

Friends of Pontesford Hill

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 7.30 p.m. on Monday 14 August, 2015 at the Congregational Church, Pontesbury

Present: Mike Mortimer (Chair), David Morgan (Vice Chair), Brian Simmonds (Treasurer), Jan Prestwood (Sec), Adrian Donnelly, Ken Day, Jan Pursaill, Christopher Cooke, Val Whittall, Dave Taplin, Beth Williams (SWT), Sara Pearce (SWT), Joe Penfold (LPS).

1. **Apologies for Absence** – All members were present
2. **Minutes of last meeting** – Agreed that the minutes issued for the meeting held on 29 July, 2015 (not June as documented) are true and correct. Noted that the Moth Event was a success.
3. **Current financial position** – Provided by treasurer (see attached). Beth costs to be accounted for. SWT will send email advising the amount. Treasurer was asked to circulate future financial statements to Committee members by email in advance of committee meetings to give members time to review before the meeting.
4. **One Hill, Two Names, One Reserve** – Discussion considered possible suggestions/options and preferences. These included such as Pontesford Hill and Earls Hill Reserve, Pontesford and Earls Hills Reserve. In any event Pontesford Hill will be the lead name as this is what most locals call it. On the other hand, Earl's Hill Reserve had been the first Shropshire Wildlife Trust reserve in 1964 and SWT would not like to lose the Earl's Hill part of the title . Beth to investigate Survey results to see what the general public suggested. The consensus within the committee seemed to be that "Pontesford and Earl's Hill" was the most suitable name for the SWT reserve. It was agreed to continue using "Pontesford Hill" for FoPH publicity purposes until such time as any name change is agreed, probably at an AGM.
5. **Human Survey Progress** – Beth reported that there had been 121 responses to this. The Hill Survey responses totalled 50 (paper-based survey). Nice comments made. An interim report will be issued sometime during September. Money received from a will for the Appeal will be noted in the report. Management Survey feedback requires the information to be expanded. The Management Plan / vision is generally supported by participants (a common theme is that people don't want it to be managed "like Haughmond Hill"). Committee will wait on Beth's report which is to be issued in pdf format. Clive Dean has been appointed as the new South Shropshire Reserves Officer. He will start work with SWT at the end of September and the PH Management Plan will be part of his remit. He will be report to Carl. If possible, he may attend September's meeting.
6. **Down To Earth** – Not much to add to information in Beth's report. Discussion was held on the matter of local photographs, in particular those from the 1940's. Does the cost of scanning these come from the Pontesford Hill budget? David Morgan asked if the originals could be scanned by Jessops to create digital images for future use. The aim is to show the changing landscape over time and consider what the public want from the landscape. Mike said he would like this on the web page where a history of Pontesford Hill is accessible from the front page. Derek Evans from Plough Garage has lots of old photos as does someone in Tankerville Pottery. Mike suggested that Ben

Osborne might be able to assist with scanning prints and the use of Photoshop. Beth will contact him. Joe mentioned a number of possible new events: Rob Rowe(?) a meadow survey specialist is keen to run a survey on the Hill. Old trees, winter foraging “plants with a purpose” and Id. of trees in winter are possible activities. Possible dates are 4 and 5 or 12 and 13 September, 3 and 10 and 17 October. No cost to FoPH. Mike suggested 3 October. Joe to liaise and report back with possible dates. Archaeology may also be possible at this time.

7. **ECO Surveys** – Jan Pursaill gave her report (see attached). Discussion took place on whether to include in the website or publish. Mike said that he would like content to be sent to him or included on the website. Various formats of the report are possible but before deciding on the presentation mode the Committee needs to see the results. Joe Penfold advised that there is a national nest box scheme and that this may be a possibility for the Hill. Another possibility is an invertebrate survey (next year). Everyone reminded of the ragwort control work (cutting and bagging) to take place Thursday 20 August. This considered to be a good PR exercise for SWT to be seen as proactive in helping control this problem.

8. **Website** – Mike to coordinate with all information to be passed to him. Andy May (local resident) has created the website (similar programme as the Appeal website). Mike will obtain password and logon details for individual members of the Committee so they will be able to maintain the site – possibly sharing responsibilities. The web menu structure needs to be agreed. Tuition by Andy on “how to” can be provided and needs to be done within the next 10 days as Andy will be back to work teaching at school.

9. **Practical Work** – P3 not operative in August. Car park improvement discussed. Beth to contact Tarmac. There is an LPS budget available to expand the parking area. General discussion took place on proposed works for the car park. Agreed that the bund at the left-side of the car park entrance remain in place. Jan Pursaill asked that the nearby neighbour (Randall’s) be contacted about the proposed works. Mike agreed to do this. Dave Taplin noted a need to infill the new steps and possibly include a handrail. The Wood Carvers are still keen to work on signage but are unable to start until a name has been decided. Sara advised that there is SITA grant available for a community led project to help improve the access for wildlife sites. This would assist with contractors and materials. Timeline however is the end of September and an early site meeting need to be organised. LPS may possibly provide a £5K match with the grant. Sara to action.

10. **AOB** – Mike proposed that life membership of FoPH be given to the family members who made a single donation in excess of £50K. This was unanimously agreed. A “get together” at the village hall was proposed for a Friday or Saturday in November/December. Format being a social evening maybe with music, quiz and update information on display. Noted however that the AGM was not well attended. General discussion followed – sell tickets or not? – agreed no, instead RSVP required to gauge numbers. Val Whittall to investigate. “The Seven Hills Walk” has been made known to FoPH for 6 September. Brian to hold on to counterfoils from the Prize Draw until the next meeting.

11. **The next meeting will be held on Monday 14 September, 2015 at 7.30 p.m. at the Congregational Church, Pontesbury.**



Bank Account:	£10,322.39	
Cash/Cheques in hand:	£ 52.40	Total = £10,374.79

Membership:	£ 1,805.00 for year to date	
Grand Draw:	Gross £ 2,136.15	
	Costs £ 151.00	Net = £ 1,985.15

Probable that we make it up to a round £2,000 for SWT Appeal.

This will bring our Bank figure down to £8,374.79

The only expenditure since our last meeting has been £120.00 for the "Thank You" banners.

The £400.00 cash raised by Shropshire Fields has been donated direct to the Appeal.

Our balance of "say" £8,374.79 includes the Down To Earth grant of £3,794.00.

To date, our expenditure from the Budget is £161.00 leaving £3,633.00.

Beth's costs need to be accounted from this.

Friends of Pontesford Hill

Eco Survey Report

Plants

A Phase 1 survey was carried out on 7th April by Fiona Gomersall and a few volunteers. Habitats were mapped and a baseline survey of plants listed.

On 13th May Fiona led a Wildflower Walk for FoPH and further plants were added to the list, totalling 111 species.

Mammals

Stuart Edmunds led a Mammal Tracking Event on 19th April, setting up camera traps. This was followed up on 25th April to retrieve the camera traps and see what had been filmed. The "Secret Nightlife of Pontesford Hill" was shown in the Youth Building behind Pontesbury Library on 24th May to show the edited highlights of the filming.

Birds

David Wilson led an early morning bird walk on 16th June for FoPH, when 23 species were heard or seen. Since then we can add Tawny Owl (heard at the recent Moth Event).

Moths

Stephen and Lucy Lewis led a Moth Event on 15th August, setting up a Robinson Trap on Lower Camp. The following morning, the trap was opened up, moths identified, photographed and released. 33 species of moths were recorded. The night was rather cold, so not as successful as the "Rescuing Rocks and Overgrown Relics" moth event a month previously, when 126 species were recorded at Lower Camp.

Future Events

A Fungus Foray will be led by John Hughes, date to be decided.

Dormouse project: FoPH have been approached to see if there is enough interest to set up a group but no response yet.

Bat Walk: possibility to be explored.

Jan Pursaill

17th August 2015