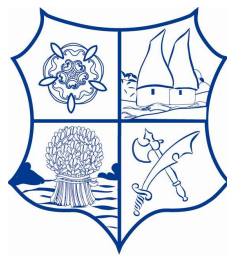


## **Flood Meadows and King's Pond Steering Group Meeting Notes 11<sup>th</sup> August 2020. 12.00pm held virtually**

In attendance: Cllr Pam Jones (Open Spaces Committee Chair), Charles Kay (Wey Walk Working Group / AHRA) Brian Goode (Alton Society), Gareth Hurd (AVLAN) Councillor Ginny Boxall, Councillor Pam Bradford, Councillor Suzie Burns, Louise Parker (Amery Hill Residents Association), 3 members of the public and Leah Coney (Town Clerk)

- 1) **The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting**
- 2) **The Terms of Reference for the Group were noted.**
- 3) **Friends of King's Pond.** The group discussed the formation of a volunteer programme managed along the same lines as the Friends of Flood Meadows which has an annual programme of works. It was suggested that Dr June Chatfield, our resident ecologist, be approached to join the group along with former ATC Grounds Manager John Sadler. The group would meet once a month on a Sunday and Cllr Burns was happy to take a lead on this. With input from BG it was felt a number between 6 and 15 volunteers with maybe a few helpers from the Alton Society, would be a manageable number with occasional help from local schools or scout / brownie groups where appropriate. Regular tasks could include litter picking, low level tree works and coppicing. The Clerk was asked to compile a programme of works using the management plan and the Flood Meadows template, with a view to starting the scheme in September with a social media request for volunteers. GH agreed to lead on the November session when tree works between the pond and the railway line were to be the focus.
- 4) **Grass cutting regime at King's Pond.** The group discussed concerns that had been raised as to the availability of "green" foodstuffs for the wildlife and agreed that the Grounds team would be asked to stop cutting the grass until the end of this season to encourage more growth. The grass should then be allowed to grow at the beginning of next season with a view to cutting paths in the grass and strimming around the picnic benches to try and achieve a more natural look to the site with more edible material for the wildlife and to create a barrier between the pond and the road to try and discourage birds from wandering up to Ashdell Road. This zoning should be beneficial to biodiversity, culminating in a site wide cut and collect at the of next season to create a better environment for wildflowers to establish and thrive. The group also discussed removing some of the undergrowth close to the pond as suggested by Environmental Health but viewed this as a natural barrier to the water and this was therefore beneficial to retain, as well as discussing the creation of a line of shrubs along Ashdell Road. Here it was felt that a solid hedge was inappropriate and the planting of individual shrubs would make it difficult for the grounds team when cutting, so this idea was not pursued. GH also requested that the hedge alongside Ashdell Road in the car park only be cut on the outside, leaving the top and inside for autumn flowering. The Clerk said she would speak to the contract hedge cutter as they were due in at the beginning of September.
- 5) **Feeding at King's Pond.** There was a discussion over the issues surrounding the feeding of wildlife at the pond and the impact it has upon the rodent population. PJ explained that Dr Day had suggested in the original draft of the management plan that no feeding be permitted at all but it was felt that this would be unpopular with residents so the compromise position of suggesting that feeding only took place at the feeding stations was instead included. A lengthy debate ensued as to the right type of signage for encouraging people to use the feeding station area but more widely, publicity over what to feed and how to feed to prevent a resurgence of the rat problem experienced in the spring. The group also discussed whether litter bins with built in rat traps could be deployed but LC pointed out that this could trap hedgehogs and other wildlife. On this basis the idea was rejected in favour of continuing to educate people through signage and publicity. It was also suggested that there could be better grills on the Waterside Court area to prevent young birds disappearing off downstream – to be investigated with the management company.
- 6) **Disabled parking (upper car park) at Kings Pond.** The Clerk advised that an additional disabled parking space had been marked out in the car park. It can be used by any blue badge holder but is primarily for use as required by the adjacent resident who needs access to park their vehicle to assist when travelling with their disabled child.



- 7) **Management Plan actions for Flood Meadows and King's Pond.** LC tabled the current project plan for information and highlighted the deferment of the path improvements for Flood Meadows in favour of replacing the bridges running alongside the river which had been damaged further during last winter. This work is due to start next week.
- 8) **Trees in Flood Meadows by Cromwell Gardens.** CK noted the concern from residents about the encroachment of the trees in this area ( noted as area G9 on the recent tree survey of the site) The group agreed that, whilst low priority on the survey action plan, it should be undertaken over the coming autumn/winter following a meeting between Senior Groundsman Dave Gilbert, Charles Kaye and the resident. Clerk to ask Mrs Harris to action.
- 9) **Wey Walk Update.** Louise reported that there were some additional works to undertake by the Lenten Street entrance that they will be looking to fundraise for. The Clerk suggested if they were undertaking a GoFundMe, they might liaise with the Alton Society as they could claim gift aid as a charity. Whilst not strictly part of this meeting there was also a brief discussion on the proposed ownership and management of the source of the river along the lower field at the Will Hall Farm development. The Clerk confirmed that the Town Council would not be responsible for the river and the extent of land to be handed was limited a boundary 8m from the river. It was also noted that the dip in path by the Odiham Road was the responsibility of the highway's authority to remedy.

The meeting finished at 1.20pm