**Friends of Bradgers Hill Meeting – 11 January 2017**

1. **Present:**

Abi Coupe, Dave Coupe, Alan Mason, CharulataPatel, Bob Tarron, Rita Tarron, James Hetherington, Margaret Hetherington, Judy Entwistle, Trevor Tween and Paul Hammond.

1. **Apologies:**

Scott Ashdown, Mark Lysons.

1. **Minutes of November 2016**

Agreed.

1. **Interpretation Signage Update (Paul Hammond)**

Trevor reviewed draft text from James and sent commentson 11 January 2017. Next step is to see how this text will fit around the graphics. Trevor suggested giving consideration to adding some country code information e.g.warning people about fires and hot ashes etc. We will also need to request that the designer follows colour coding conventions on the map to denote bridal paths and rights of way etc.

Paul confirmed that £2k of LBC funds are allocated. ***Action: Paul to retrieve information on payment arrangements for the interpretation signage and to forward to Alan.***

1. **Finance (Alan Mason)**

The membership area of the website has been developed by Scott. Alan has shared a draft application form with Scott.***Action: Abi to ask Scott on the status of the membership application form. May be worth using Paul’s address as this has been used for the bank account.***

Alan has sent off our claim for £625 (50%) of our approved ‘Your Say Your Way Funding’. Alan has prioritised the items we claim for, as we will have to provide receipts for the first half of the spend before we ask for the remaining 50%. The £625 should be available in early February.

Part of the Your Say Your Way Funding was £450 for tools training. Charulata asked where we can acquire training? James suggested that he does not see a need to purchase power tools, asmost of the work so far has been done with hand tools and TCV have the ability to use power tools.

Trevor suggested that if we look to open up the northern side path, we might need to use power tools.Suggested tools for heavy duty work include: 1) Brush Cutter - (strimmer mechanism with a tri blade), which can be used with a circular blade to become a clearing saw. Different training is needed to use both of these, and2) Achain saw. Chain saw training must be refreshed periodically, as well as having appropriate safety kit. Clearance of the northern side of the hill is not an immediate priority.

Potential training providers include the Chilterns Conservation Board (in the past they have had subsides to provide discounted training) or Shuttleworth College.***Action: Trevor to speak to Esther to see if she is aware of any other tools training providers.***

James circulated a list of potential extra tool purchases. With a B&Q 10% Diamond Card discountcard we could probably afford everything on the list (also worth considering if we can ask management for an additional discount). James suggests purchasing in March/April, and storing them in 2 locations.

***Action: Paul to update Alan on the outcome of the final amount from Tesco for the Community Garden at the Community Centre.***

1. **Future Vision (Paul Hammond)**

Paul suggested the following objectives for our future vision:

* A network of accessible, maintained pathways
* A three year plan of monthly conservation tasks
* Growing survey of major fauna and flora
* Communications through signage, way makers, internet and social media
* Education programme April to September
* Link up with sister organisations in neighbouring counties.

The group agreed with these objectives and agreed that the focus for 2017 would be carrying on with maintenance work, interpretation signage, carrying on speaker events and trying to have more activities focussed on the under 18’s audience.

1. **2017 Events**

Dave created an electronic calendar. This can be accessed by the web link and it could also be added to the website. Highlights include:

* Monthly meetings, excluding August (***Action: Scott to remove from website and Dave to remove from Calendar - Complete***). Proposed speakers include Esther Clarke (Wildlife Trust) - April, Andy Grimshaw (bird expert) - May, an orchid walk with Trevor Tween – June, and a visit to Stopsley Common Farm in September (following from Lionel Shaw’s well attended talk last year).
* Walks, approximately 5 miles, starting at 26 March, led by Bob and Rita.
* Butterfly Surveying between May – October. We will investigate extending this to cover flora and fauna.
* TCV and conservation work (Phase Two on 2 February 2017 – see section 8)
* Wildlife Weekend (14 (evening), 15& 16 July) – Friday Evening -Bats and moths (Bedfordshire Bat Society and Gordon Redford) – ***Action: Paul to advise of contacts - Complete***
* Saturday (am) – Geocaching event and possible treasure hunt for younger children
* Saturday (afternoon) – Possible re-run of the reptiles gazebo event. ***Action: Paul to advise of contacts - Complete*.**
* Saturday (evening) - Astronomy event.
* Sunday (am) – Possible guest speaker with demonstrations -Guy and Jane Lambourne (Wassledine). Guy is a conversationalist and Jane is a story teller. They have a small holding and weave willow products.

**Action:*Charulata will get in contact with possible event leads to gauge availability, fees and interest(in progress).***

1. **Right of Way & Scrub Clearance Update**

On 27 November 2016 we carried out scrub clearance near the top of the public right of way in collaboration with LDCV. Additional clearance took place on 22 December with TCV in the same area, just to the south of the original clearance.

We discovered that we would need approval from Heritage England for the replacement of timber risers and stubs on 14 steps on the escarpment (Phase 3). James completed the application and on 6 January we received approval. We must give 2 weeks’ notice of our intention to do the digging. A date has been suggested in early May, but we would aim to get it done earlier.

The timber will be delivered in advance (Abi offered her garage in Kidner Close for storage, ***Action: Abi to give Trevor the address(Complete)***). TCV will pick it up from there and drive it up the hill.

Phase 2 (2 February 2017) – Will focus on cutting back the undergrowth, in conjunction with TCV volunteers led by Katherine Miskin.

We will aim to set up regular working groups during 2017.Suggested an October/November session where we can entice people to have a gowith refreshments and a bonfire.

Additional upcoming clearance dates include:

Saturday 11th February – scrub clearing

Thursday 16th February – scrub clearing

Wednesday 29th March – fencing repairs on Stopsley Common

Meeting place for these is on St Thomas’ Road opposite the school entrance. Please let Esther.Clarke@wildlifebcn.org know if you plan to attend.

1. AOB

Nothing raised.