



## MILLPONDS ACTION GROUP

**Monday, November 24<sup>th</sup> 2008 at The Foundry, The Commons, Pembroke at 7.30 pm**

### Minutes

#### 1 Welcome by Chairman

#### 2 Present:

John Hayes (Chairman), Linda Asman (Secretary), Stuart Asman (Treasurer), Karen Houser (Project Officer), Rose Blackburn (Pembroke Town Council), David & Jill Holmes, Jacky Birthistle, Irena Kruszona (Vice Chairman), Nikki Anderson (Wildlife Trust), Pauline Stone, Jane Major, Trisha Biffen (Pembrokeshire Rivers Trust).

#### 3 Apologies

Cllr Rosalie Lilwall (PCC), Pat Watts (Swan Rescue Pembrokeshire), Rosey Mitchell

#### 4 Presentation by Trisha Biffen – Pembrokeshire Rivers Trust

- Trisha, Project Officer with the Pembrokeshire Rivers Trust wished to introduce herself and tell us about a forthcoming project.
- The PRT was founded in 2002 by John Stoner – who is now wanting to set up an Association of Welsh Rivers Trusts. Funding of nearly £6,000 is being looked for to undertake a local project which has to be match funded, in volunteer time, resources and/or money, totalling therefore an equivalent of £12,000. The project would run from the 1<sup>st</sup> November to until the end of March 2009. Karen Houser meets regularly with the Rivers Trust and gave them details of Nikki Anderson's Otter Spraint Project. Karen and Nikki then met with Trisha about the possibility of extending the project till March, and described the work being carried out in the Pembroke area. Nikki then spoke to the volunteers who all agreed to further spraint recording. She also discussed with Trisha other related Otter issues including building an artificial Otter Holt for educational purposes, production of an information leaflet, and the installation of video cameras etc. After approval by Chris Lawrence (CCW), the go ahead was given for Nikki to make arrangements with Geoff Lyles for a talk and presentation of current results, and site visits for new volunteers.
- Trisha will write an education plan and involve local schools – and this could link to building the artificial holt. However, the holt, video cameras and information panel etc would be part of a further extension to the project after the end of March. The success of the project is the strong volunteer base, and their continued involvement will take the project forward.
- There is a need to promote the Local Nature Reserve – the group felt that a glossy tourist style leaflet that promoted the Otter project and the LNR was a good idea that could also be funded by the extended project in 2009.
- TBA – the Volunteer/ public meeting with a talk by Geoff Lyle, asap in January 2009, as well as a further public meeting at the end of the project.

Chairman thanked Trisha for discussing this project with us. He then proceeded with the meeting and sought approval for the minutes.

#### 5 Minutes

Minutes were read, proposed and seconded by Rose Blackburn and Jacky Birthistle

## 6 Matters Arising

- Irena was concerned about the youngsters disturbing bats in Barnards Tower. She felt that we should contact Bob Haycock and ensure that the Tower was still secure. Pauline likewise had seen youngsters playing there and damaging the tree, poking branches through the windows. She wondered if the tree could perhaps be pollarded to help prevent this. *Action:* Project Officer to check position over Barnard's Tower with Bob Haycock.
- **Little Gates:** Irena stated that progress is slow – Currently, the Wildlife Trust is in the process of sorting out the legal position with regard to the Land Registry and Crown Estates.

## 7 Tidy Towns

This event had taken place in October and involved litter picking, installing picnic tables at Monkton Bridge and Barnard's Tower, lowering kerbs by two of the seats on the Castle Pond for wheelchair access, planting. The week prior to this the Litter Picking Group had cleared the paths at Barnard's Tower, tried to remove graffiti and tidy the area.

## 8 Chairman's Report

- The Pond was doing well with a multiplicity of species. With the heavy rain there was a lot more vegetation; starwort was doing well indicating cleaner water. This in turn gave more shelter for fish, with increased numbers particularly carp and trout.
- The new reed beds were doing well and spreading. The intention is to put more reeds in, paying more attention now to the Castle Pond.
- John reported that Black Tailed Godwits were on the Upper Millpond. One of these had been ringed and it turned out that it had been ringed in Greenland as a chick. On contacting the Group responsible, they sent photographs. These will appear in the next Newsletter.

## 9 Treasurer's Report

- Stuart stated that there is just over £200 in the account.
- John informed the Group that there will be a further £250 from Chevron
- He suggested that it may be an idea to approach the Council for funding for Projects

## 10 Project Officers Report

See attached file.

## 11 Castle Pond Focus Group

- The Group are planning a Daffodil Plant along the Cycle Path and are looking into planting a few trees and shrubs. Stuart Asman has already made a start planting shrubs at the base of the wall. It was decided that the December Litter picking be replaced by bulb planting on the Castle Pond. A suitable date was discussed and Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November (weather permitting) was agreed. *Action:* Linda Asman to coordinate this.
- Dave Holmes pointed out that there has been vandalism to the bins on the North side and the oak railings removed by vandals have not yet been replaced.
- Linda pointed out that two of the six sculptures by Robert Jakes have been removed and perhaps we could look into replacing them, involving perhaps the Greenlinks pupils. Nikki said she would put this on the agenda of the Heritage and Environment Group.

## 12 Project Officer's Post – update of meeting from Irena Kruszona Vice-Chair

On October 15<sup>th</sup> an emergency meeting was called for Karen's post. The outcome of this meeting was that funding was up to 21C and the Project Officer to decide, not the Group. Irena also pointed out that we had been unaware that the post covered Holyland Wood also. John informed us that Karen's role is the Millponds and that the Holyland funding has finished. There

remains a £3,000 pot but that is for maintenance only. When Irena pointed out that we were rather confused as to our part in the line of communication, and that we weren't aware of the funding problem, John made clear that:

1. Karen is an employee of 21C
2. The Group is responsible for directing Karen
3. It is one of Karen's roles to raise funding

Nikki commented that one useful outcome of this meeting was that we had aired our feelings and expressed that we felt we need to be more involved.

### **13 AOB**

- Karen drew attention to the Pembroke 21C minutes which stated that "The Holyland Wood Opening was a great success mainly thanks to it being a beautiful day". She felt that this statement rather denigrated the hard work which had gone into making the project and therefore the day a great success.
- Karen announced that Jane Davidson AM, Minister for Environment, Sustainability & Housing, would be making a visit on Thursday January 15<sup>th</sup> from 1 – 3pm. *Action:* Karen to call a meeting to decide what we are going to do to present our Projects in the best possible light. Tuesday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 9 am was agreed.
- The problem of dog fouling was again brought up. *Action:* Project Officer to contact PCC Dog Warden about patrolling Millponds area for dog faeces, with the aim of sending out message to dog-walkers that they should be clearing up after their dogs or face a fine.
- John brought up the subject of life jackets for the boat – it was decided that we should purchase 4 for our own use rather than borrow.

### **14 Setting the dates for 2009 meetings**

- Next year's meetings will be held quarterly, as usual, on the last Monday of January (26<sup>th</sup>), April (27<sup>th</sup>), July (27<sup>th</sup>). October (26<sup>th</sup>).
- John suggested that Open Meetings twice a year should include talks to keep members in touch with what is going on on the Ponds, to include the AGM in January and the July meeting. This was welcomed by the Group.

The meeting finished at 9.50 pm.

**The next meeting of the Millponds Action Group will be the AGM and will take place on Monday January 26<sup>th</sup> 2009 7.30 pm at the Foundry House, The Commons, Pembroke.**