

# Kingston Nature Recovery Group

## Minutes of meeting 20 February 2024 in Kingston Pavilion

**Members present:** Helen Sida (Chair), Louise Holloway, Ellie Rotheray, Steve Berry, Grahame Mayo, Alison Mayo, David Hoare, Tim Ambrose, Pat Gibbon, Jane Alderton and Chris Moulder

**1. Apologies:** Crispin Holloway

**2. Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting on 9 January 2024 were accepted.

**3. Matters arising:** none

Helen welcomed Pat and Jane to the group.

### 4. Wildlife Gardening Forum

The KWGF insert was in the March edition of the Kingston News.

Arrangements for the launch of the KWGF on 16 March are in hand. The event is targeted at residents of the parish and will be promoted widely in the village with invitations also to those with specific interests/supporters/networking (SDNP rangers; railway land wildlife trust, Southwood Foundation etc).

The Lewes Mosaic Project are hoping to secure funding for an interactive map to document all sites of wildlife interest (verges, gardens, etc) in Lewes. They would welcome Kingston taking part.

Currently the format for the KWGF is planned to be 3-4 speakers throughout the year. We need a speaker for the next meeting. AM had no response from the Bumblebee Conservation. Dave Goulson (University of Sussex) and Alison Parfit (Buglife) were suggested.

#### Action

- Promote the launch to friends and neighbours - all
- Help put out chairs at KPH on 16 March (3.00pm) - all those who can
- CM, HS & AM to meet 8<sup>th</sup> March to finalise plans
- HS & CM to liaise with Helen Meade Railway land Wildlife Trust re the Mosaic Project Interactive Map.
- ER to ask Dave Goulson if he would be willing to speak to the KWGF in June / July.

### 5. Wildlife monitoring

**Southwood Foundation:** HS and ER have been in touch with the volunteer and are hopeful he will develop a monitoring plan and GIS Map. At this stage, exactly what is unclear. His work with the group must be completed by the end of March.

**Tree survey:** GO ran a useful training session. The next step is to put the learning into practice and survey some trees, probably on St Pancras Green. Date to be confirmed (in better weather).

Bat surveys for potential bat roosts and acoustic surveys were discussed. Funding would be needed for the acoustic survey.

**Action:**

- GM to draft a proposal for an acoustic bat survey in Kingston.

**Great Crested Newts:** Alex Worsley (Sussex Wildlife Trust) has one or 2 volunteers interesting in doing reptile and amphibian surveys in Kingston. It was agreed to take up any offers available. The KWGF talk on 16 March could be used to gather more data on where garden ponds are.

**Action**

- HS to reply to Alex saying yes please to surveyors.

**New Butterfly transects:**

**KHF:** SB surveyed KHF last year and will repeat the survey this year. The transect is registered with Butterfly Conservation and recorded with Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre.

**Kingston Hill SSSI:** SB and a friend are planning to establish a butterfly transect on Kingston Hill this year.

**Use of website for sharing data:** GM reported that Barcombe PC have extensive wildlife data on their website which has become a useful source of local information. The group discussed the value of such an initiative. There were concerns about: who manages the site / information; who uses it; also what information is needed at a local level. More information is needed.

**Action:**

- Check out the Barcombe PC website - all
- GM to find out more about the Barcombe website

**City Nature Challenge Bioblitz 26 - 29 April:** The challenge is to record as much wildlife as possible using iNaturalist. Kingston is in the Brighton area. It is an exciting opportunity to involve the village in recording our local wildlife and engaging families/children.

**Action:**

- Ask Jan Knowlson to run another iNaturalist training session - HS
- Develop a plan to engage the village in the Bio blitz - HS, ER, GM, AM & JA
- Advertise the event in the April KN (deadline early March) - HS

**Pond survey:** ER is going on river mapping training and will report back at the next meeting with a view to making a plan for a survey then.

**Engaging / recruiting volunteers for monitoring activities:** General agreement that we need to develop specific projects and then recruit volunteers to fill the roles. The excellent response to Grahame's toad safaris demonstrates that there is interest in the village.

Louise is unable to co-ordinate the nesting bird survey this year.

**Action:**

- HS to ask Gerry if he can co-ordinate the bird survey.
- Keep looking out for engagement opportunities - all

**6. Communication**

Monthly articles from KNRG to continue; ER to write about hoverflies for the April edition. A write up of the launch of the KWGF should also be submitted (May edition). SB is negotiating with the KN editor about a monthly wildlife column.

It was suggested that we should Consider preparing an annual calendar of events that can be published in advance and could include, for example: the toad safari; Bioblitz; bird nesting survey etc

**Action**

- ER to submit article on hoverflies for April edition of KN
- CM to prepare write up of KWGF launch

**7. Management of KPC land and liaison with other large and medium landowners**

**Management of KPC land:** The draft paper, already circulated to all members of the group has been submitted to KPC for preliminary discussion, date to be confirmed, prior to the KPC meeting on 13 March. Members of KNRG are encouraged to attend the KPC meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> March.

**Action:**

- DH to ask KPC clerk to share the paper with our District Councillor (Stella Spiteri)

**Letters to landowners:** SB is getting the relevant addresses. The letters should go out at the end of February.

**8. Habitat protection issues**

**Wart biter:** GM reported that a small group of people including Alice Parfit from Buglife had cleared the scrubland on Kingston Hill. Contractors should clear the land in the autumn. Alice is working with the farmer on grant applications.

**Cuckoo flowers:** The verge remains uncut; ESCC were supposed to do by November but are now saying the end of February. The LDC tree officer said there was no reason to cut the trees back. The daffodils have yet to be removed so it was agreed to do this once the cuckoo flowers are up.

**Action**

- HS to contact LDC tree officer direct to explain that the overhanging branches are detrimental to the cuckoo flowers in the designated wildflower verge.
- HS to ask Julie to ask ESCC to postpone cutting the grass in February

**Cockshut:** LH and ER are meeting Tim Bartlet (LDC Environmental Health and Flood Risk Officer) and Peter King (River Trust) to discuss ways to engage with the source of the Cockshut. The Cockshut restoration project is complete and plan to extend the project to the Ouse and up into catchment areas. LH highlighted some ideas for

engaging/involving Kingston such as a guided 3km walk from the source of the Cockshut to where it meets the Ouse this summer. The 'Rights of the River Ouse' are interested in the tributaries of the Ouse, including the Cockshut.

#### **Action**

- LH & ER to meet Tim and Peter on 28 Feb

Given the shortage of time it was agreed to pend discussion on tree protection, tree planting and light pollution until a future meeting.

#### **9. Networking**

**Weald to Wave:** HS is meeting Amy Hurn, Gardens and Greenspaces on Thursday to walk around Kingston. Members are welcome to join her and are encouraged to register their garden on the Weald to Wave website.

**Lewes Climate Hub:** HS met with Dinah Morgan. They have a newsletter which members can subscribe to.

**Southwood Foundation:** HS, SB and CM met with Caroline Croft and took her on a tour of the village.

**10. Need a secretary:** please let HS know if you are willing to take on this role or you know someone who is.

**11. AOB: SDNP:** Members were encouraged to sign up to the SDNPA online monthly newsletter. We featured in the January edition. HS feeds back to Jan Knowlson SDNPA Biodiversity Officer; Tom Simpson (SDNPA Ranger) is on our mailing list and receives minutes of the meetings.

**12. Next meeting:** 7.30pm 16 April 2024 in the Pavilion.

CM 26/2/24