

# Notes of Open Space Working Group Spinney Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> December 2019

## PRESENT

Parish Council – Georgina Blackhurst, Louise Gibson, Iain Keeping, Cindy Parry, Esther Sadler Williams, Norman Sharp, Lisa White, Ann Wright (Clerk).

Cheshire West & Chester Council – Hilary Smith Localities, Stephanie Hefferan Countryside Ranger

Other – Andrew Hull Chairman of TWiG, Yvonne Keeping.

The group looked at the open space and coppice area then walked through the Spinney.

The following points were noted during the site meeting:

That if the public are invited to enter the Spinney the inspection regime needs to be increased.

It was noted the Spinney is part of the flood plain and regularly floods and is a 'Wet Woodland' area.

It was noted that TWiG had asked CW&C in the past not to cut the whole of the grassed area next to the Spinney but just a 1m strip on the edge of the paths to create a wildflower meadow. It was discussed if the area could become a wildflower area.

It was noted there needs to be a balance between creating wildflower and conservation areas and providing public access, although it was stated that people could walk through wildflower areas.

It was discussed that the coppice required management and coppicing noting this area has become a key wildlife habitat.

It was discussed that this area as well as the Spinney would be an excellent location for a Forest School which could be used by the Primary School, Sandy Bears and the Outdoor Centre as well as other groups.

The following points were raised during a discussion in the Sandstone Ridge Conference Room:

Working needed to take place to identify the route a path through the Spinney should take once this has been achieved the group needs to look at how to make that route safe and costs.

It was noted that a number of grants are available to help with the project including:

Grants for training forest school leaders (finishes January)

Seven Trent – projects linked to water

Awards for All

It was noted that the Council through TWiG are submitting a heritage lottery application for the restoration of Glebe Meadow and it was suggested that a bigger application could be submitted to cover more works including the Spinney.

It was agreed the Clerk should obtain quotes from a range of people who could design the path inc. CW&C, Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

It was agreed that Bob Blackhurst would contact the Bishop Heber to see if they would be interested in being involved with the project. Andrew Hull agreed to provide details of a local landscape designer.

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It was suggested that the Parish Council may want to enter into a 'land access agreement' with CW&C to take control of the green space next to the Spinney.

It was noted that the projects costings and design work needed to take account of tree safety management.

It was noted the Coppice is identified as a top-quality habitat and that if coppicing takes place only a third should be done at any one time. It was noted that Coppicing does encourage biodiversity.

The importance of communication was stressed and the need to provide interpretation panels to identify the plants and habitats and even the smells created by the various plants.

It was noted that Barnfield is an exceptional wildflower area and has an interpretation board there for the Mill Brook. The field would benefit from being fenced to allow grazing.

It was noted the area of land between the footpath and Brook on the right when walking from Ravensholme Court towards the bridge is another excellent habitat and that cutting a 1m strip along the edge would help to tidy the area and stop brambles and nettles encroaching on the path. It was agreed that this needs to be included in the Parish Council's maintenance and that it should be discussed with the Barbour Institute if the Millfield cutting should also be included for economies of scale.

It was noted that the Spinney needs to be seen at different times of the year to appreciate the plant growth etc, it was also agreed that councillors should visit other areas including Caldby Valley Nature Park, Farndon and Stanney Woods to gather ideas.

The Chairman thanked all for attending the meeting.

## **NEXT MEETING**

TBC – Late January / Early February

Ann Wright 10/12/2019