**Biodiversity Working Group Meeting 12th March 2021**

**Notes**

**In attendance:** Cllrs Elaine Goodyear, Jane Jones, Gill Perry and Josh Potts.

Also, Rebecca Grantham- Operations Manager.

1. **Agree draft Terms of Reference (circulated prior to meeting)**

A draft was circulated prior to the meeting. It was suggested to change the name of the plan referred to ‘Local Climate and Environment Action Plan’, to refer to John Willis as Volunteer Tree Warden (now a team of four volunteers) and to refer to this group as an ‘Oversight’ group.

Following the above amendments, it was agreed to take the Terms of Reference to the Finance Risk and Change Governance Committee next Tuesday for approval.

1. **Review current projects list & HPC involvement.**

Adur Restoration Project

Elaine confirmed that her husband Roger French is pursuing the issue of a survey with the Biological Records Centre at Woods Mill . The previous survey conducted by Henfield Birdwatch in 2003 is on record which will be a sound basis to move forward to. He will discuss with Tony Baker (SH2030) and it is hoped that the Parish Council can then assist with recruiting volunteers and paying for any necessary training. It was felt that the area could be split into 11 smaller areas, as per the Birdwatch survey.

Sandy Lane Appeal

This is being considered by the Plans Advisory Committee. Gill will look at the previous statement from the first application and will adapt and improve it if possible to address the sustainability and biodiversity issues. She will circulate to this group first for approval.

Cemetery extension and existing cemetery

Jane confirmed that five mature cherries have been planted and Gill stated 10-15 whips including Birch have also been planted by the spoil heap. It is hoped that some wildflower turf can be purchased once the bindweed issue has been addressed. Elaine explained that the wildfire planting budget will pass over to General Reserves if not spent by the end of March, but that it can still be draw on when needed. Concerns about the use of glyphosphates were raised in relation to the bindweed, but it was agreed to wait and see how serious the issue is as shoots have not yet appeared.

Roadside Verges

This matter is being considered by the Recreation and Open Spaces Committee (ROS). In particular the area around Manor Way and the Swales by the Link Road. Gill has purchased seed and the works officer is arranging to have the turf removed. A group of volunteers are keen to assist. Additional areas such as those by the library and scout hut were mentioned but are not owned by the Parish Council.

Sandpit Field

ROS are currently considering allowing the use of bicycles in the Sandpit itself but whatever the outcome the area needs to be managed in a way that is sympathetic to wildlife. It was felt that the Sandpit Field also needs a habitat survey with a view to allowing it to return to wild or potentially plant with fruit trees. Andrew Sharp is commissioning this survey.

1. **Initial views on Henfield Parish Recommendations (Sam Buckland Report)**

* It was acknowledged that there has been some difficulty with implementation of the Henfield Common Management Plan and without the resource and finances to pursue the recommendations.. It was also felt that management plans would be helpful for Oreham and Broadmere, and that further funding may be necessary from Horsham District for these surveys as well as for implementation of any recommendations. Gill will contact Andrew Sharp initially to discuss, then Josh is happy to make contact with the right people at Horsham in order to push for more support with Henfield’s three commons.
* The group were in favour of seeking target to increase the amount of land managed for wildlife initially for HPC land but then encouraging other community groups with land ( scout hut, youth club etc) and residents to do the same. It was suggested that this could potentially be an item for Garden & Arts in 2022.

1. **Biodiversity targets for HPC**

It was felt that targets will be very useful once the necessary surveys have been completed.

The group were in favour of seeking target to increase the amount of land managed for wildlife initially for HPC land but then encouraging other community groups with land (scout hut, youth club etc) and residents to do the same.

Areas for planting of fruit trees would also be valuable, the Sandpit field was mentioned again as potential to be included as part of a future ‘picking’ trail, along with the Tanyard where wild varieties such as Damson or cherry would be very beneficial to wildlife. Again the scout and guide land as well as the area around the youth club, Rothery and Kingsfield were also mentioned as having potential for small areas of planting.

Other potential targets could include going pesticide free and cutting down on the use of leaf blowers that disturb insect life. It was agreed that the Parish Council needs to look at its own works officers and contractors working practises.

1. **Any other issues**

Rebecca will look into how to store all of the information, maps and surveys that are gathered, perhaps using Parish Online. Elaine will contact Richard Black to ask for the information and maps from his recent Henfield Outdoors presentation. Gill will invite Sam Buckland to attend the next meeting of this group.

**Next meeting provisionally planned for 16th April at a time to suit Sam Buckland**.

**HPC BIODIVERSTY PROJECTS**

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| Project | Detail | Action |
| Adur Restoration Project | Habitat survey for the parish | Using previous survey results  HPC to seek volunteers  Training for volunteers  Allocate areas  Undertake surveys during 2021 |
| Sandy Lane Appeal | HPC response to the Appeal | Elaine Gill & Malcolm to write Appeal statement. Gill will prepare Biodiversity element |
| Cemetery extension and existing cemetery | Managing the area for wildlife | Wildflower turf to be used in the extension |
| Roadside Verges | Wild flowers planting & reduced mowing | ROS actively progressing –  Wildflower seed purchased  Gill to contact WSCC re signage |
| The Commons in Henfield | New Management plans for Oreham & Broadmere  JCC and conservation group have limited resource and budget to deliver the all the management plan actions | Josh to contact HDC officer to seek more resources & funding as per other HDC wildlife sites |
| Sandpit field | Managing the area for wildlife | Habitat survey commissioned |
| increase the amount of land managed for wildlife initially for HPC land | HPC land  Areas for planting of fruit trees | Consider achievable target for HPC land  Contact other community landowners to consider wildlife planting |
| Carbon footprint | Understand Henfield Carbon footprint and potential actions | Initial survey undertaken using NALC recommend - IMPACT Community carbon calculator |