

Friends of Carpenters Wood

Committee Meeting Thursday 10th September, 12.30ish at Beech Glade (in the Woods)

Present: Cllr Barbara Green - Chair
Donald Maclean – Vice-Chair (Dmac)
Stephen Ramsey – Treasurer
Martin O’Connor – CMS
Darren Monk – TRDC (for the last half hour) (DM)
Frank Mahon-Daly
Pam Ferrar
Tony Edwards
Lesley Edwards
Oona Lean
Diana Whitney
Michael Eaton

Barbara Christie provided written representation.

1. Minutes of 4th March Meeting – **Agreed**

2. Matters arising from Minutes not dealt with elsewhere
 - Grant Application – we were successful in our bid for a £500 Grant from TRDC and this is now in the bank.
 - Ragwort Removal – BC has been removing Ragwort during her walks in July and August. Friends and horse-riders do not consider this a major problem at present. Therefore no need for further action.
 - Garden Waste at rear of gardens – this also seems to be less of a problem. Some complaints may have been due to the tree felling (and resultant brash) confirmed to have been carried out by TRDC last year at the back of Carpenters Wood Drive. A watching brief is needed for garden waste - any problems to be reported to TRDC.
 - Insurance – BG recently organised the ‘Friends’ insurance – we are now fully covered for personal accident, public liability up to £5m, and £1,000 cover for tools. This has been paid for by TRDC.
 - Tools – BG and TE agreed on tools to be purchased and these have now arrived. A breakdown of items purchased is included in the Treasurers Report. Chorleywood House Estate Friends Group has agreed to share their brush-cutter with us so we don’t need to buy one of these at present.

3. Treasurers Report

- SR reported that we have a balance in the bank of £527.19 after paying for tools and website registration.
- Very little response has been received following our request for voluntary donations. It was suggested we should send out another request this Autumn. If we are to obtain further Grant funding we need to be able to show that we have raised some funds ourselves.
(Action BG)

4. Special Item – Fires in the Wood!

- A number of fires have been lit in the woods over the last 6 months, some small and probably by local youths, others by more organised groups. Concerns were expressed regarding the danger to the woodland and to surrounding houses especially when the ground is dry. Access into the woods for emergency vehicles is almost impossible. MO reassured the group about the likelihood of broadleaf trees catching fire. Apparently it is almost impossible to ‘set alight’ broadleaf trees due to the amount of moisture in them. The Larch plantation would, however, be more susceptible. By clearing Beech Glade as an open area for ‘picnickers’ we have reduced the probability of damage by fire, since fires lit in this area could do little harm overall. Removal of brush piles has also helped. FL agreed to remove more of the felled logs from the Birch plantation. **(Action FL)**

It was also agreed to investigate putting up NO FIRES notices. These need to be ‘official’ woodland signs rather than something we do ourselves. **(BG to discuss with TRDC)**

5. Report on Progress of Volunteer Group and forward plan

- We have had a very successful first year. Few sessions have been missed through bad weather – the sun always seems to shine for us! Most of the Spring was spent continuing the holly removal, thinning out the Birch plantation, clearing pathways, litter picking and, of course, brash burning. We have gained some new members, and lost none of our old ones!
- The following tasks have been identified for the coming year –
 1. Further Holly removal in the lower central section of Carpenters Wood, near to Whitelands Avenue.
 2. Laurel removal and disposal – in collaboration with TRDC.
 3. Continue with the Birch thinning
 4. Remove holly by the fallen log on the edge of the horse field to create a viewing seat.
 5. Re-open the ancient track through the centre of Carpenters Wood.

6. Ash thinning by the barrel arch in Whitelands Wood – in collaboration with contractors.
7. Mapping the Woods – a more accurate small scale map showing some of the ancient features. MO agreed to provide an A5 copy of the map for this purpose. **(Action MO)**
8. Beech thinning in Carpenters Wood

6. Review of 5 Year Plan – work not yet covered for 2009.

- **The 30% thin of the upper plantation of Larch in Hillas Wood** is due to be undertaken this Autumn. DM has contacted a contractor who has agreed to start soon. All necessary notices have been given for this work to go ahead. Volunteers can support this work by clearing brash/needles once work is completed.
- **Further thinning around Broadleaf Trees, southern end of Hillas Wood.** It is hoped that the same contractors can be used to do this work.
- **Fell 0.3 ha of conifer in Carpenters Wood** – this is also outstanding for 2009 and needs to be scheduled in TRDC timetable.
- **Remove Rabbit Fence** – Friends to investigate whether this is something they can do. TRDC to collect cut wire.
- **Improve Entrance at Whitelands Avenue** – the Parish Council have an allocation of money to maintain this entrance. BG to discuss what improvements can be made to tidy up the entrance to the woods. Dog litter bin needs replacing, new signage with friends information board and NO FIRES sign would be good. **(Action BG)**
- **Funding for works** – DM stated that appropriate TRDC/Forestry Commission funding is in place for this coming year.

7. Training Courses

- SR and TE expressed interest in attending the brush-cutter training due some time in October. Several others expressed interest in Woodland Management courses due in November. MO to confirm dates. **(Action MO)**

8. Update on Website and Leaflet

- BG thanked Dmac for his fantastic efforts with the website. We now have a fully functioning website with recent photos and updates as they occur.
- Further work needs to be done on the Leaflet. **(Action BG)**

9. A.O.B.

- Discussions around raising the profile of the group identified a number of approaches,
 1. Carrying out work nearer to the main Whitelands Ave. entrance
 2. Notice Board at the entrance with updates on current work
 3. Attendance at village events such as Village Day in the summer and Xmas late Night.

Dangerous Trees were also raised. DM agreed to survey. One fallen tree to be removed next week

10. Date of next Meeting - **Thursday, March 4th 2010 1.00pm**