**Friends of Bradgers HillAnnual General Meeting**, 13 September 2016, 19:00 – 20:30

1. **Present:** Paul Hammond, Abi Coupe, David Coupe, Steve Lee, L Purser, Judy Entwistle, Margaret Hetherington, James Hetherington, Charulata Patel, Alan Mason, Rita Tarron, Bob Tarron, Mark Lysons and Scott Ashdown.
2. **Apologies:** Katherine Knights, Magda Lysons, Trevor Tween and Judith Batson.
3. **Minutes of July 2016**– Agreed.
4. **Wildlife Weekend July 2016** – All events were successful.

Lessons learnt:

* We have a list of bat species.
* Next year we will trial local walks, on the last Sunday of the month, suggestions include Barton, Hexton, Telegraph Hill, Caddington etc. Can also include seasonal mini rambles onBradgers Hill, to encourage families.
* Litter picks – Next year we will try to organise when the grass is cut and litter easily visible.

1. **2016 Remaining Events**

* **25 September –** Foraging walk led by Trevor Tween, meet at 11am at the Community Centre
* **12 October –** Talk from local farmer Lionel Shaw. Please send questions to Abi in advance.
* **9 November –**Talk from John Young, owner of Stopsley Common Farmhouse, Bushmead Road. We will ask Jon for permission to be filmed so we can upload it to the website.
* **20 November –** Litter Pick, meet at 10am at the Community Centre.
* **10 December –** Christmas walk led by Trevor Tween, finishing at Wardown House.
* **14 December –**Christmas Meal. Booked Pizza Il Forno, for 15 people.

1. **Interpretative Signage (Paul) -** £2k grant received for 2 signs, aiming for a large map showingaccess routes, text and photos. Also a space for a lockable cabinet for A4 notices, a wooden design is preferred. Two sites chosen: 1) by Fairfield Avenue roundabout, on the left 30 yards away from the Chiltern Arc sign, and 2) the green on Gleneagles Drive. The signs would be the first real markers of Bradgers Hill, up to us a group to update the contents and maintain where needed.
2. **Meadow clearance (Paul)** – Trevor previously asked if we would consider contributing £200 towards meadow maintenance, this would allow heavy duty clearance of the same area that was cleared last year. The work is usually done by the Conservation Volunteers. Alan Mason volunteered to help on a Monday and Thursday.

The Friendsagreed that if we get the grants set out below that we would be prepared to make a donation. **Action:** To ask Trevor at the next meeting if we can do some of the work ourselves, now we have the tools (details below).

1. **Butterfly Survey (Dave)** – Runs April – end October, must have 70% sunshine and 18 degrees to survey. Highlights:

* 18 surveys completed, 5 missed due to cooler weather in early summer.
* 24 species of butterfly, Dave has compiled a results summary table.
* 1404 butterflies spotted to date, with a peak in the 3rd week of July. June was wet, meaning that the peak was later than expected.
* Could add a butterfly walk as an event for schools next year and possibly also survey floral species.
* **Action (All):**Please send any butterfly photos to Scott for addition to the website.

1. **Bradgers Hill Right of Way (James) (Paper attached)** – James presented his Paper on the ‘Assessment of condition August 2016’ including rights of way map. James also took the Friends through a set of photos showing the lack of signage, some steps in a state of disrepair and heavy overgrowth along the Right of Way.The top nature trail is in a very good state, the lower nature trail is unpassable and needs significant work.

James preliminary estimate is that approximately 6 man days would be needed, plus materials and equipment, with an approximate total cost of £400 - £500 to keep the public right of way navigable and fit for purpose.

We will need to communicate with the Old Bedford Road Estates trust on our plans (who are said to be open to discussions), it was suggested that we do this via the Council.

**Action (James):**Agreed next steps are to walk the route with Trevor and a Conservation Volunteer to refine the estimate and allow creation of a project plan. Trevor is currently on leave.

1. **Funding bids (Paul &Charulata)**– We applied to the Conservation Volunteers for a £150 start up fund, which was approved and we are waiting for the funds.

We have also been granted £350 for tools (also awaited), which have been selected from B&Q, including loppers and saws etc. Storage will need to be found, it was suggested breaking the tools down into sets of 2 or 3 which are stored separately and hence more secure. Possible storage in the Community Centre from April 2017.

**Your Say Your Way Funding (Paul)** – Application bid for £450 for tools training, £150 for educational development resources, £250 for speakers’ fees, £100 meeting room hire, £50 website hosting and £50 marketing.

All bids will go to the 1 October presentations session at Bushmead Community Centre, Paul will have a 2 minute slot. **Action (All):** Please can as many as possible attend, to vote you must listen to all of the submissions and be a resident of Barnfield Ward. Sean Manning will send details through.

Sean from the Community Centre also made a successful application to Tesco for restore the ecological garden at the Community Centre. The minimum we will be awardedis £8,000 up to a maximum of £12,000. Voting in local Tesco’s begins this month.

Audit trails will be kept for all spend to show impact.

1. **Bank account (Charulata)**– Submitted an application for a Barclays Community Account with Paul and Charulata as named contacts, it was suggested previously the option of having a third named person, who can be added at any time once they complete the paperwork. Suggest this is Alan as our appointed Treasurer (see below).
2. **Annual Membership (Scott – Paper Attached)** – Scott presented his proposal for the Amendment to the Constitution of the Friends of Bradgers Hill (attached).

Scott sets out how the Friends were originally against the fee, however it now seems the right time to define proper membership and differentiate those that have shown commitment to the group. This would also add the element of protection from the worst case scenario that adverse events could include the removal of the committee or dissolution of the group. Scott’s paper sets out two potential membership categories:

* Basic friend – No annual membership, just completion of a membership form. Access to member only events (versus public events).
* Full friend – Nominal annual membershipfee e.g. £5 per person per year. This would offer voting rights, ability to stand for election on the committee, members area access only part of the website, discounted or free event entry etc. Other benefits as they become available.

The Paper also sets out terms for expulsion, proposed changes to voting and finances, all of which will enhance protection to the aims and objectives of the Friends.

The Friends welcomed Scott’s suggestions and agreed to them.

**Action:** Paul to update the Constitution and for the discussion to continue at the next meeting, particularly with regards to implementation of membership changes. We also need to ensure careful wording to ensures that being a ‘Full Friend’ does not carry individual liability.

**Action (Ongoing):** To consider an appropriate level of public liability insurance for future events.

1. **Annual Report (Paul - Attached)** – The first year has been very successful and we have maintained a regular cycle of well attended meetings with a sustained core membership of individuals willing to take on roles. These activities have all been done with zero budget.

Paul has also included detailed proposals for next year, which can be considered in more detail at a future meeting.

1. **Officer posts** – The following appointments were agreed by the Friends for the coming year:

* Organiser – To convene meetings and coordinate activities – **Charulata& Dave**
* Secretary – To carry out administrative activities that sustain the activities of the Friends – **Abi**
* Treasurer – To maintain accounts, banking arrangements and membership details - **Alan**
* Fundraising Officer – To seek opportunities for funding, prepare bids and evaluation - **Paul**
* Website Officer – To maintain and develop our online presence, including social media – **Scott**
* Conservation Officer (new) –To assist with the organisation of maintenance opportunities and liaise with relevant bodies - **Alan**
* Education Officer – To liaise with local nurseries, schools and the Sixth Form College with view to the provision of educational opportunities – **Vacant**
* Liaison Officer – Establishing and maintaining relationships with Luton and country wide groups with similar aims – **Vacant**
* Survey Officer – To organise volunteers for surveys, collate data and liaise with relevant bodies – **Dave**
* Events Officer – To organise and publicise speakers for monthly meetings and other events - **Charulata**
* Access Officer – To begin the task of mapping the major and minor routes on the hill, organising volunteers to keep these in good repair and seek opportunities to improve signposting – **James**
* Environment – To organise quarterly litter picks - **Margaret**

1. The Meeting closed at 20:55.