

FRIENDS OF PUTNOE WOOD and MOWSBURY HILLFORT

Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 March 2019 at Cloverdale Retreat Café, Priory Country Park

Members present: Jon Bishop, Robert Bright, Fiona Bucknall, Lynn Caudrey, Diana Readhead, John Wallace, Marion Wallace, Chris Wedge, Helen Wilkie, John Wilkie, Allison Wilkins, Andy Wilkins,

1 **Apologies for absence** were received from Mick Lilliman, Chris Moss, Dave Parratt and Jane Warner. In Dave's absence, John Wallace took the Chair.

2 **Minutes of last meetings**

2.1 **Special General Meeting held on Tuesday 22 January 2019.** Agreed as an accurate record

2.2 **General Meeting held on Tuesday 22 January 2019.** Agreed as an accurate record.

3 **Update from Country Park Guardian**

Jon Bishop reported. Both sites were looking good and Jon thanked the Friends for their work over the winter. He hoped that in the coming months the Friends would be able to enjoy the environment that had been created.

4 **Review of activities carried out in 2018.**

Lynn had produced documents covering activities in Putnoe Wood and the Hillfort which had been circulated with the Agenda for the 22 January meeting. John Wallace thanked Lynn for producing these.

Discussion took place regarding the **Hillfort**. As a new member of the group and a regular visitor to the site, Fiona's opinion as to the impact of the Friends' work was sought; she felt that it had been much improved over recent years and a good balance between the needs of nature and archaeology achieved.

4.1 **Issues arising from HLS March 2018 site meeting.**

4.1.1 **Dead hedging** was discussed, in particular removal for burning of the remaining dead hedging around the inner island. Lynn noted that much still remained intact and showed little signs of rotting down due to it being very dry, despite having been in situ for seven years. No firm decision was made as to removal, but the matter will be kept under consideration.

4.1.2 **Creation of a southerly Viewpoint from the raised walkway.** This had been suggested during the site visit, but the Friends agreed not to proceed.

4.1.3 **Rabbit damage** to the site had increased in the last year. Jon will investigate methods of controls.

5 **Future Tasks and Events.**

John Wallace reported.

6.1 **Putnoe Wood.** Future work to be carried out included path clearance and edge trimming, clearance of the western ditch and removal of material from immediate area; a spring wild flower survey which could include Mark Rutherford Students. It was noted that Laura from the Wildlife Trust had agreed to do a baseline survey this spring which would inform Claire Pick, BBC Economic Development Officer, in drawing up a Management Plan.

5.2 Mowsbury Hillfort. Future work to be carried out included: completion of bramble clearance on the southern edge of the site to create rough grassland with trees and controlled bramble patches; removal of dogwood and brambles from meadow, courtyard and ramparts; clearance of pond and maintenance of northern viewpoint; management of nettles in southern orchard (some to be left for insects). It was agreed that the orchard would benefit from renewal of labels on trees to include stating the variety of the fruit. Chris Wedge will make enquiries at Metrosigns and Jon will enquire about Council in-house signage.

7 Financial Matters

John Wilkie presented the latest figures.

Cash in Bank	£947.14
Petty Cash	£10.00
TOTAL	£957.14

Transactions since last report:

Income:

Tea sales	£10.00
Wassail donations	£149.36
Hemlock Morris donation	£100.00
Ward funding	£450.00

Total Income **£709.36**

Outgoings:

Wassail costs	£47.70
Purchase flask	£22.49
Donation to Tibbs	£191.66

Total outgoings: **£261.85**

Summary of Wassail

Received in donations from attendees	£149.36
Received from Hemlock Morris	£100.00
Total received	£249.36

Cost, batteries	£10.00
Cost, pies juice etc	£47.70
Total cost	£57.70

Available for donation **£191.66**

Ward Funding. This has been received. Dave had submitted quotations for the bid covering the purchase of pruning saws and shears. After discussion it was agreed that an ad hoc meeting on site will be convened when Dave is present to finalise purchase details and the necessary accounting paperwork signed. Once the items have been received, John Wilkie will submit the required evidence that the purchases have been made in accordance with the original bid to Rebecca Taylor.

8 Any Other Business

8.1 Hazeldene School visit to Putnoe Wood. Marion is in discussion with the school to arrange a guided visit for 60 pupils on Friday 26 April as part of the school's celebrations around Earth Day on 22 April. Marion will make a pre-tour school visit on 25 April. A number of the Friends have agreed to guide the walks, and it is hoped that Nicky will be able to help. A preparatory walk by the guides will take place on 24 April.

8.2 Mark Rutherford Students. Marion reported that of the 7 students who had started out as volunteers, 4 remain. Certificates will be awarded for 6 or more hours' work. Sam Baker is keen to recruit a new set of volunteers from Year 12. After discussion it was agreed that an individual student's experience could be enhanced by pairing them with a mentor from among the Friends while they were working on site.

8.3 Requests for guided walks. Diana had received two requests: Kempston WI – an evening walk on Tuesday 18 June (agreed), and the Black Tom Walking Group on a date to be agreed.

8.4 Old Butts and nearby pond. Robert enquired about wildlife in these areas, but it was noted that both these sites were outside the Friends' area of operation.

9 Date of next meeting

7.00pm Tuesday 26 March 2019. Location to be confirmed.