



Milford Environment Group
(Formed 1989)

www.milfordcv.org

Wildlife Recording Group
(Formed 2001)

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MCV COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Meeting held on Friday 5th April 2019 at 7.00pm in the Community Centre.

Present : Tony Locke, Keith Metcalf, Anne Jenks, David Cobbett, Mary Macmillan, David Horne, David Burch, Martin Gretton and Penny Ramus.

1 Apologies : Lorraine Mabbett

2 **To approve Minutes of the last meeting and AGM held :** 11th January and 15th March 2019.

Both sets of minutes proposed by Keith Metcalf. Seconded Anne Jenks. Approved.

3. **Outstanding Matters :**

a) **Butterfly Transect and Scrub Block Flora :** No meeting with the PC yet.

b) **Brown Paper Bags :** Anne Jenks is still working on this.

c) **AGM :** Wash Up and feedback from AGM : See agenda item 6 I)

4 **Chairman's Announcements and Reports :**

a) **Main Subject – Salt Grass Lane.** Keith to cover this in depth under the Conservation Officer's Report.

b) **Risk Assessment Officer :** To appoint a responsible person to cover all conservation work carried out by the Volunteers. Steve Mabbett has kindly agreed to take on this position in an ex-officio capacity. It was agreed that an e-mail would be sent out to the team prior to the task day and signatures would be collected to ensure understanding. To be policed by the Task Leader.

c) **Big Info Day :** Mike Collison and Keith covered most of the day with Tony covering the lunch period. Mary visiting. It was a very busy and worthwhile day. Thanks go to Mike Collison (MCV) and Jenny Whitley of the Charitable Trust and Community Panel for organizing the event.

d) **NFNPA :** To help deliver the odd conservation session. A request has been received to find tasks suitable for Autistic youngsters to take part. It was felt that there are no such tasks at present. This was left pending until such tasks become available.

5 **Treasurers Report :**

- a) **Year to Date Accounts** : After some discussion these were approved by the committee. .David reported that Membership levels are good and the anticipated drop did not occur. A letter is to be sent out to non-payers as per previous years.

Proposed : Keith Seconded : David Burch Approved

- b) **To consider any other financial matters.**

- i) **Contribution towards water table monitoring : £100.**

Keith talked about a report explaining this item in detail to the committee as this matter was held over at the last meeting for further consideration. Keith explained that the proposed sum covers the ongoing monitoring costs to Vision Link for the Saltgrass Marsh project following the initial three month free trial that ended several months ago. Keith said that providing a full year's water table data giving information about the levels at a cost of up to £100 was important as this would be given to NFDC and the Parish Council to help them understand the low-level risk to property flooding from the proposed re-wetting project. Keith's full report would be circulated to all members for information. **The data collection service from this project is available for all to see on-line, using a password on the Vision Link web site.**

Proposed : Anne Jenks Seconded : David Cobbett Approved

- ii) **Long reach Chainsaw and Safety Equipment** : Estimate for purchase £300.00. This item has already been budgeted for and it was agreed that the purchase should go ahead. Safety Equipment for use with this saw is already available.

Proposed : Keith. Seconded : David Burch. Approved

- iii) **Dormouse Nest Boxes** : £214.67 has already been paid.

6) **Conservation Officer's Report :**

- a) **Saltgrass Marsh Project** : Keith produced a comprehensive bird survey report which was circulated to all committee members. He said that the Keyhaven Forum - Marsh Sub-committee had supported the three primary aspects for the marsh project.

1) to follow a three-year vegetation management plan (already consented to by Natural England)

2) possible future modest tree work to the northern side of the marsh and

3) the re-wetting and re-salination of the marsh.

Following discussions with Chairman, Tony Locke, Keith had presented the bird survey report at the recent Keyhaven Forum (KF) meeting. The report covered a comprehensive 12-month period of surveys around the Marsh. Keith said that Ben Collins, another member of the KF Marsh Sub-committee had presented a survey of water table levels and salinity measurements. Keith's bird survey concluded that just three waterfowl had been recorded (Water Rail, Moorhen and Mallard) no waders, terns or gulls, three reed-bed species (Whitethroat, Reed Warbler and Reed Bunting) but significantly, 12 garden/woodland birds. He said that the survey had clearly showed that the Marsh was in poor condition for use by waterfowl and waders.

The report indicated that 'pooling' of the Marsh was imperative if the site was to recover from the past years of management neglect. He said that MCVs Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) aspiration H15 was to re-salinate and re-wet the site to create a series of shallow muddy pools across the centre of the marsh. Keith suggested that the proposal was to have between 5 and 10% pooling across the whole marsh to

encourage more waterfowl and waders to use the reserve. This was thought to be a modest request that will greatly benefit both wildlife and the amenity value of the site.

Members were reminded that the Environment Agency is the responsible body for water table levels and maintenance, plus the opening and closure of the sea-wall flaps and the flood protection gates. He said that it was necessary to reassure the residents of Saltgrass Lane and Keyhaven that the re-wetting proposal was a very modest enhancement to the marsh that would have untold wildlife and amenity benefits. He hoped that residents, Keyhaven Forum, NFDC and the Parish Council would eventually support the proposals. Committee members encouraged Keith to pursue the MCV aspirations and to continue to bring BAP Action H15 to fruition.

- b) **Observatory Update** : It is now too late for reed cutting which will be deferred until the autumn/winter but other tasks are being carried out.

It was noted that a free Key Fob has been given to Alison Barnes – CEO New Forest National Park. Keith asked for retrospective approval. Tony said that we are grateful to Alison and the NFNPA for their support in many ways. Approved.

- c) **Studland Common** : New periods of grazing are being considered by Tony and Keith which will need the approval of the Parish. Flailing has been carried out, some of which has been excessive. However, wildflowers are now returning to the area after many years and after a very dry and hot summer. There have been a few complaints by regular users that the Dexter cattle have been nibbling the bluebells and primroses! Tony reminded us that these plants are traditionally found in significant quantities in the woodland.
- d) **Sturt Pond Bird Hide, Management Agreement** : A meeting is to be held with Graham Wells – PC, Simon Hanney and Georgia Pathy from NFDC to discuss the 10 year lease on the bird hide and a 10 year management plan.
- e) **Birding for Beginners Sessions** : This are going well on the 1st Saturdays of the month for the Observatory and the 3rd Saturdays for the Hide between 10am and noon.
- f) **Old Milford Meadow** : Secret Garden. Sue Crabbe (Chair of Gardeners Club) and other members are inspecting the Meadow site shortly and will decide whether they can help with the garden part of the meadow.
- g) **Creeks and Saltmarsh Trips** : Mary and Keith led on the last trip of the year. The over-wintering birds are now going so the trips will start again next Winter.
- h) **New Orchard (BAP H4) and Mini- Flower Meadow (BAP H13)** : This report to be held over for the next meeting. MCV member Chris Maybe has agreed to service the brush cutter. Keith to deliver the brushcutter to Chris.
- i) **Logging Update** : Following several recent sessions of logging at the Old Mill there are now plenty of logs for sale. Two loads are awaiting delivery but storage is urgently needed for the rest. It was suggested that the committee should advertise logs for sale to a wider audience such as the Lymington Times, village notice boards or even a letter box drop through doors with obvious signs of log stores in their gardens. Keith also suggested that MCV purchase 9 Log stores at a cost of £1000 to allocate to members willing to store logs for MCV. However, this suggestion was not supported. It was decided to try more advertising for the time being.
- j) **Community Orchard** : Chris Mabey (MCV member) has been strimming the orchard area. Thanks were expressed to Chris for his help.

- k) **Net Biodiversity Development Gains** : This is a government initiative which means that before any development can take place, the developer has to submit a 'net biodiversity gain' application prior to submitting a formal planning application for the site. This, in time, should have significant benefits for wildlife.
- l) **Solent Grange Update** : There is a Lawful Development Certificate application for the middle field to become part of the Caravan site. Residents cannot simply object to this application as it will be decided via a legal process. We understand that NFDCs legal department are now dealing with this LDC.
- m) **White-tailed Eagles**: An application to Natural England for a White-tailed Eagle reintroduction programme on the Isle of Wight has been consented. The Government has stated in its 25-year conservation plan that this is an iconic bird species, that once was widespread and has previously bred at Culver Cliffs on the Island many years ago should be tried. Whilst there has been some opposition from farmers, this is a very exciting project that could bring much wanted revenue to the Island, but could also have far reaching benefits along the Solent and its estuaries. Keith has offered to help arrange a local presentation to the organizers of the programme – the Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation.
- n) **Moth Group** : Mary reported that the Mothing Season has started and she is hoping to be able to use residents' gardens for the traps over the summer. She is also taking the trap to Studland Common but asked for a volunteer to accompany her on those evenings. David Burch and David Cobbett offered their services.
- o) **Ancient Woodland Walk**: Keith and Tony were invited by Shorefield Holiday Park to cut the ribbon at the opening of their new Ancient Woodland Walk. Keith and Hugh Corry have been assisting the application process and helping Simon Pollock – MD Shorefields to produce a woodland management plan.

7 **Publicity Officer's Report :**

- a) **Wildlife Matters and Village Voice** : April and May issues have gone out.
- b) **Calendar of Meetings and Events 2019** : Update to be circulated by Keith.
- c) **Communications Officer Needed** : Keith is still keen to invite someone on board with the necessary experience and skills to be able to provide reports on MCV activities that can be turned into regular newsworthy stories for the Lymington Times. If you know of someone with these skills and would be interested in this voluntary position, please contact Keith.

8 **Any Other business :**

- a) Anne Jenks had been given a list of recorded birds and wildlife dating back to the 1960s which will prove very interesting and can be put in the MCV archives.
- b) David Horne was able to tell the committee that he now has a new title with his RSPB responsibilities, as **Visitors Experience Officer** he will be studying Tern populations.
- c) It was noted that the price of the Community Centre hall/committee room, is to go up to £12 per hour.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00pm

DATE OF NEXT MEETING : FRIDAY 10TH MAY 2019