

Kingston Nature Recovery Group

Minutes of meeting 26 September 2023 in Kingston Pavilion

Members present: Helen Sida (Chair), Louise Holloway, Crispin Holloway, Ellie Rotheray, Steve Berry, Grahame Mayo, Alison Mayo, Chris Moulder (Sec)

1. **Apologies:** David Hoare (KPC), Tim Ambrose, Louisa Adams
2. **Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting on 29 August 2023 were accepted.
3. **Matters arising:** none

4. St Pancras Green and other KPC land; next steps.

Following KPC's request KNRG has agreed to redraft the proposal for managing St Pancras Green. This will include a to scale map and a plan for wider consultation on the proposals and will be presented at the KPC November meeting on 8th. The group expressed concern that while it is recognised that a few people object to the proposals there is widespread support for a more biodiverse green and these views also need to be taken into account in making a decision on the way forward. It was welcomed that approval has been given by KPC to plant a small section of wildflowers adjacent to the new sports equipment this autumn, plant spring bulbs on a 1m wide strip along the north boundary and allow a strip on the east side to grow long next spring and summer. Amended further plans will now need to be implemented next year.

Action

- Write to Chair of KPC to express our concern about the September KPC meeting being somewhat undemocratic and seek an opportunity to explain to councilors our proposals in advance of their next meeting so they are well placed to make an informed decision. (HS)
- Redraft proposal for KPC meeting 8 November (HS and SB)

5. Biodiversity monitoring plan

Pond survey: ER reported that she had eight replies to the pond survey request. We hope for more and it was recognized we may need to repeat the request periodically over the next few months.

Action

- ER to resend the request and email those interested with a map of the ponds and ask them to share with people who may be interested.

Trees: SB is the tree warden for KPC. KPC have just completed a tree survey of all the trees in the village though this contains limited information. Only three ancient trees are listed in the parish. Could a map of the TPOs be obtained from Planning?

Action

- To contribute to PPS re trees in the village.
- To seek a volunteer (or volunteers by road) from the village to build on the KPC survey map. HS to put out a request on WhatsApp groups.

6. Garden pledge scheme: update

The group were supportive of and agreed to the proposals set out in the notes of the Garden Pledge subgroup meeting. An inaugural meeting will be held in the Pavilion at 7.00pm 8th November.

Action

- AM, HS and CM to take this forward and set up and advertise the meeting.

7. Information dissemination

Kingston News: Positive feedback on October article. The article for the next edition will advertise the Garden Pledge Scheme and explain tree mapping and seek volunteers.

Press release: this will be sent out once KPC have agreed the text.

Action

- HS to write and submit article
- HS to send out press release once KPC approval received.

8. Parish Priority Statement

Louise's contributions on The Cockshut and trees were much appreciated. The group thought that the SSSIs, Castle Hill NNR, wartbiters, cuckoo flowers and devil's bit scabious / Round headed Rampion should also be included.

Action

- KNRG contribution to be sent to KPC, to Chair, Clerk LA and DH (HS)

9. KPC Environmental Policy and Action Plan

KNRG agreed to review the KPC Environmental policy and Action plan and to discuss at the next meeting.

Action

- Circulate copies of the Environmental Policy and Action Plan along with the footpaths review for the group to read and think about ready for discussion at the next meeting. (CM)

10. Working parties

Wart biters: GM reported a clear strategy for clearing the scrub and then grazing the land with cattle which would encourage / protect the wart biters. However, this is privately owned land. It was thought that the landowners could apply for funding (SDNPA/Natural England/National Trust).

Cuckoo flowers: The bank is a designated wildflower verge. The cuckoo flowers have declined in recent years due to multiple factors. Advice from various experts has been sought and it seems digging up daffodil bulbs; cutting back the lower branches of the trees; and severely mowing and raking up the grass at appropriate times are all required to encourage their return. In addition it was suggested we identify all the springs/seepages on clay in Kingston and plant Cuckoo flowers in these damp areas using seeds harvested very locally.

Action

- Cuckoo flowers: Discuss management of the bank with KPC clerk and ESCC. KAG to remove bulbs in spring. (HS)
- Wartbiters: Continue liaising with landowner, conservation organisations and funding bodies to progress scrub clearance. (GM)

Cockshut chalk stream

There is general concern that there is little appreciation or recognition of the importance of the Cockshut as a globally significant feature which we need to protect. Consequently, there is little understanding of the importance of the quality of the water feeding into it from Kingston which is the Cockshut's source. The work on the current phase of the Cockshut Restoration Project is nearing completion, in November the programme will extend to include work from the Cockshut to the Ouse. The group agreed we should raise awareness of the importance of water quality, encourage participation in the volunteer days the Railway Land Trust are organising for the Cockshut Project (next one 7 November) and could possibly involve the Nature Club. LH reported Tim Bartlet (LDC flood management) is interested in water in Kingston both as a source of the Cockshut and the flooding problem in Wellgreen Lane. She has also spoken to Peter King of the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust who was also concerned about compliance with mid-tier stewardship re the quality of the water feeding into the Cockshut.

Action

- The Cockshut to be the topic for a future Kingston News, possibly as an extra piece. (HS)
- LH to send HS her notes re Cockshut
- Contact Tim Bartlet and at some point in the future Peter King (HS)

11. Case study for SDNPA - update

The case study has been submitted and will go on the SDNPA website.

12. Landowner letter update

Action

- HS to contact LA for update on progress.

13. AOB

- CM is standing down as Secretary. AM will minute the next meeting. HS thanked CM for her work and asked for volunteers to take on the role.
- Greg Oakley has moved to the village and is a arboricultural consultant and registered tree inspector. HS to invite him to the next meeting.

14. Next meeting. Date changed from 31 October (Halloween)

CM/ 29/9/23