**Minutes of Friends of Bradgers Hill – Wednesday 13 July 2016, 19:00 – 20:30**

**Present:** Scott Ashdown, Trevor Tween, Margaret Hetherington, James Hetherington, Trevor Tween, Paul Hammond, Charulata Patel, Judy Entwistle, Alan Mason.

**Apologies:** Kathryn Knights, Dave Coupe & Judith Batson

Paul noted that the group’s first year of activity was now completed and offered his sincere thanks to a great group of volunteers.

**Minutes of 8 June 2016**: Agreed.

**June Orchid walk:** Many thanks to Trevor, a big success - having seen all 4 types of orchid we hoped to, plus a very good turnout. Particularly interesting to see the pyramid species in the lower meadow adjacent to Bushmead Road.

**Our Wildlife Weekend 15 – 17 July**

**Friday Night 15 July**: Jude and Gordon will do their respective talks on bats and moths.

Followed by bat detection and moth tracking. We will produce a list of moths identified.

**Saturday 16 July:** Bob Tarron volunteered to lead the walk to the Lily Arms and back at 11am.

**Sunday Litter Pick (10am 17 July):**The council have supplied a number of new litter pickers. Thanks to Margaret for the marketing has gone up in local shops. Aim to walk up the hill and collect smaller items.

**Astronomy Evening (pm)** – In the area that backs on to Hay Wood. There have been a few comments that if we do this in term time again please can we have on Friday or Saturday night to allow children to participate.

**Post Meeting Note:** All events went ahead, with exceptional turnout for the Creatures of the Night and Astronomy evenings. Smaller numbers at litter pick and Lily Walk.

**Remaining 2016 Programme of Events**

* No August Meeting
* 14 September – Annual General Meeting as per our Constitution
* 12 October - Business Meeting – Lionel Shaw guest speaker (if we can get in touch)
* 9 November – Business Meeting - StopsleyFarmhouse owner guest speaker – John Young
* 20 November – Litter Pick
* 10 December – Christmas Walk with refreshments at Wardown Park Museum, reminder to check in October about refreshments (Action – Abi to diarise)
* 14 December – Christmas meal at Pizza Il Forno (Action – Abi to book)

**Matters Arising**

**Interpretation Signage** - £2,000 funding confirmed for this project. Paul met to discuss next steps with Charulata.

A design company are now engaged, the same designer who designed the map for the Wildlife Weekend Map last year.

The proposed sign would have a permanent map on the left handside and two lockable sections on the right, with space for 2 A4 notices. Another option for the one of the right hand side sections is a ‘seen this month’ board, which was popular with all. The designer will be commissioned to draw up a brief on this basis. The designer willneed access to sharp local images for the map part, can also use free IStock images.

The Parks Department will query possible location. Suggested areas were: 1) off Fairfield Avenue where the steps begin, 2) The greens at Gleneagles Drive/Hawkfields and 3) perhaps another one further up Bradgers Hill Road (possible site of vandalism) or near to the playground off Hancock Drive.

**Slow Worms:**Trevor reported that the Wildlife Trust are continuing surveying during August. A trio of lizards was recently spotted and photographed by Paul, a potential photograph for the website.

**Clearance of Meadow adjacent to Bushmead Road:**It costs approximately £250 per day to clear the meadow, the Council would be grateful for any grant money we could contribute or alternatively volunteers time for raking. Ideal time for clearance would be in October on a Monday or Thursday. A number of us are interested in training for tools for such projects. Agreed to put this anAgenda item for September (Action: Abi). Trevor advised that the necessary tools to be trained on would be a1) strimmerbrush cutter, 2) chainsaw and 3) use of herbicides. Training offered by Shuttleworth College, funding sometimes available.

**Butterfly Surveys** – Continuing under the leadership of Dave with good numbers recorded.

Possible breeding birds survey in 2017, might need to commission Andy Grimshaw to come back to us.

**SSSI** – No update from Natural England. Paul still plans to write to Kelvin Hopkins (Action – Paul).

**BushmeadCommunity Centre Future Operating Plans** – Setting up the Charity and drafting the Constitution.A good group of volunteers is established and momentum is picking up.

**Finance** – Sent off application toThe Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to join, funded by Paul and he will be reimbursed once funding is received (reimbursement also needed for the website hosting). Applied for a start-up and ongoing grants of £250 and £350, will also be applying for tools funding later on.

Bank account paperwork is also submitted. Paul and Charulata will act as the initial signatories. Can add more signatories later on to give more scope for contingency purposes

Once the bank account is open we can also set up a Just Giving.com page to encourage donations. When we have sufficient funding we will be able to have a second look at signage needs.

Agreed to have Finance as a standing Agenda item (Action: Abi).

**Your Say Your Way Funding** - £1250 available to bid for, agreed we will bid for the whole amount to fund our running costs for the year. This would cover our guest speaker, website, tool training and venue costs.

We will have to pitch to the community who vote on their preferred causes. Voting likely to be in October 2016 – we will need a good turnout from Friends to have a chance of securing funding.

**Our Website** – Looking great and massive thanks to Scott for his time and creativity.

**AOB**

**Membership (Scott)** – Scott suggested it would be worth revising this. Options include a possible annual fee of £5 per year to give a voting right, children would be included with adult membership. We could offer free events to members that we would otherwise charge for. Other benefits could be access to our website Members Zone or offer out a library. Another option would be a membership form with a voluntary donation of minimum of a few pounds.

Scott offered to draw up a proposal on membership for the AGM (Action: Scott)

**Old Bedford Road Estates** (James) – Asked whether we would be able to secure permission to do trimming and obstacle removal. A more complete site survey is also needed to establish future project work, including clearing the unpassable path. (Action: James)

Also suggested that we approach the Council for £250 funding to get a conservation volunteer group to clear the public footpath, Trevor advised he would be very happy to supervise.

Bob reported that the Ramblers Association have already reported the access issues. Worth chasing up Keith Dove/MetiaKatechia at the council – James offered to survey and take photos as part of an assessment in liaison with Bob (Action: James & Bob).

**Offer of time:**Alan Mason offered admin help which was greatly received.

Trevor advised Esther was putting in a new Kissing Gate, at entrance to old sports centre driveway. Volunteers were welcome from 10-4pm on Saturday 16 July.