadow
- Remedy problem with main hanging post to meadow gate when water table in the ground has reduced

John is currently having some problems with walking on uneven ground especially on the hillfort. Dave suggested a rota of volunteers should work with John recording volunteers' attendance, allocating and co-ordinating tasks and giving instructions. Mick and Lynn volunteered and a rota will be drawn up. Other volunteers would be welcome.

## 5 Financial Matters

Peter presented his Financial Report as at 13 May 2024.

| Category           | Brought Forward £      | Current Balances £     | Change £   |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Money held in bank | 111.72 (361.72)        | 312.72 (562.72)        | 201        |
| Petty cash         | 22.08                  | 22.08                  | 0          |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>133.80 (383.80)</b> | <b>334.80 (584.80)</b> | <b>201</b> |

NB: figures in brackets indicate actual balances and include £250 funds for benches.

### Transactions since last report:

£201 has been raised through voluntary donations by members (18 members have donated) giving a balance of £334.80 for group expenditure. Voluntary donations will be discussed at the AGM. Dave will also enquire if Ravensden Council could make a donation.

### Income:

**Total Income** £201.00

### Outgoings:

**Total outgoings:** £0.00

**Month Net change** + £201.09

### Comments:

The donation of £250 given to the group in September by Airedale Nursing Home has not yet been spent (intended for 2 x benches for the Hillfort area). Helen has donated the Ash planks for the bench seats and Jon believes he has the timber for the leg posts and he will check. It was suggested the donation could be used to contribute to a replacement for the existing bench at the top of the hillside. Additional funding will be needed for this purchase. Cost of a suitable replacement to be sought.

## 6 Reports from members

**6.1** Marion has been in conversation with staff at **Castle Newnam** school regarding their plans for the Year 4 pupils' geography fieldtrip studying land-use in Mowsbury Park and Putnoe Wood during the morning of Thursday 13 June. There will be 3 groups of students rotating between studying the Wood, the use of the park and who uses the park. The school is working out the programme, and Friends have been asked to help with groups in the Wood.

**6.2** In Chris's absence, John reported on the **Green Flag** visit to the Hillfort on 8<sup>th</sup> May by Verity Roberts. Her verbal feedback was very positive, and the final report and verdict will be known in July. Putnoe Wood will be subject to a 'Mystery Shopper' inspection with the result in July.

**7 Any other business** There was no other business.

## 8 Date of next General Meeting

7.00pm Tuesday 9 July 2024 at Cloverdale Retreat Café, Priory Park, Bedford.