

**Minutes of Econet Meeting  
Monday, 7th March 2013 at 7:30pm  
RBC Parks Department Offices, Prospect Park**

Present:

Steve Ayers, Dave Booth, Kit Brownlee (Chair / minutes), John Lerpiniere, Tricia Marcouse  
Alan Stevens

**Apologises for Absence:**

Oonagh Kelleher, Judith Oliver, Anne Latto, Mike Cox, Christine Cliburn

**Minutes From Previous Meeting (12/9/12)**

Accepted

**Matters Arising**

None

**News & Updates**

**Crow**

On average around 10 people per task are volunteering. There is currently a full program of work with Ufton Court being added to the work sites. Ufton Court site is woodland with mature oaks & Hazel coppice

**Friends of Clayfield Copse**

No report

**Friends of Mapledurham**

Has 6 to 7 regular volunteers, enhanced on one occasion by the presence of Councillor Isobel Ballsdon. Work consists mainly of general tidying of the site. Community Service volunteers assisted in the laying of woodchip. It is hoped to do more planting to give clumps of 2 or 3 mature trees (Tm can assist/advise with supplies). There is an increased usage of the site by walkers & dog walkers.

**Friends of McIlroy Park**

Membership is down to 3 & we need to examine ways to increase this. More exciting tasks? Detailed management plan? Crow to kick off the next series of work parties (thus heartening the volunteers) Increased publicity? KHB to get further posters into Tilhurst Library & other Reading Libraries

**Friends of Waterloo Meadows**

Consists solely of 3 volunteers who seem happy as they are. No help has ever been requested

**RUWG**

Still keeping watch on planning applications. Very few coming through currently.

**The Conservation Volunteers**

Have a reasonable turnout on tasks which currently consist of tree planting (all whips) at sites in Maidenhead, Winnersh, Early & Caversham

## **Other**

### **Friends of Cemetery Junction**

Now in existence led by Teresa Verney-Brooks, who has emailed asking to join ECONET. Unanimous agreement

### **Friends of Lousehill Copse**

Now in existence led by Dave Booth Joining ECONET ?

### **Friends of Fobney Island (Fobney Island Wetland Nature reserve)**

Friends of group now in existence with support from Reading Borough Council (Environment Agency and Thames Rivers Trust) They have a FACEBOOK page. It is not known if they will form part of ECONET

### **Transition Town Reading**

Year 1 of a 3 year Community Orchard Planting project lead by Rich Waring, with a grant from the Forestry Commission, took off with the planting of 2 orchards, one in Prospect Park (40 trees near the old orchard) and the other in Waterloo Meadows (50 trees). Planting in 3 other sites over the next 2 years is planned.

Volunteers from Reading University took part & some halls of residence will be adopting some of the sites

### **Volunteer Recruitment Mcilroy Park Waterloo Meadows**

See above

## **Health & Safety**

No issues

## **Accounts**

Currently £5K in the bank with £600 more to come. Outgoings still to come £250

Income to date around £3k

Insurance next year like to increase & we will lose around £800 income from a) reduced tasks.

## **Publicity & Events**

### **Xmas Tree Sale**

See attached report. Points to note:

- 1) Few punters seem to know what/who the sale was in aid of .Responses
  - a) Improved use of banner
  - b) Volunteers to use tabards as per BBOWT.
  - c) Information leaflets near cash desk saying money for charity/conservation
  - d) Xmas cards ornaments with same information
  
- 2) More transport needed if we want more trees for sale Response
  - a) Contact J Mould to borrow one (TM)
  - b) Hire van/pickup truck for the (Rabbit Van Hire ? Rushall Farm ?)

### **Bean pole day**

Not going well to date. A number of previous exhibitors have either not yet responded or have declined for this year. The allotment will not be open this year. Confirmed are BBOWT (PLANT SALES) , RSPB, Reading Beekeepers, Tilehurst Horticultural Soc, Nat Hist., Butterfly Conservation.

First Aider4s: Kit B, Trish M, Alan S.  
Publicity paid for by Local Estate Agent.

**Tools**

There is an adequate supply of tools which are replaced as needed

**AOB**

**Kings Meadow**

Has been subject to flooding & the area near the flats has been under water for 6 months .  
Two standards are down & there are a large number od dead coppice stools.  
Clearing/replanting will need to be done in the autumn.  
Transport is required for removing material for shredding

**Blundells Copse/ Loushill Copse**

May benefit plans for RBC to partnership with the Forestry Commission rejuvenate Readings  
Woodlands for the people that use them and for the wildlife that lives to ensure their future survival.

**Date of next meeting (AGM):**

5/9/13 RBC Parks Department Offices, Prospect Park. 7.30 pm

## **Xmas Tree Sales 20012**

### **On the day:**

Selling approx 100 trees we could have sold more, from 3ft to over 6 ft., (taking about twice as much as last year! ) we had 20 poor specimens left. ( RBC are not recycling trees this year!.) Conservation Volunteers are clearing the remainder.

Logs and birch twigs did not sell, perhaps more selling techniques are needed if we want to promote these.

Thank you to the many volunteers who helped with selling and humping trees around, they smoothed the path considerably

An attempt to count sales and sizes, was made this year, having a central point to collect money seemed to work.

We could have spent more time getting prices standardised, perhaps the board measuring the height could be resurrected.

Most sales occurred between 9 .45 and 11.00. A rough poll i think would show many are returning customers, some referred to seeing the banner, some had looked us up on line, not sure what local press contributed. ( Adrian sold one tree direct to a passing motorist!). ,

I felt the presence of Bbowt and Christine and RSPB contributed to the atmosphere and passing awareness. Ways and Means I felt were a very welcome presence, but needed more space, they were smothered in trees. Perhaps more could be made of refreshments next year. ( it slows down purchasing time! ) . I hope they all had a successful day and will come again

The banner was good ( though it needs keeping anchored in the wind) also perhaps we need a couple of A frames outside on the day listing what is going on.

**Storage facility.** The second door much easier to manoeuvre. The sheds do look in a fragile condition, but we need somewhere for tables, boards etc. RBC have suggested that if garages do deteriorate we could use the allotments for storage of trees.

One complaint (so far), cars blocking the pavement! .? Not sure what we can do, we did have a volunteer out there when we heard of the problem.

It was good to have keys and access to water and toilets.

### **Collection, and cutting**

Although the site is some distance and gaining permission seemed tortuous, they are good quality trees. Thanks to Bbowt for organising that. We hope we can return there next year.

Although we had, ( thanks to CT,Alex, John,and Steve, ) one car, one trailer, one large van and one small van , we had to leave some behind, it is not feasible to make more than one journey, we must decide whether it is worth searching for more transport.