

Kingston nature recovery group

Minutes of meeting 29 June 2023 in Kingston Parish Hall

Members present: Helen Sida (Chair), Tim Ambrose, Louise Holloway, Crispin Holloway, Ellie Rothersay, Chris Moulder

Apologies: David Hoare; Steve Berry

1. The report: The Monitoring report has been accepted by KPC and placed on the KPC website. KPC have sent the final report to SDNPA but we need to keep them informed of our progress and continue to liaise with them.

The need to liaise and work with other interested groups was agreed; e.g. Sussex Local Nature Partnership and Weald to Waves. HS has been in touch.

2. Monitoring Plan: There was a broad-ranging discussion about the next steps based on the proposals set out in the paper 'Biodiversity / wild life monitoring in Kingston Parish 15 June 2023'. Key points:

- Focus on taxonomic groups with target species
- Important to measure eco-system health, focus on eco-system functions and pick focal species as indicators of eco-system function
- The importance of the health of the Cockshut
- The possibility of capturing historical records of bio-diversity by interviewing older residents about their memories of the parish. A school project?
- Probably practical to identify indicator species that would also capture residents' interest; e.g. hedgehogs, birds, butterflies
- There has been a good response to the request for mapping birds nests on the WhatsApp group. Numbers continue to increase. Could/should we plan a bird count in Kingston to co-incide with the RSPB annual bird count?
- Monitoring should be organised in specific places as well as ad hoc reports and should be repeated annually
- The importance of mapping ponds
- Important to engage residents for example as 'species champions' or champions for each street whilst recognising the pressure on people's time
- There are lots of resources to tap into as well as a lot of local expertise
- We should plan events to engage the community to include education / information and details of what residents can do; e.g. sessions on hedgehogs, birds and butterflies
- It was recognised that several residents have camera traps which could be used. We could also consider applying for a grant to buy camera traps which could be loaned out. It might be possible for university students to analyse camera trap data.

Action: It was generally agreed that there was scope to be ambitious and apply for funding but that we need to develop a clear plan. The group agreed to reflect on the discussion and **ALL** to come to the next meeting prepared to formulate an action plan.

3. Gardener pledge scheme:

- There was broad support for the proposals set out in 'Kingston garden pledge scheme; initial ideas 15 June 2023' but we need to think through the pledges carefully and frame positively rather than telling people not to do things.
- We also need to consider what people will get out of joining such a scheme and how best to promote it.
- A scheme would benefit from a website to store information.
- The Kingston Fete would be an ideal opportunity to promote such a scheme but there was insufficient time to do that this year.
- There are many similar schemes in other places that we can learn from.

Action:

LH agreed to reframe the pledges and circulate for comment
HS agreed to consider a pilot project in more detail.

4. Large and medium Landowners

Action:

HS to liaise with Louisa to draft letters to large and some medium sized landowners to inform them about the project and find out about their initiatives.

5. KPC land

It was recognised that St Pancras Green is an important recreation area in the village and that space is needed for football and other games. It was also recognised that the group could helpfully provide details to KPC on the management of verges to assist KPC when agreeing managing contracts. It was recognised that there has been wide support for the wildlife friendly management of the Village Green and that we should publicise this.

Action:

HS to liaise with SB re developing an incremental proposal for St Pancras Green and developing verge management plan.

6. Information dissemination

The importance of regular information to promote the work of the group was recognised. There are over 90 members of the WhatsApp wildlife group. Whilst it is important to engage with the village, the Mapping Project Report has value and interest to a wider audience.

Action:

Monthly article in Kingston News on different topics. HS to submit article for August edition about the project and the group, seeking new members.

TA to draft a press release about the Mapping Project to include pictures of the Green, with suggestions for circulation.

7. Funding

Whilst there is a lot local volunteers can do it was generally felt that we need funding to co-ordinate a bigger project to take the work forward and that we need to develop a more detailed proposal before we are in a position to make any applications. There are sources of fnding for such projects available.

8. Secretary: CM's offer to act as secretary for the group was accepted.

9. Next meeting: 7.30pm Tuesday 1 August 2023 in the Pavilion

CM 2 July 2023