

Kingston Nature Recovery Group

Minutes of meeting 7th November 2023 in Kingston Pavilion

Members present: Helen Sida (Chair), Crispin Holloway, Ellie Rotheray, Steve Berry, Grahame Mayo, Alison Mayo, Chris Moulder, David Hoare, Greg Oakley

1. **Apologies:** Louise Holloway, Tim Ambrose
2. **Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting on 26th September 2023 were accepted.
3. **Matters arising** None

4. **St Pancras Green and other KPC land: Update on revised proposal**

HS, CM & SB had a meeting with Julie and DH (KPC) concerning St Pancras Green. It was agreed to include in the revised proposal a reduced mowing regime (16 down to 10 cuts a year) for all areas except the football pitch and other sports areas, provide more specific detail of where turf would be stripped, and to create a better scale plan. Marion Brandis, a skilled garden designer in the village, has agreed to help with the design and plan. HS and CM met with her on the green and have provided her with a list of stakeholders. It is hoped she will prepare something by mid-December which would allow time to re-present the proposal at the January council meeting. If this does not prove possible the proposal will be presented at the March meeting.

Actions

CM to liaise with Marion when she has completed the plan.

HS to update the proposal ready for presentation once the plan is ready

5. **KPC Environment Policy and Action Plan.**

Ideas for updating the Action Plan were discussed. It was agreed to suggest the following updates to KPC:

KPC Environmental Policy: add to bullet point 5 something like '*... and encourage other landowners in the parish to do likewise*'.

Action plan point 5 policy:

- (as above) add in '*... and encourage other landowners in the parish to do likewise*'.

Point 5 actions

- KPC to review contracts for managing the Village and St Pancras Greens; the verges; trees, and the Tennis Courts with a view to using environmentally friendly contractors where possible and identifying environmentally friendly changes that can be made. (KPC clerk)
- Work with the KNRG to develop a plan for the management of St Pancras Green to improve biodiversity and add visual interest while maintaining recreational use.
- Work with KNRG to support, encourage and highlight wildlife monitoring, surveys and mapping in the parish (KNRG)
- Work with KNRG to develop a Gardening for wildlife forum in the parish to improve biodiversity in gardens (KNRG)
- To continue to work with KNRG to support all aspects of nature recovery in the parish

All to be reviewed in 12 months

Action: HS to pass on recommendation to parish clerk

6. Parish Priority Statement Update

The KPC is undertaking a survey of villagers to identify issues to be included in the PPS. They have commissioned Action in Rural Sussex to carry this out. Action in Rural Sussex have been in touch with HS to find out KNRG priorities. HS passed on the list previously discussed within the group and already shared with KPC. The survey will be circulated to all villagers in November as the PPS needs to be submitted to the SDNPA in mid-December.

Action: All to complete the survey when they receive it.

7. Email Address Use

KNRG has its own KPC email address (knrg@kingston-pc.gov.uk). This is very useful for anyone wanting to use an email address for replies on KNRG matters but not wanting to share their private address eg on the press release, at the end of articles etc

Action: HS to share the password so everyone in the group can access if they want to.

8. Biodiversity Monitoring

• Pond survey

ER shared that 27 ponds have now been recorded on the map and owners of all but 3 are happy to be contacted and to do surveys. There is potential to train people at the KHF pond. The best times would be Spring and Summer. It was agreed some sort of pond survey could be carried out next year in as many of these ponds as possible.

• Trees

Greg (GO) shared useful advice about things to look for when assessing trees, the usefulness of dead wood and leaving grass long under trees. He has Excel sheets for recording trees and could train volunteers to undertake surveying. No volunteers have yet come forward.

Actions:

- HS to send the current tree list and all other relevant information on trees in the parish which the group has to GO
- GO to formulate a plan for undertaking a parish tree survey
- GO to start surveying trees and involving others as much as possible
- GO to draft an article for the next Kingston News about trees and the tree survey (The next Kingston News deadline is 1st December)

9. Gardening scheme

The first meeting of the Wildlife Gardening Forum is tomorrow 8th November. It will be a very informal meeting to discuss plans and ideas to date, gain feedback and to agree the next steps.

10. Information dissemination

- The Kingston News – The last edition had 2 articles from the KNRG. The first an article about the Garden Scheme, and also asking for volunteers for the tree survey. The second about the Cockshut. 1 email was received as feedback from the Cockshut article. This

month's article is about Autumn decay (written by HS). It was agreed next month's article should be about trees and tree survey.

- Press release update – SDNPA media team have the press release and will amplify through their social media. HS's request for assistance to share the press release with relevant local media outlets and the list of local authority type bodies suggested by Julie did not receive any offers so the press release has not been circulated any wider at this point.

Actions

GO Draft a Kingston News article on trees & the tree survey

All Support with sharing the press release would still be appreciated.

11. Working parties /Actions updates

- Wart biters GM reported that he understood from discussions with Alice Parfitt (Changing Chalk/Buglife) that the landowner needs to make a long term commitment to appropriate animal grazing following scrub clearance for funding to be forthcoming. Cattle with GPS collars may be the way to go to accurately target grazing and lead to the mosaic of sward heights needed by Wart Biters.

Action: ?

- Cuckoo flowers HS reported that Julie (KPC) has contacted ESCC. They confirmed the verge is designated a "wildlife verge" and as such will be cut once (in autumn) and cuttings collected. The Action Group have permission to remove the daffodils. The ESCC Tree Warden, Ant, will look at the trees and decide if anything needs doing.

Action: HS to check cuttings are collected when the verge is cut and follow up with the tree warden

- Cockshut LH has contacted Tim Bartlett (LDC liason for the Cockshut Restoration Project) and is hoping for a meeting in December. Issues for discussion include water quality and what happens to the cockshut on its journey through the parish. LH will confirm when a meeting date is set and invite others to join.

Action: LH to agree meeting date with Tim Bartlett

12. AOB

CH suggested KNRG organise public talks – speakers suggested were: Dan Danahar, Graeme Lyons, Dave Goulson, Geoffrey Mead and Simon Linnington.

Action: CH to look into it.

HS explained that following Alex Wolselys introduction, she had been in touch with the Southwood Foundation. Caroline Croft has been very encouraging about our work and offered to try and find some expert voluteer support.

Action: HS is currently exploring with Caroline what volunteer support they may have available now that we could realistically make use of. Initial ideas for before Christmas are assistance with mapping and a monitoring plan.

HS highlighted that there is funding available from the SDNPA – Re-nature Fund. Deadline 15th Dec. HS has circulated the link to further details and invited ideas for anything we could apply for.

Action: Let HS know any ideas

HS explained that she has been in contact with Wave to Weald's Garden and Greenspaces initiative. Her contact there, Amy Hurn, the Garden and Greenspaces Coördinator, has ensured Kingston postcodes are now included in the catchment area. She would like to make Kingston a "Community Champion". This will "open up more opportunities to work collaboratively and find ways to support each other's activities, including data collection and monitoring"

Action: HS to invite Amy to Kingston for a walk around at an appropriate time

SB asked what had happened to the planned letters to landowners. HS explained this had dropped of the agenda as she was too overwhelmed with other tasks. SB offered to deliver the letters to landowners.

Action HS to very gratefully pass on all letters and the most up to date contact list (which doesnt have email addresses and in some cases no specific address either) to SB to make progress with this.

Date of next meeting: **9th January 2024 Kingston Pavilion 7.30pm**