

Hedgerow and Wood for Fuel Group
Meeting held at Tucking Mill farm 21/3/2016

Attendance

Charles (Chair)
Dave
John
Eddie
Emma
Terry
Alan
Hazel
Pete (minutes)

Reflections on last year

Poltimore

Another great year with two solid projects. The team learnt lots about felling bigger trees, working in confined spaces (near railings), use of ropes etc. The group acquired a larger quantity of wood from beech trees at Poltimore.

Carol had responded to our e-mail and thanked us for our work and would be willing to provide a reference for us, outlining our work.

Thanks to Eddie for finding the project

Thanks to Carol for the hospitality and the good cheer for the wood parties.

Alan would remove all the remaining beech from the site at Poltimore

Tucking Mill Farm (TMF).

Hedge laying skills increasing and the team working well together. We started a small project to start coppicing and woodland management. Small trees planted. Gerald will take down and store the wood we have in the orchard. The site was cleared and was left in good order. Wood that had been stored was taken from the wood store.

Next Season

The season will start again in October 2016 for Hedge laying at TMF. It was agreed that we will continue with the following activities a) Hedge laying in orchard, b) coppice management (if feasible) c) clearing of 2 fallen trees near stream. We may clear the trees in the summer?

Action

To firm up plans with Gerald and Sue as to what we will agree to do

It was felt that the group would like to have an 80:20 split between projects that liberated larger wood for fuel needs as well as continuing rural skill based hedge laying work. This required new projects to be uncovered and the group discussed a marketing plan.

It was agreed that we should create a press release to advertise, publicise our work on our projects to a) solicit new work/projects and b) seek interest and new membership for the group. This led to a larger discussion about the potential for the group to be more rural skills based. The group identified

a range of our work skills. The group was keen to find more woodland management projects, as well as continuing work on hedges and possible fallen tree clearing.

Action

Emma would do a first draft of a press release for circulation

Eddie would look at photos to support our project work

Carol and Sue might be asked for a quote or two

The Press release would invite contacts to the sus cred wood group both potential projects and members

The DASH magazine membership was also thought to be a potential audience for any press release and Pete could link this.

Future Vision

The group discussed the vision and values for the Hedge row and wood for fuel group

The purpose of the group was considered in a number of areas including

Wood for fuel

Rural skills (hedge laying, green wood working, etc)

Friendship,

Nature conservation

Sustainability of the wood the group cut was also considered.

It was suggested that the group could be a wider 'rural skills' group that could help members experience a range of activities. This might be helpful to broaden the offer to attract more members. To help us to provide training and skills workshops and to get more members into the group.

We were mindful of the time we had available and the fact that we normally only have 12 work parties a year. But the vision was seen as worthy of being added to the sus cred website.

Chain saw competency and Insurance

Charles had liaised with the insurance broker and they had agreed that we do not require chain saw refresher courses for another 2 years. Insurance costs would remain unchanged. The need for re-training would be re-visited in 2017/18

Fuel costs

This was considered to be something the group could be asked to contribute to say through a 'whip round' if chain saw job demands were identified within our project assessments.

Scything

This was brought up as a possible addition to our work, particularly related to ground clearance if required. It was also noted as a potential rural skills training areas that might be of interest to the group

Fund raising

This continued to be an area that we might need to activate to cover insurance costs etc.

A paid Hedge laying introductory day might be considered at the start of the next season as we had access to a hedge line that we could use for the training. This might be a useful way to attract new members too.

Social event

Sunday 12 June 2016 11am to 11pm Thorney lakes Mulcheney Somerset TA10 0DW

This is a magical one day environmental fair in a beautiful setting on the Somerset Levels run entirely by volunteers on wind, sun and muscle power. Excellent live music, over 70 stalls displaying traditional skills, crafts and produce, lively environmental debates, delicious organic local food, a variety of the best ales and ciders and a large kids area with activities throughout the day

The Green Scythe Fair includes the celebrated West Country Scythe Championship, known far and wide for the stupendous and often hilarious feats of haymaking by international scythesmen and women, who mow a swathe through the summer festival scene. It is probably the most authentic, and enjoyable, country fair in all England!

- Accompanied children free!
- Dogs on leads welcome
- Limited Car parking on site (priority given to disabled parking and bicycle parking)
- Camping available (see: [Thorney Lakes Campsite](#))
- Come by bike to the Fair, reduce your carbon footprint and enjoy a free [bike MOT](#) (first come first serve - spaces limited)

Pete was looking at coach costs but these looked rather high. It was suggested we might e-mail around for car share nearer the time as £10.00 per car.

John would cycle and that was free entry,

Pete would create the sus cred wood group flag and erect that in the field near the cider tent!! To allow us all to meet up. Perhaps around 12ish for lunch. Let's think about a bring and share picnic.

Partners were welcomed and dogs on leads

The scything heats are from 11.00am to 2.30pm and finals later around 4pm.

Pete felt that this could be a nice team bonding, inspiring event to help us with our vision for the future. This met with sniggers from some members of the group, but Pete with his new found interest in Morita therapy refused to be crushed by negative energy and he would continue to lead a purposeful and constructive life despite distress.

AOB

Vote of Thanks to Charles for all the planning and administration and for being a good egg

Vote of Thanks for Dave for being our gaffer and a safe pair of hands and knowing about the country ways

SUS cred AGM 16th May 2016 at the Come along and join the sing along,

End