**Biodiversity Working Group Meeting 16th April 2021**

**Notes**

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

Also, Rebecca Grantham- Operations Manager and Sam Buckland

1. **Matter Arising.**

There were no outstanding matters to be discussed.

1. **Henfield Parish Biodiversity Recommendations incl Sandpit.**

Sam Buckland confirmed that it was not him that produced the report on the Sandpit, rather a supporter of the Mountain Bike trail who had provided some information for the Sandpit Working Group that had explained how it would be possible to allow cycling as well as protecting wildlife and biodiversity. Elaine confirmed that Andrew Sharp was commissioning an ecological survey of the area and that once received the information could be tied together.

Sam then explained that any projects undertaken need to be community driven and that another more detailed survey would be a good idea. He suggested that roadside verges should be the first priority and recommended mapping them. Gill explained that the Link Road had been sown and plans were underway for Manor Way, but that there are differing opinions on method, particularly in respect of the use of glyphosate, and that the public like to see quick results. Sam explained that the best approach would be to minimise soil disturbance as it is important for carbon storage and to use plug plants which would give an initial flush of wildflowers. A change of management regime would then be vital. He suggested asking the Garden Club and School to propagate seeds for planting and to arrange a community planting event.

Jane agreed that involving the school was a good idea and will contact Ann Donoghue to discuss. She commented that the school might also consider planting in their own playing field and that some of the twittens and the Parsonage Track could also be included. Jane also mentioned that the Commonwealth War Graves commission have offered seeds that could be propagated and planted in the northern end of the Cemetery extension, the school may be interested in this as a project for the children. Elaine also suggested some planting on the edges of the Kingsfield and that Parish Council land should be the first priority. Gill agreed and suggested that further locations and volunteers could be requested in a survey.

Sam then suggested contacting the Wildflower Conservation Scheme based in Stanmer Park and the Warnham Nature Reserve Volunteer Group who have recently undertaken work on a flower rich marshland and tree planting scheme, he will forward the contact details. He then suggested looking at ensuring these areas are joined up as a longer term approach, then linking in to the wider Horsham network. Gill commented that WSCC will be attending a future ROS meeting to advise on verges.

Sam then suggested the next stage would be to consider planting of fruit trees for early blossom and food for small mammals, he recommended a community orchard and a pickers trail with smaller groups of 4-5 trees in various locations. Gill commented that Mike Morgan had suggested the Sandpit Field as a possible location for this. Elaine commented that the planned orchard on the Barratts Estate had not materialised and she will look into what commitments they have made to wildlife as there was also a wildflower meadow planned. Ongoing maintenance is also an issue.

1. **Parish Habitat Surveys Update.**

Several volunteers have come forward to carry out the surveys. Roger and Tony are working together to organise training which is likely to take place via Zoom. Henfield Birdwatch conducted a phase 1 survey in 2003 and Roger has secured permission from SWT to use the files and maps. He is currently tidying them up so that Rebecca can arrange for them to be transferred to Parish Online. Roger also has a list of the recognised colours to use for colouring the various areas, the same areas will be used as previously by Henfield Birdwatch. Crayons will need to be purchased.

Habitat Survey training will start on 10 May 2021

1. **Review of Current Projects**

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| Project | Detail | Action |
| Adur Restoration Project | Habitat survey for the parish | Using previous survey results  HPC to seek volunteers- Completed  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.  Completed |
| Cemetery extension and existing cemetery | Managing the area for wildlife | Wildflower turf to be used in the extension.  Still waiting for bindweed to emerge, to then discuss how to remove. |
| Roadside Verges | Wild flowers planting & reduced mowing | ROS actively progressing –  Wildflower seed purchased  Gill to contact WSCC re signage  Link Road completed. |
| 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  Gill in discussion with Lost Woods Project who are looking for a Youth Project. |
| 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  Gill will invite Vassos Siantonas to next meeting. SH2030 also intend to offer a work placement to a group of university students who want to survey the carbon footprint of Henfield |

**Next meeting provisionally 12th May at 7pm via Zoom.**

**The invitation will be extended to Vassos Siantonas from Sustainable Henfield 2030 to discuss Henfield Carbon footprint**