

Minutes of Econet Meeting

Thursday 5th September 2013 at 7.30pm

RBC Parks Dept Offices, Prospect Park

Present

Anne Latto, Judith Oliver, John Lerpiniere, Alan Stevens, Dave Booth, Kit Brownlee

Apologies

Tricia Marcouse, Dave Kenny, Steve Ayres

(BTCV will only attend in future if there are matters of particular concern to them)

Minutes from Previous Meeting – presented, read and accepted

Matters Arising – none

Election of Officers

The current officers were re-elected:

Chair – Kit Brownlee

Treasurer – Alan Stevens

News and Updates

CROW

Continued its good support and full programme. Tasks to start of October have been arranged and the winter programme soon will be.

Friends of Clayfield Copse

Have developed a tree trail. A pamphlet is being prepared and will be made available in local centres. A walk is planned for 3rd November.

A Dawn Chorus and a Summer Walk were both well attended and successful.

Friends of Mapledurham Playing Fields

Will resume tasks in October.

Friends of Mcllroy Park

Some advertising has successfully brought in new volunteers.

Friends of Waterloo Meadows

Now enjoying much better support.

Pond gloves have been purchased after volunteers working in the pond contracted swimmer's itch (intense itching arising from an immune reaction after the skin has been infected by water-borne microscopic parasite).

Fortunately the condition while unpleasant clears up after about a week and has no long term affects.

Newbury and Thatcham Green Gym

Group continue alternating tasks between Thatcham Discovery Centre and Burghclere Common most weeks. Volunteer numbers have fallen off slightly in recent weeks however work undertaken has been well received particularly at Burghclere.

The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)

Regular Thursday and occasional Saturday tasks with up to ten volunteers.

Friends of Reading Old Cemetery

Have joined ECONET.

A very successful spring Open Day attracted about 150 visitors and included a variety of walks and other activities.

A successful event was held which included a dawn chorus walk and moth trapping and this resulted in an excellent presentation on BBC South's Urban Jungle programme

A History of Garden Cemeteries walk is planned for September.

Future conservation work is expected to be carried out by CROW and TCV once a plan is agreed with Giles Sutton, RBC ecologist.

Fobney Island

An Opening Day at the new **Fobney Island** wetland reserve was most successful with talks from Martin Salter and Environment Agency followed by guided tours in the morning, and classes of children from a local primary school enjoyed the afternoon's activities. (The Friends of Fobney Island group is not part of, but enjoys links with, ECONET).

Health and Safety

The only concern was the occurrence of 'Swimmer's Itch' at Waterloo Meadows – see above.

Accounts

Bank balance at end of last financial year (March) £4,812. Since then we have received £3,420 including £1,020 in task charges, £362 from Bean Pole Day and £2,000 from the RVA for Reading Old Cemetery which is likely to be used to provide interpretation boards for the site. The main items of expenditure this year have been £250 task costs (refreshments and travel expenses) and £360 for tools.

Bank balance is currently £7,618. Known expenditure for the remainder of the year is in the region of £930.

We have received an invitation from *The Conservation Volunteers* to participate in a scheme to support local conservation groups whereby they will pay part of the group's insurance costs using funding from the Earley Charity. The payment would be for 500 volunteer days plus the administration fee, a saving of £160 for Econet. There would also be the option to increase public liability cover from £5 to £10 million if needed. In return the group would be subject to an annual inspect. Initially the scheme is to run for 3 years. It was agreed we would accept the invitation.

Publicity and Events

Bean Pole Day (review)

Event successful. Access to drive in was appreciated.

Possibility of supplying local allotment societies with bean poles was not considered of value for effort involved.

Judith O. will discover the date of Bean Pole Day in 2014.

CBeebies

Event on Christchurch Meadows during the summer school holidays attracted 12,000 people and there was much interest in the activities which ECONET and other groups provided.

Thought should be given to promotion of ECONET at such events including banner and very simple, clear map showing wider options for conservation in the area.

Christmas Tree Sale

Sales of logs and of birch twigs should be discontinued.

29th November was agreed for tree cutting ready for 7th December sale. 10am – 1pm was suggested for tree selling. (*This conflicts with the banner which states 10am – 2pm*).

Some considered ECONET volunteers were not easily identified and there was discussion of wearing tabards, sashes or caps with ECONET in green letters; possible options to be investigated.

Alex now has a smaller van but has offered to drive larger vehicle if borrowed or hired; Anne to ask Alex whether he would investigate obtaining a van.

Judith O to ask Francis of 'Ways and Means' whether they would again like to provide refreshments in the 'selling area' or from the kiosk.

Tools

No issues

'Improving Reading Woodlands' Consultation

All are invited to look at the proposed Management Plans and to attend any of the three consultation meetings.

AOB

No matters raised

Next meeting

Thursday 27th February 2014 at 7:30 in The Pavillion, Prospect Park (thanks to RBC)