Minutes of The Friends of Stainton and Thornton Green Spaces
held on 29th November 2021.

Guest speaker:

Dr. Ronan O'Kennedy, Microbiologist and local resident(member of the Parish Council sub-committee on pollution) gave a power-point presentation on the pollution problem of the beck in Kell Gate Green. He gave a full explanation on what was expected of this type of package treatment plant AND the shortcomings of this system.
Having been involved as part of the sub-committee for over a year, the level of pollution although still unacceptable, has shown steady improvement since monitoring and sampling have been carried out. The plants are still not operating at the manufacturers claimed levels, but are close. Now that both properties are occupied and the plants appear to be operated and maintained correctly you would expect continued improvement in both COD and BOD levels. He still has major concerns about power outages, equipment failure(pump breakdown) and poor maintenance. Any one of these could result in further major pollution issues into the seasonal beck.
He is of the opinion that the Parish Council should take the planning issue to the ombudsman to ask "why when mains sewers were nearby, this type of system was allowed to be installed in the first place?"
The other areas of concerns are that each plant should have had its own outfall, that way you know which plant is not working correctly and there should be some form of alarm system to warn the residents/owners of system failure.
He would continue to work with the Parish Council to assist in any future sampling of the outfall and the interpretation of the results from the Northumbrian Water Labs.
He would ensure copies of his slide presentation were made available to the group AND circulated to all Parish Councillors.
The chair thanked Ronan for giving up his time and presenting the group with a thorough explanation of the problem?
As Ronan had a prior commitment at 11.00 am the published agenda was re-ordered to accommodate this.

Agenda item 1. Welcome and apologies.

The chair welcomed those present, namely: Alan Conroy, Brian Hogarth(Treasurer), John Cooper(vice-chair), David Coupe(Ward Councillor), Dave Fewtrell, Geoff Edwards, Nick Cubitt. Matt Moore and Sue Antrobus(Tees Valley Wildlife Trust) and to accept apologies from : Elizabeth Revett, Ron Dennisson(retired from the group) and Muriel Newbould(secretary) who had a fall on the ice and couldn't make it for health reasons. Belated apologies from Brian Chapman as the secretary did not have his new email address and therefore did not know about the meeting. This oversight has now been rectified.
The chair wished to thank Ron for all his help and expertise over the previous years

and wished him well for the future.

Agenda item 2. Minutes of the previous meeting(August AGM)

Muriel had some computer problems and so was unable to produce an accurate copy of the August minutes, as a consequence, the chair had endeavoured to produce the minutes which were circulated to the group and hard copies were available at the meeting. As the group had only just received the minutes, corrections and approval would be submitted to the chair/secretary in time for the next meeting. Alan Conroy commented that he was unaware that any proposed felling of trees in the quarry could be used as the wood for possible sculptures by Steve Iredale(item 8). It was agreed that green wood such as this would NOT be suitable for sculptures as the wood needs seasoning to allow best results.

Agenda item 3. Treasurers Report.

Brian presented his report, but had not printed copies and stated that the account balance was £18033.38. We had spent £376.00 since the last accounts statement on consumables(petrol, stain etc) and our income was £850.00, made up of £150.00 from the community council, £200.00 from the Parish Council and £500.00 from the Parish Council as the annual street furniture maintenance grant.

Agenda item 4. Winter work programme including habitat and maintenance schedule

Now that the mowing season had finished, our work schedule was primarily concerned with maintenance and repairs.
The handrail on the lower path had been vandalised and this had been repaired, as had the door on the Vernon Court Noticeboard.
Alan Conroy presented the Habitat and Maintenance Schedule highlighting the following :
a meeting with Richard Ward from MBC Area Care had resolved the cutting issues of the paths in Maelor's Wood.
A new cutting/management regime for Kell Gate Green AND the wet area. The latter was to allow nature to take its course, subject to review.
Alan would ensure Muriel received an updated schedule for circulation with the minutes.

Agenda item 5. Children's Nature Event 26th October and future events for 2022.

Sue Antrobus(who organised the event) said the event was a great success and she thanked the group for their help and support in running the sessions. She was particularly pleased to see one volunteer, Charlie, who although only 17, used to come to the events as a child and wanted to return/repay some of the pleasure he had when attending the sessions over 10 years ago.
Sue commented that we had agreed up to three sessions in total, the October one

being the first. She hoped to do two next year, one at Easter, with the other late spring or early summer. We had agreed a price of £250.00 per session, an at cost fee for the trust. She would finalise things at the next meeting in 2022.

Agenda item 6. Progress on projects/suggestions made for using 106 monies.

Replacement sculptures for the damaged/rotten deer and badgers were suggested at the last meet and Steve Iredale had visited the site to measure the remaining deer and badger with a view to sculpting similar sculptures, but because of the condition of the remaining sculptures, he suggested new ones. He would look at sculpting two pairs of animals, size and design to be agreed, and the cost would be in the region of £5000.00. He would let us have drawings and prices.
Jay Marrison from 4Nature had been contacted to give a price to put in a footpath from the kissing gate at the High Rifts Field entrance along the tree line and into the field in order to negate the muddy entrance. He is/was unable to give a price or timescale as he has lost permanent members of staff and is now operating on his own and struggling to carry out the work he is committed to. He is trying to employ more staff and would get back to us when things improve. It was suggested that we try and approach different contractors, but this would prove very difficult.
Replacement street trees had been suggested and MBC had been approached to see what if anything they could do to assist. Simon Blenkinsop from MBC was waiting for confirmation of a funding bid from central government. No timescale was given. We would need to canvas residents again to see if they wanted new trees on the verges outside of their houses and perhaps use some 106 money to replace them ourselves, but MBC would need to assist/plant the trees because of services etc. Geoff Edwards suggested we re-form the sub group looking at how to spend the 106 money.

Agenda item 7 : Working with others to develop our green spaces.

Following an on-site visit with Richard Ward from MBC Area Care and Gary Hill(part of the Area Care Team), we have agreed what is expected from MBC with regard to grass cutting in our green spaces. The Quarry, High Rifts Field and Kell Gate Green will be cut on a regular basis in line with MBC policy(about every 15 days during cutting season). The rides/footpaths in Maelor's Wood will be cut at least twice a year once in April/May and again July/August. An extra cut would be possible on request/agreement should the paths become overgrown. MBC would cut the hedge in Maelor's Wood in line with MBC hedge cutting policy.
Richard has agreed to spray the footpath from the centre of the village beside The Wynd down to Rose Cottage Phase 3 to cope with the nettles to keep the path clear.

Ian and Anne-Marie from TVWLT visited the east end of the quarry/wildflower area and would like to develop the area further by increasing the size of the designated wildflower area. Extending the wildflower area needs to be given a bit more consideration before it is applied as it has the potential to increase the workload of the

group. They will discuss and agree any proposals with the chair.

Agenda item 8 : Update on pollution issue in Kell Gate Green.

Dealt with at the beginning of the meeting by guest speaker Dr. Ronan O'Kennedy.

Agenda item 9 : Any other business.

Sue suggested that it may be worth considering the formation of a “sub group” of volunteers to look after the northern part of the village, Maelor's Wood and Stainton Low Wood with residents the from Rose Cottage Farm. The idea of another group to look after Maelor's Wood etc. was something that the group would have no real problems with, and took the opinion “good it is not us” and it relieves some of the workload of the group. It would however present a number of ramifications- who leads the group, what tools/machines will they require and who do they report to/agree management strategy etc? She would explore the possibility and report back.

Brian Hogarth raised concerns about the state of the bed at the entrance sign to Thornton from Seamer. It was suggested and agreed that the sign bed be cleared of weeds, dug over and covered with gravel/slate. John and Brian would carry out the task when the weather permitted.

John Cooper offered the suggestion of “Last of the Summer Wine” polo shirts (£140.00 for ten) Voted AGAINST.
The group had moved and dismantled some of the half barrels on the verge on Seamer Road, leaving one barrel empty. It would be down to The Environment Group to suggest a new possible location.
Similarly, the old village pump had been removed from its current location on Thornton Road and would be re-located by The Environment Group/Green Fingers Gang.

Date and Time of the next meeting: March 2022. exact date tba.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting and closed the meting at 11.45am

Signed as a true record : _____

Date : _____