

SRWT Minutes for Sunnybank Reserve Advisory Group meeting:

09.07.15

On Site: 6.00pm to 7.30pm.

(1) Present & Apologies - Welcome & Introduction

Attending: Rob Miller (SRWT), Hannah Wittram (SRWT), Colin Roth, James McClean, Jean Glasscock, Lewis Dagnall (City Councillor) Olivia Blake

Apologies: Nick Hardy

(2) Capital Works & Land Management Update (Jan 2015 – July 2015)

- 2-3 Weekly patrols by reserves team – patrol spreadsheet findings;
 - **The leaf bench** north of the cycle track was rotten and the back rest has become unstable and therefore was removed from site for safety reasons.
 - James asked about the decorative bench and whether it would be replaced.
 - RM explained that we have recently been approached by a local wood carver who has offered to carve and donate a new back for the bench which is fantastic news. We have taken him up on his kind offer and are currently awaiting some design ideas.
 - RM explained that a recent bid to Veolia for another carved bench to replace one of the pond benches has unfortunately been rejected.
 - In recent months we have seen an increase in the number of needles we have been finding on site which is a concern but we are working with the police to try and resolve this matter. They are patrolling the site on a daily basis.
- General maintenance from Land Management team consisting of (x3 days carried out since last meeting in January):
 - litter picking / fly tipping removal
 - needle and graffiti removal
 - path clearance of leaves during winter
 - Strimming of over encroaching and overhanging vegetation (x3 - 4 visits from May – October at 6 – 7 weekly intervals).
 - Spraying surfaced paths and desire lines with herbicide (Roundup Biactive) to kill weeds.
 - Treating the hazel and willow hurdles with linseed oil to increase longevity.
 - Cutting the hedge along the cycle track.
 - Clearing leaves from the footpath and cycle track in the autumn.
 - Injecting Japanese Knotweed only two small strands visible on site at the moment.
- **Replacement of Hazel Hurdles**
 - RM discussed the hazel hurdles at the back of Sunnybank which were installed to deter anti-social behaviour (drug use) have started to collapse due to their age and the weight of snow over the winter. Rob is looking at the new

management plan and considering a tanalised wood structure instead that would last longer and continue to deter anti-social behaviour.

- The group discussed various other options. James asked whether it could be opened up and Colin asked whether we could open it up and create a fairly informal football and picnic area for the local young people in the meadow adjacent to the bench.

-Jean commented that it currently provides a valuable undisturbed habitat for wildlife.

- RM explained that he liked the idea of a picnic area but keeping it short for a games area would reduce the biodiversity, it is currently managed as a meadow and in SCC biodiversity action plans. Colin pointed out that it is currently overgrown with tall ruderals, hogweed. RM explained that SRWT were in the process of trying to secure some funding to improve the meadows through re-seeding/plug planting.

Wildflower Meadows

- RM agreed that the meadows have moved into tall ruderal succession and have become grass dominated. Jean warned that the soil was becoming too rich for a wildflower meadow and gradual succession is to be expected.

- RM suggested introducing yellow rattle and it has been recommended that the meadows are cut twice a year, an earlier cut in the season and September one which should stunt the weeds / tall ruderals.

- The group discussed the meadow above the pond– it would be nice to be able to sit in it. We have been approached by the 'Friends of the Earth' in the last week who are delivering a Bee campaign to see whether we have any sites that could be improved or turned into wildflower meadows. This may offer some opportunity to improve the meadows at Sunnybank. Rob Miller to respond shortly and enquire about this opportunity.
- Vegetation on frontage to Ecclesall Road is continually monitored & regularly gets cut back. We get quite a bit of litter dropped on the frontage and try to make a concerted effort to keep on top of this issue although it is currently in need of some attention.
- Pond continues to do okay, vegetation very well established now and is starting to become dominated by Glyceria. SRWT to carry out some winter maintenance work and remove a large amount of Glyceria.

Street Lights

The group discussed the removal of the old light half way up the path and how there was now a dark patch. Where the new lights are there are also holes where Amey haven't filled them back in.

Councillor Lewis Dagnall explained how he has been in contact with Amey, they have carried out a light test and the middle area failed so they have now installed another light. They should now all be working.

Group looked at one of the lights which has been installed in amongst the branches of a tree. SRWT to contact Nick about SRWT trimming back some of the branches of his tree.

Dead Ivy

There has been someone locally who has been cutting Ivy from trees without permission both in Sunnybank, Lynwood Gardens and the General Cemetery (one of the Lynwood members caught him doing it – he is under the mistaken impression that Ivy kills trees and he is doing us a favour). The loss of the Ivy across all these sites represents a significant loss of nesting habitat.

ACTION: SRWT to create a press release, as it is a common misconception.

- Back in February / March 2015 Nigel Dunnett from the University of Sheffield (Landscape department) suggested that they would be interested in getting more involved with Sunnybank nature reserve and could potentially help with ongoing maintenance and possible supply of some materials such as wildflower plug plants. Since this initial email we have been trying to arrange a meeting to discuss further but so far have not been able to arrange one – this is something that needs to be re-visited.
- We have been in discussions with places for people (Gary Slater) about creating an annual management agreement for the area of land that they are responsible for within the Sunnybank nature reserve – through this process it is hoped that SRWT can be paid an annual fee to help cover the costs of managing the meadow and removing litter / fly tipping.
 - The interpretation panel cover has been damaged and needs replacing. Rob also explains that the panel isn't in a great location as it is under the trees and on the edge of the cycle path. Plans are to move the board further up the path onto the footpath side and into a brighter area. Group agreed that this was a good decision.
 - **ACTION:** Hannah to replace the damaged cover.
 - Group looked at the corner of wildflowers near Ecclesall road. RM noted that it needs cutting. Colin asked whether it could be left until the honesty has died back as the seed pods look very pretty in the autumn. RM agreed but suggest we selectively remove the large dock plants. And extra bulb planting next spring if spare native bulbs can be found.
 - The triangle patch of trees next to Ecclesall road is managed and owned by highways but they have been happy for us to manage it as required. There has been a suggestion to open this area up more to improve sight lines and possibly seed wildflowers. We are keen to keep some of the trees as a noise barrier from the main road while trying to make it lighter & safer on the footpath – group agreed.

(3) Events, Education, Community and Interpretation Update

| Date | Event | Type | Total | Adults | Children |
|----------|-----------------|--------------|-------|--------|----------|
| 28/05/15 | Crafty Frog Day | Family event | 15 | 5 | 10 |

Events for 2015 – Have run a crafty frog event in the May holidays which went well with 15 people attending. We will also be running the Frog Rescue Day on the 23rd September and a Meadow Rake Community Work Day on the 28th September.

Earlier this year our development team evaluated all the events and wanted to trial a new event plan which mainly concentrates on the three main nature reserves due to larger amounts of people using them. Blacka Moor, Wyming Brook and Greno Woods.

Events on the smaller reserves can still be planned but will be subject to funding or partnership working with other groups.

Upcoming Events

- RM asked whether the group would be interest in a regular volunteer morning? Task could include conservation tasks and maintance and monitoring and surveying. Group agreed it was a good idea.
ACTION Hannah to decide monthly day and promote, making sure we avoid clashing with Lynwood Garden.

Frog rescue volunteer work day, Wednesday 23rd September, 10 – 3pm adults only
3 – 4pm – Meet the frogs – family session

Shake a rake – Volunteer Work day – Monday 28th September, 10am – 3pm – adults only

(4) Management Plan (April 2015 – March 2025)

The new management plan for Sunnybank nature reserve has been completed and will cover the next 10 years. We have a detailed work programme that we will work towards delivering but it is important to highlight that lots of the work is dependent on securing external funding to make things happen on the ground. Thank you to everyone who made comments on the draft, we have taken them on board and tried to incorporate them in to the work programme where possible. The full plan hasn't been fully adopted just yet as we were hoping to meet with Nigel Dunnett from Sheffield University to discuss potential partnership working but this hasn't taken place yet.

The new management plan will be available on our website once it has been fully adopted.

(5) Future work programme (Jan 2015 – March 2016) – Associated funding

- We have a further x5 work days planned between now and March 2016.

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| Tue | 21st July | Sunnybank | Maintenance Day - Tasks TBC. 1. Strimming PRoW & desire lines. |
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| Wed | 26th August | Sunnybank | Maintenance Day - Tasks TBC. 1. Strimming PRow & desire lines. |
| Mon | 28th September | Sunnybank | CWD - DO NOT MOVE: Rake up meadow management (frog rescue) arisings and dispose of them in the compost bay (1 day) |
| Tue | 27th October | Sunnybank | Maintenance Day - Tasks TBC. Pond management - remove Glyceria to stop the pond from being overgrown. Maintain sightlines into central woodland as required. Cut back hedgerows and remove Sycamore tree next to the flat on William street. |
| Tue | 23rd February | Sunnybank | Maintenance Day - Tasks TBC. Step repairs / hazel hurdle repairs / replacement. |

Upcoming Surveys:

- Butterfly & Invertebrates survey - (Moved to 15/16).
- Bat Survey - (Moved to 15/16).
- Many of the suggested site improvements mentioned below are subject to bringing in the necessary funding to cover the costs of the work. Due to Sunnybank nature reserves location it is eligible for several different funding pots we can potentially apply for and will be investigating these over the next 12 months. These include Biffa, Viridor, Veolia, Awards for All (Big lottery) and Peoples Postcode Lottery to name a few. The likelihood is that we will need to clump together several pieces of work that we would like to deliver as a project.
- We submitted a funding bid application to Veolia for funding to deliver:
 - Replace knee rail fencing on William Street with Campbell style fencing and small section on Sunnybank Close entrance – getting local youth groups / school children involved in the design – name of the site / wildlife etc (2014/15). See examples – they will cost in the region of £4000.00 to create and install.
 - Install x2 community generated artistic benches at pond – get youth groups / schools involved in the design (2014/15). £6900.00 to create and install.
 - Meadow management – the annual frog rescue and rake up including the purchase plug plants to improve the diversity of the meadow.
 - Small scale thin of woodland strip along frontage on Ecclesall road mainly for safety to allow light to the cycle track and discourage drug dealing, this will also include the removal of some of the shrub layer whilst trying to retain the buffer zone that reduces traffic noise from Ecclesall road.
 - Delivery of a couple of events.
 - Project management (10%)
 - Total bid: £15,100
 - Potential to approach Places for people for the 3rd party contribution if the bid is successful.
 - Thank you to everyone who provided letters of support for the funding application.

- **Unfortunately this funding bid has been unsuccessful now to both Veolia and Biffa.**

- We currently have no further funding bids in for Sunnybank. We are currently re-evaluating priority pieces of work across the trust to see what funding is required and where funding bids can be submitted to.

(6) AOB

Future RAG meetings – we are proposing to reduce our Reserve Advisory Group meetings to x1 meeting per year. This x1 meeting would be held on site during the summer with a winter newsletter (replacing a meeting) to be sent out via email.

(7) Date and time of next meeting:

6.00pm – 7.30pm on Thursday 4th February 2016 @ the Broomhall Centre (Venue TBC).

SRWT contact details:

Telephone – 0114 263 4335

Hannah Wittram– Community Wildlife Ranger: h.wittram@wildsheffield.com

Robert Miller – Living Landscapes Manager: R.Miller@wildsheffield.com