

Annual General Meeting of ECONET

7th September 2009

Parks Department Offices, Prospect Park 7:30pm

Present:

Alan Stevens
Anne Latto
Dave Booth (RBC)
Dave Kenny
Jenny Cottée
John Lerpiniere (Acting Chair)
Judith Oliver
Oonagh Kelleher (BTCV, Minutes)

Apologies:

Tricia Marcouse, Steve Ayers

Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Judith, Dave Booth and Mrs Sheila Ward [*owner of the horses that occupy the field next to Clayfield*] had a meeting with Defra regarding the ragwort issue. They came to a compromise agreement to remove all ragwort from the two fields in Clayfield nearest the horses and to reduce the amount in the third where a species of hover fly which depends on ragwort has been found.

Election of Officers

Kit was re-elected as chair in her absence and Alan was re-elected as treasurer.

News & Updates

Conserve Reading on Wednesdays (CROW) CROW have a full agenda till March 2010. They had a great Summer with an event every week.

Clayfield Copse On the 26th September a Woodland Management Day has been organised. They need bird boxes and bat boxes to put on show at the event - did any one in the group have any that they could loan them? At the event there will be guided walks to educate people on how the wood needs managing. Judith and Oonagh to liaise regarding BTCV printing flyer for the event.

There is also interested in doing some tree planting in November and it was mentioned that Caversham Globe may have some money for trees.

Mapledurham Playing Fields Bat Evening on 26th June with about 20 people attending. No task activities over the summer, will resume in the autumn.

McIlroy Park About 7 people out every session. Over the winter they will continue thinning holly and other clearance work.

Balmore Walk Dave Kenny reported that there has been a reawakening of this group recently so we hope to hear more from them soon.

Tilehurst Globe Tilehurst Globe has been improving gardens at Corwen Road Flats particularly focusing on the flower borders. They are trying to sort out a programme that varies from mucky work to easy going, not so strenuous work. Jenny will circulate the dates when she has organised them and will send to Alan to advertise.

There may also be an opportunity to do some work in Blundells Copse. Originally it was thought this might be a CROW task but as its programme is full, it was suggested organising a weekend task to encourage the involvement of local residents.

Caversham Globe Caversham Globe is considering doing some tree planting. They have organised battery recycling points at 3 shops in Caversham.

BTCV BTCV have appointed Tori Yates as their new Volunteer Officer at the Reading office. Her position is funded through the Earley Charity. She will be assisting Oonagh in the office and also leading volunteer days and site visits. There is a similar position still waiting to be filled which is also at the Reading Office. BTCV has also appointed another member of staff, Tristan Glenn, who is dealing with volunteer enquiries directed from the Job Centre Plus. He is placing these volunteers with several organisations in several sectors. BTCV also have several training courses available, for details see <http://www2.btcv.org.uk/display/training>.

Health & Safety

No issues were raised.

Accounts and Grant Application

End of year finances (31st March) were in line with the projection at the last meeting. Year end bank balance £2652.

So for this year Econet has spent £445 (tools - £320, volunteer expenses - £95, printing and admin. - £30) and received £660 (RBC Grant - £500, task charges - £160).

Alan currently working on this year's grant application, John offered assistance. Alan has emailed Clayfield, Mapledurham, McIlroys and Waterloo Meadows asking for input.

Publicity

What a wonderful website!

Tools and Tool Store

Econet would like a new arrangement with RBC in regards storage because of continuing problems of use (and occasionally misuse and loss) of their tools by others.

Friends of Clayfield Copse - 20th Anniversary

It was agreed Econet should pursue the idea holding a Woodlands Day (as in 2005) next June to mark the 'Friends' anniversary. Funding in the region of £3k - £4k would

be required. It was suggested that through FWAG and TVERC they maybe able to access BeWild support. Judith will continue to look into it

Events - Christmas Sale

BBOWT don't have enough trees to sell so may join with Econet to sell cards and calendars. Sale planned to be held at Caversham Court again but need to check with offices first, Oonagh will contact GreenSpace. It will be on Saturday 12th December (and possibly the 19th December). Need to find source for mistletoe, holly, pine cones and trees!

AOB

BTCV have been asked by the Earley Charity to put in an application to do more work around Reading. BTCV want to outline some way they could assist Econet in the future, e.g. giving training, allocating staff time to help in anyway, doing site visits, finding work etc. BTCV are looking for suggestions by the end of September. Alan and John suggested helping in some way with Lower Southcote Allotments, Oonagh and Alan will be in contact in regarding this. [*There is a triangular area of land within Lower Southcote Allotments bounded by the railway line, Holy Brook and the allotment plots which becomes waterlogged over winter and therefore of little use for allotments. Dave Booth has suggested Econet might like to manage this area for wildlife.*]

Date of Next Meeting

1st March 2010, Parks Department Offices, Prospect Park at 7.30pm.

Footnote

During the discussion regarding the financing of a future Woodlands Day, Judith queried why the Friends of Clayfield Copse retained their own bank account and why the funds had not been transferred to Econet. Alan briefly explained that Econet was originally envisaged as being an umbrella group, with its insurance providing cover for the associated 'Friends of' groups and CROW. Unfortunately this arrangement was not clearly set out in Econet's constitution and also proved unsatisfactory to Econet's insurers. As a result CROW merged with Econet, its bank account was closed and the funds transferred to Econet. The 'Friends of' retained their independence (and bank accounts) but agreed all practical work and activities would be run by Econet on their behalf.

The feeling of the meeting appeared to be that there would be greater clarity if the associated 'Friends of' groups (Balmore Walk, Clayfield Copse, Mapledurham Playing Fields, McIlroy Park and Waterloo Meadows) also merged with Econet.

An item to discuss this further will be added to the next meeting's agenda.