

Minutes of the Footpath And Amenities Group of ARPC held on 03/04/2017.

Present: Peter Hetherington in the chair, Di Eaton, Jan Gooders, Lynn and Graham French & Tony Hughes.

Apologies: Peter Gibbons, Julian Knight, Mike Eaton.

Minutes of the last meeting held on 07/11/2016: Agreed and signed.

Matters arising: The pruning of the cherry trees by the B4009 at Butts Way triangle and the bushes at Kingston Blount junction with the Stert Road has been completed. Ditches and grips have not been a problem as the winter has been fairly dry but there is a partially blocked culvert along the village road which may need attention with any heavy rainfall.

Fiveways report and further work: Di reported that the new seat has now arrived but without any anchors, and will need assembly and installation when these arrive, hopefully in the next week. The dam on the stream is working well, and is now attracting fish. The willows are doing well and will need pollarding soon. The next project would be signage depicting local history and an explanation of the planting and some appropriate illustrations, which Tony offered to produce. Some discussion was had regarding which material would be best, but no decision made.

Previous planting has now produced an array of flowers; daffodils (which have naturalised and spread), fritillaria, wood anemones, marsh marigolds, toad flax and greater stitchwort which is in decline throughout Oxon, and has no record of flowering locally before. Some Spanish bluebells have still come up, but will be dealt with. The wild garlic and Welsh Poppies have still to be planted and there may be some Rowan trees in the future.

Historical & Nature Outings for Aston Rowant School: Nothing is currently planned and it was suggested waiting until the Autumn term, Mike to speak to the Head Teacher in this respect. Chinnor U3A Strollers have requested a led historical stroll around the parish and a provisional date of Friday 4/August was agreed.

Snowdrop Sunday & Duck Race: A very successful day again this year although more help will be needed with the Duck Race when the event is repeated next year. We bought more ducks with a donation from the church after last year's races, but despite this we will need more help next year to avoid delays in getting the ducks back to the start. Next years' event has already been booked for 11th February, which is a week later to ensure the snowdrops are fully flowering.

Grand Litter Picking Event: Despite all the hard work collecting many bags of litter, Grundon didn't pick up all the collected bags and had to be asked several times to return and collect the bags all down Kingston Hill, which somewhat detracted from the success of the event. There is even more litter in the field & hedge towards Crowell, but with the undergrowth coming up

now, it is even more difficult to spot where it all is. Litter picking is a never-ending job in the parish.

Improving Bridleway & Footpath Surfaces: £15,000 has now been raised towards the £21,048 required for the work on the Moors footpath. The shortfall of £6,048 has been requested by the Hillwerke Trust as a grant from the Weston Foundation. The application was made 3 weeks ago but has yet to even be acknowledged, so Peter will ring them to follow through. At the last Parish Council meeting a request was made to improve the condition of the lanes which cross the village in Kingston Blount and this may be considered once current projects are nearing completion. The Chiltern Society have asked if any gates are required on footpaths within the parish. There has been an extensive programme to replace stiles with gates and they secure grants for the materials and provide the labour themselves. There is one possibility in Kingston Stert, and Peter will investigate other possibilities and report back to them.

Village Flower Tubs: more planting is due for the summer months, but it was agreed they have looked good over winter thanks to the efforts of Simon Coulon.

The next Parish walk is on 21st May 2017 starting at The Lambert Hotel from 10AM, and will be a 6-mile circular walk via Chalford, Kingston Stert and Sydenham before returning through Kingston Blount. The last walk in January was poorly attended, mainly due to the appalling weather on the day and not being local (starting in Wendover). Details to go on the Parish web-site/KBAR.

New Projects: It was felt that the current projects are enough to be going on with, but possible future projects include:

- The lanes in Kingston Blount as detailed above
- Permanent signage at Fiveways, possibly 2 separate signs for history & wildlife/flora and maybe double-sided.
- A direction sign towards Fiveways from the church/Aston Rowant village.
- Planting of Field Maples throughout the parish.
- A chalkboard at Fiveways for comments on wildlife sightings or suggestions etc.

Other Business: Tony mentioned that the unofficial path on the road-verge from Kingston Blount to Crowell is very uneven and resulted in him falling the other day which could have been disastrous had he fallen into the road. A request was made to even the verge out to overcome this, possibly to the farmer of the adjacent field. We cannot simply go ahead even if willing, as the verge is part of the highway which is OCC owned and unlikely to be given any priority. It was agreed to bring the subject up at the May Parish Council meeting (April being the Annual Parish meeting when time will be at a premium).

Next meeting: will be at 8:00pm on Monday 23rd October, at Lynn and Graham French's house.