THE FRIENDS OF STAINTON & THORNTON GREEN SPACES

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Held On Monday, 14th January, 2019

At 10.00 p.m. in the Parish Room, Stainton

1. Chair's Welcome: The Chair, Cllr. Alan Liddle, welcomed those present. **Present:** E. Revett (Vice Chair), B. Hogarth (Treasurer), M. Newbould (Secretary), S. Williams (MBC Rights of Way Officer), S. Antrobus (TVW), Ward Cllr. D. Coupe, Cllr. A. Conroy, B. Chapman, N. Cubitt, D. Sanders, D. Fewtrill and G. Edwards.

2. Apologies were received from J. Cooper (on holiday), K. Hornby (away), P. Armstrong (ill).

3. The Minutes of the meeting held on 21st September, 2018 were amended on page 3 (re No. 18, AOB, The W.I. Rose Garden, 'Strait Lane' became 'High Rifts') and under No. 9, Improvements to be made, two sentences ('Another . . . Rowans' and 'The gate . . . application' were deleted on page 1. The minutes were then agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters Arising not covered elsewhere on the Agenda – None.

5. Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer, B. Hogarth, gave his report re income and expenditure. Very little had been spent since the last meeting, just £120 (John Tarron for hedge cutting in KGG) and £60 for other expenses. The current balance was £1403.76. Expected Income in June/July: £200 per annum from S & TPC and £100 p.a. from the Community Council, plus £500 p.a. from the PC for maintenance of street furniture.

6. 106 monies and Grant Application - The Chair reported that Cllr. A. Conroy had done a huge amount of work on this agenda item. Taylor Wimpey had signed for 1.82 million to MBC but had forgotten to include in the document the £20,000 for the FSTGS. Paul Clarke (MBC) had emailed the Chair with the modified details. The monies would be sent directly by Paul Clarke to the Friends' HSBC a/c. Cllr. A. Conroy had also dedicated a great deal of time and effort on the Grant Application but this had been unsuccessful because of a lack of evidence of communication with residents and community involvement. The Big Lottery Fund,

Awards for All, were tightening up their rules and requirements and had recently received a substantial increase in the number of applications. The Friends' group agreed that the Chair use a Facebook link to the S & T P/Council website before the end of Jan. 2019 in order to communicate more with the village public and to ask residents' opinions, comments and suggestions re what they would like for S & T Green Spaces and for the BLF grant application's requisite evidence of community involvement. It was also agreed to go ahead with the grant application according to the grant criteria. Cllr. A. Conroy had received a helpful application video from Awards for All.

7. Improvements to be made: (i) A Field Drain; (ii) Link beween High Rifts field and Maelor's Wood; (iii) Footpath Improvements; (iv) the entrance to the HR field and a soak-away or pond just inside the gate; (v) the footpath extension from Cedarwood Glade entrance to the ski slope and the path that led to the edge of the wood. S. Williams had funding available for investigative work and would look into and solve the excess water problem to prevent water running onto the highway. Agreed.

8. The Friends' Group taking on work for the Parish Council, maintaining street furniture, etc. Cllr. A. Conroy reported that the group was 2/3 of the way through the work. The Street sign had been beautifully refurbished by John Cooper; a container had been installed; & the green bench at the bottom of Maelor's Wood (donated by Nicky Morgan and the Pioneers) would be painted in the near future.

9. Green Spaces Forum report by E. Revett. Forum Leader - Sue Antrobus. Elizabeth had attended the Forum at Nature's World but Alan L. had been on holiday in Australia. Firstly, there was an enjoyable walk-about around Nature's World; a comment was made about the boardwalk at Fairy Dell that had been causing concerns; ER had mentioned the non-slip markers used in S & TGS; Gamini was making a list of all Green Spaces volunteers; Nicola wanted interested people under 18 to join, with their parents' permission; a new group called 'The Green Stuff' had to have its own insurance; in Spring 2019. The Friends' Group from Darlington wished to meet the FSTGS at Stainton. Elizabeth spoke about the benefits of meeting with other Forum members, e.g. having a fresh pair of eyes and sharing information. A Volunteers' Day from 10.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. was held with Ageing Better, M'brough. Bird boxes had been made. E. Revett had done the teas & coffees.

10.The Quarry and Kell Gate Green – wildflower meadow Blackberries had all been cut back by John Tarron. Cuttings had been cleared by the group. the bare earth uncovered gave an extra 5 metres of green space. Nick Cubitt had suggested a neat pile to form a demarcation line for the first 2 or 3 cuts of the season. Some bramble roots had been left behind but the group would keep on top of them. The WFM contained much good material and the Chair had WF seeds. The plot would be top-dressed. KGG: Amy & the group had dug up a large number of flag iris which were transported to Preston Park and another location. Grass on the pond: ER commented that the 2nd pond was now virtually non-existent, much drier than it used to be. John Tarron had scraped it out. Sue and other members would have a site visit to the pond in the near future.

11.Habitat and Maintenance Schedule: items in red were discussed. Cllr. A. Conroy would update the Schedule as usual and send it to the Secretary for distribution to members.

12.The Spinney Cllr. D. Coupe reported that a wide lorry had recently burst into The Spinney and dumped a load of waste and also, not long after, some more near the Vernon Court garages. His requests to MBC for barriers had been refused. 3 points of access had been identified on the grass verges either side of Stainton Way to Hemlington Rd. A list of these was given out by A. Conroy. The problem would be rectified.

13.Thinning in the Old Orchard The Group was informed by the Chair that Phil Armstrong had been ill. However, some thinning had been done in the area between the owl seat and Stainton House. There were a lot of apple and a few plum trees which Dave and Alan had chopped back. Ongoing.

14.Footpaths and Bridlepaths update by S. Williams (MBC Officer): In respect to The Spinney, a long-distance bridleway was envisaged from the Riding School to Low Lane and The Post House for horses and cyclists to allow people to ride or cycle in greater safety. The Spinney was classed as a highway verge and part of the adopted highway. The structure of the route could be changed and all aspects could be re-examined. E. Revett enquired about the effect on new path through Maelor's Wood. The Rights of Way Improvements Plan was underway; as an aspiration for walkers and cyclists; it would have some crossings; multi-user routes were being considered; the practicalities were currently being weighed- up. E. Revett suggested that horses should not be permitted to go through High Rifts or Maelor's Wood. The new tarmac path should be discussed. S. Williams would look further into the responsibility for the maintenance of the path.

15.Maelor's Wood – new Management Plan Sue Antrobus introduced the new Management Plan for Maelor's Wood. Sue had ordered various plaques to replace the missing ones and a post to replace the one that had been burnt, which would arrive during January. The hedge in Maelor's Wood: On 29th November, 2018, Alan, Peter, Becky and Dave did a practice trim of one small area. The Chair and Dave thought this would be feasible. Peter of Area Care SE would drive the tractor himself. The Chair would contact him in Jan. or Feb. 2019. Community Payback had usually done the chipping with their own chipper but as piles of brash and tree thinnings had built up, Sue suggested that the Friends could have bonfires and she would tell Heather Wyman of the Fire Authority. Sue and Becky would be making bird boxes on Thursday, Feb. 21st in Maelor's Wood if the weather was good, otherwise in the Parish Room at 10 a.m.. It was hoped to involve families with children in this pursuit. The children would always be supervised. Sue would handle publicity for the event.

16.<u>Any Other Business</u> The sum of £35 was needed for the saw and twelve pairs of gloves for the TMG volunteers: Authorised. S. Williams asked about the fence repair. Notice of the current rat infestation problem would be posted on Facebook by the Chair. When feeding the birds in the garden, care should be taken to not allow bird food etc.to build up on the ground beneath or around your feeding station, as this encourages rats to the area.

17.<u>Date, Time and Location of next meeting</u> The next meeting would be held on Monday, 8th April, 2019 at 10.00 a.m. in the Parish Room.

The Chair formally closed the meeting at 12.15 p.m.

Minutes taken by Mrs. M. Newbould (FSTGS Secretary),

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