

Love Springwater Park

Meeting notes from the Group Meeting – 10th October 2022

Attendees: Richard, John, Alison, Alan, Brian, Kathy Paul's 2nd in command! Liz, Tim, Chris, Angie, Paul (Green Space Officer) Caroline, Michaela

Apologies: Mark, Dean, Alan

Introduction of members

We had several new members attending the meeting, so we agreed to introduce ourselves

- Notes from previous meeting were circulated and agreed.
- Treasurer Update John updated us on the finances at the present time, there is £7,146 in the bank however this includes £5,400 from Whitefield Environmental Forum, £260 has been paid for Springwater Calendars we are expecting a return on this. Alan needs to put in a claim for petrol, £99 has been paid for insurance which covers us for the use of hand tools, the petrol mower and events of up to 500 people. There is still some money left from the animal homes project we have spent some of it on expertly made bird and bat boxes. We have also booked two bat walks for next year one in Spring and the other in the Autumn.
- John was thanked for his work on our more formal accounts which were needed for our application for the high level path.

Maintenance and Work Parties

- Update on recent work parties. Chris updated the meeting on the work on the History Trail. Liz talked about clearing the litter from the copse by the carpark and clearing some of the growth to encourage the small trees to grow. Some of the trees in this area are not 'happy' as they have not been planted in an area which suits them. We also talked about the new pond.
- The Home Education Group will be there every Wednesday from 10.30 until 12 depending on the weather.
- Upcoming work parties. We will fine tune the list of activities and we agreed that we will have a work party every Wednesday weather permitting starting at 10.30 until 12 o'clock. It was agreed that we would have every alternate Sunday as a work party weather permitting starting at 11 o'clock.

People and Community

- Art Walks Liz explained that Neil was taking people on monthly art walks and that LSP has been supportive of this activity which has been covered by Love Springwater Park Insurance. The project has been funded by the Arts Council.
- Animal Homes
Caroline and Chris said that this project had been successful in that a few people who were afraid to go into the park on their own had been able to go for the walks. Some of the sessions were well supported and others less so on two sessions at least 25 people attended one of these sessions we all got

drenched! Several people only attended one session so there was not the progression which had been hoped for.

- Professor Jigget Workshops
Liz said that these sessions had been successful and that between 15 to 25 people joined in the sessions. Oliver is a very talented storyteller who is able to entrance the children.

We were asked how we had advertised the sessions. We had used LSP, Facebook, contact with schools, leafleting, Notices in the park and Home Education sites.

- Social prescribing

We are now on the Social Prescribing list and BIG are encouraging their clients to join us.

A local company had an 'away day' when some of their employees spent a morning helping us slash the area up the drive. The Environmental Agency also had an 'away day' when the staff planted some of the plants which the original contractor had bought. It was a very hot day and not all of the plants survived.

All events have helped to increase the footfall in the park.

Nature and Biodiversity

- Nature spots

We now have shaggy inkcaps near the new pond. There are several herons and egrets using the park as their 'home's. There has been an increase in the number of butterflies and insects living in the park there was an emperor dragon fly caught on camera.

- Wildlife Pond. There has been an increase in pond life since the work done by the Environmental Agency.

- Development of biodiversity post EA project

People are now using the path uneven as it is, and this has increased the biodiversity in the park especially insects as they are no longer disturbed as much as they were by people walking through the meadow.

Liz encouraged us to log sightings on 'inaturalist' so far, we have 170 different species logged onto the website where people can be advised by others as to what they have seen. All the information is logged by Greater Manchester Ecology Unit. The data from this project has been helpful in our application to make the park into a Nature Reserve.

Liz agreed to inform us of the inaturalist link.

Projects

- Environment Agency – update

Paul gave us an update on the work needed to complete the work. The broken overflow: - a new chamber will be built round it soon; the contractor will

start the work when he can fit it in. There will be some work to the berms. The coir matting will be secured where it is loose. Paul explained that the berms had been landscaped and a coir mesh had been 'fixed' to secure plant growth. Some of the planting in this area has been spoilt by water ingress. The plants higher up the berms seem to have grown better than those closer to the water. Unfortunately, the pegs were not knocked right down and have become a safety hazard. There has been quite a lot of damage to the berms by dogs digging under the mesh. Chris asked about the 'replacement' trees for the area of the park where the path was cut for the machinery that the EA were going to use but couldn't. It was suggested that we get 6 standards or do some work in the coppice near the carpark.

- National Lottery Community Fund – bid

The bid is for a path running from the hairpin bend up to the dog bin near Middleton Road entrance. We cannot start the work before the contract has been agreed, however the likely candidate is putting some spoil in the area. The initial part of the work is to remove the steep part of the path. A pipe will be laid for the water and then the area will be filled with the spoil from other jobs. The contractor would have to remove the steep slope before he could do any of the work on the path.

- Nature reserve application

Paul gave us an update on the bid to make the park a Nature Reserve. Paul gave us a brief history of Nature Reserves in Bury. Establishing Nature Reserves in Bury was Paul's initial job in the borough. The aim had been to have a Nature Reserve in each of the Townships. There had been an agreement to have a hectare of Nature Reserve for every 1,000 residents in the Borough. Originally it had been decided that Springwater Park was too close to Philips for it to become a Nature Reserve. Hilly the officer from Natural England felt that the park fulfilled the requirements to become a Nature Reserve. She appreciated the amount of work done by the volunteers. There is sufficient biodiversity, natural habitats, educational resources, and strong local support. Once Natural England support our bid to agreeing that Springwater Park can become a Nature Reserve the council will ask the solicitor to make a declaration in the local press. Paul anticipates an agreement early next year. The Park will be given new signage and location maps. We will celebrate the Declaration with a week of themed events which will take place during the summer holidays. The Nature Reserve will extend from the edge of the land slip and go on towards Bury New Road. We will provide circular routes. Phase two will include the area of Landslip when this problem has been rectified.

Partners

Any other business

- Volunteer recruitment

Now that we have agreed when we will work in the park it will be possible to encourage people to join us. Volunteering should be pleasurable. We should not work on our own in bad weather. We should be doing a variety of light

tasks using light tools. There should be no woodland management at the weekend as there are too many people around.

Michaela asked how projects were chosen. Most projects develop from individuals own interests e.g., the History trail and the Art Walks. We join in with the projects that we are interested in.

One of the tasks which we need to do is to remove the leaf litter from the drive once most of the leaves have fallen.

Paul then gave us an update on the access rout/drive. Tenders are going out to replace the knee rail round the carpark and up the drive. Dangerous trees and overhanging tree limbs will be removed. The drive will be retarmacced. It is hoped that this work will take place in April/March of next year.

It was agreed that there should be a proper strategy for Balsam Bashing next spring. It was also agreed that we should have an inventory of the tools and who is looking after them.

Caroline

11/10/2022