

Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

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| Date: | 16 July 2019 |
| Title: | Report - External Organisations |

Cuttle Brook Management Committee (Cllr Jones)

Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve Site Visit - 26/06/2019

Attending:-

- Councillors and Council Officers: Adrian Dite, Sonja Francis, Tom Wyse, Catherine Jones, Helena Fickling, Anne Midwinter, Graham Hunt, Andrea Oughton, Janine Sparrowhawk
- Cuttle Brook Volunteers: John Morris, Dave Laver, Dave Watkins, Mike Furness

1. Dogs. A major issue due in part to numbers
 - a. The disturbance of wildlife especially ground nesting birds
 - b. Dog fouling
 - c. erosion of the brook's banks,
 - d. stirring up silt which smothers fish spawning grounds
 - e. anti-tic and anti-flea treatment contains neonicotinoids which a harmful to water invertebrates at extremely low levels
 - f. disturb the otters

The new 5-year management plan needs to address this and offer possible solutions

2. The Pond. It has a new dipping platform on recycled plastic legs which should last for decades. The level of the pond has stopped its dramatic fall since the addition of a piped water supply. Sadly the lower level has meant the increase in the amount of reed mace in the pond which is choking it. It needs removing.

3. Trees. Ash die-back is prevalent and will need serious action over the next five years. Luckily the timber will fetch £10-15/ton so the felling may pay for itself. There are 3 alders near the rope swing which have died and may need felling and the large crack willows are starting to degrade and lose branches. Tree management must be included in the new 5-year plan

4. Memorial benches/trees. A council policy needs to be drawn up so that sound reasons for agreement/refusal can be given and which are consistent.

5. Water flow of the brook. Advice regarding management of water courses has changed over the years. The old advice was to dredge it, current advice is to cut a channel through the aquatic plants to encourage a faster flow in a smaller area which will scour out the bottom.

6. Crayfish. Non-native crayfish are endemic. The good news is the otters eat them.

7. New water management. The ditch from below the Chiltern Vale estate has been lengthened to drain into a settlement pond above the brook. When the pond overflows the water is channelled via a new fish refuge into the brook. The older fish refuge is working well with shoals of fry visible earlier in the year

8. Flower meadows. The arrival of yellow rattle and broom rape which are grass parasites have meant the dramatic increase in wild flower diversity. A flowering pyramid orchid was seen on the visit but there are three other orchids that have been seen, green-winged, common and pyramid, plus snakes-head fritillaries, cranes bill, ox-eyed daisies, vetch, birds foot trefoil and clover to mention but a few.

9. Nontron meadow. Black poplars have been planted there - a non-native species but good for biodiversity. The fish refuge is performing well. It is planned to stop mowing a path through to the book to discourage dogs and walkers from going too near so that the meadow will become more of a haven for wildlife. The meadow will still be cut annually.

Friends of Elms Park (Cllr Champken-Woods)

Friends of Elms Park was re-launched in September 2018 with a view to work closely with Thame Town Council to provide an open space to be enjoyed by all ages within Thame on a regular basis.

Since meeting last year we have had 3 meetings in order to identify what sort of things we would envisage the park providing for the residents of Thame. Whatever we decide as a committee it should not be too onerous and it means involving different groups within the community which FOEP will support.

Therefore, initially we are proposing to look towards August 22nd 2020 to hold a 'Proms Picnic in the Park' which will see FOEP working closely with Thame Concert Band to provide a different event which will cater for differing age groups from very young to the elderly. It is also hoped that younger residents of Thame may take the opportunity to be involved and perhaps be encouraged to join Thame Concert Band.

Further discussions could take place with Paddy Harris in order to make a yearly 'Picnic in the Park' which takes place at the end of Lighthouse which is hoping to take place on 4th August this year.

FOEP would also be very interested in being involved in any VE celebrations for 2020.

As I have indicated before, I think the focus for Friends of Elms Park should be to continue to raise funds for the park and provide a programme of events for Elms Park that take place at intervals during the year, in order to have an 'open space' that is used by the community.

This will need to take account of the current scheduled events but would see the park used more frequently in a variety of ways that could accommodate all ages. This could be seasonal to compliment what already exists in the town or additional events that seek to engage with all age groups.

Thame Players may take the opportunity to do something in the future but currently they are very busy with their programme and celebrating their 75th year.

I know that we could organise similar Sunday afternoons in the park as Marlow and Henley, where bands such as Thame Concert band would play however, that would be dependent on having a stage area which perhaps could be the first phase of the park redevelopment.

The refurbishment of Elms Park will address the following factors: -

- **Amenity** – to improve and maintain the visual attractiveness of the park with regard to the health, safety and well-being of the community, visitors and facility users.
- **Recreation:** - to provide and maintain a safe, high quality recreational resource for sporting groups, clubs, individuals and others. Implicit in this is the objective of maintaining a high standard of playing facility that conforms to the appropriate sporting recreational standard.
- **Children's Play** – to maintain a wide range of safe and stimulating play opportunities for development of children.
- **Education** – to maintain and develop open spaces as an educational resource for residents or visitors i.e. creating an environmental awareness.

The benefit of this approach is: -

- To encourage and create a more diverse, more visually interesting park environment.

- To encourage and develop a more diverse green environment which will benefit people, plants and animals.
- To create an educational resource for children, schools, local groups and others.

The 10 volunteers are very keen to work with the council to create a number of events to compliment what currently happens in the town.

Thame Carnival Committee (Cllr Emery)

This year's carnival held on the 15 June choose the theme "Saving the Planet". The Mayor of Thame, Ann Midwinter officially opened the Carnival. The energetic entertainment from our local celebrity band "United Vibe" was a great success, particularly with the young teens.

Thame Carnival Quiz hosted by Sue Boyle on Thursday 13 June at the Snooker Hall helped get the carnival get off to a good start. The evening was well supported and helped raise much needed funds for the two charities the carnival is supporting this year. Red Kite Family Centre and Thame Youth Projects Group.

The Carnival organisers are very grateful for all the time and effort our carnival parade entrants put in, they all worked very hard to achieve spectacular carnival entries for the public whilst competing with each other to impress the judges. This year's winning entry, chosen by an independent panel was the Red Kite Family Centre.

Popular activities returned, a massive Bouncy Castle, Egg throwing, Duck fishing, learn an instrument, Go Karts, Bottle Tombola, Retro games, Life-saver demonstrations, Aunt Sally, Mini rugby, Meet the Fire service, Stilt walkers and lots of other children's stalls.

Thank you to Sue Martin-Downhill and her team who have supported another fun packed year for our residents of Thame.

The carnival committee would like to thank all the companies that sponsor this event in all their different ways, the companies who support the members of the organisation team, the volunteers who bring new life into the team and who encourage others to get involved and Thame Town Council.

Initial feedback on the Carnival before our official "Wash up meeting" for this year was not great. The day was overcast and at times blustery which resulted in a lot of the parade attendees leaving to go home early. The result was 50% decline in attendance at the showground. Still waiting for some money to come in. Disappointing year for the committee - need a carnival lead for next year as Sue is stepping back. Would anyone like to take it on?

The date of next meeting TBA.

Thame Football Partnership (TFP) (Cllr Dyer)

TFP held their AGM on 28 June and presented members with a very healthy summary of the year both on and off the pitch.

Thame United finished eighth in the Southern League Central Division and have set their sights on reaching the play-offs next year, whilst an Allied Counties Team will be re-formed next season and will play under Thame United affiliation. In the junior sections the under 13's won the League and Cup double, both the under-15's and under 16's won their leagues, and there are more junior teams than ever before as the membership base continues to grow.

Financially the club has benefitted from increasing volunteer engagement and staff costs have been reduced by £7k/pa. Bar and food revenues have increased substantially, margins are 10% higher, and membership income has grown, whilst the facility hire arrangement with Travelodge makes a significant

contribution. The improved financial position has enabled TFP to fund overdue repairs to the facility and to undertake necessary pitch maintenance, whilst still predicting a surplus for the year estimated at £37k (pending final accounts).

However, progress towards the installation of a full size artificial pitch, with Football Foundation and s.106 funding, remains slow.

Twining Association (Cllr Francis)

Thame & District Twining Association AGM - Friday, July 5, 2019

- * The existing officers were re-elected.
 - * The Chair, Linda Emery reported that Association now had four new members, including a 6th form student from LWS, who studied French and hopes to be going to work in France from January 2010. Anna is going to spread the word among other young people about the Association's Film Nights and other events so that hopefully we can attract more young people as members.
 - * Although the Association spends what it raises (mostly on the May visit), the treasurer reported a healthy bank balance.
 - * Members will be attending the Christmas market in Montesson on 29 November 2019, no matter what happens about Brexit, but it is unlikely that the usual group from Montesson will attend Thame's Christmas event as they have done for several years, because of Brexit uncertainty, as they need to plan ahead.
 - * Members from Thame are aiming to visit Montesson as usual in September - Probably the weekend of 13th to 15th.
 - * The date for the Montesson visit to Thame in May is yet to be settled, as 8 May 2020 is a special bank holiday because of the VE Day celebrations.
 - * The schools twinning with John Hampden School and Aston Rowant School is going from strength to strength but the idea of twinning between LWS and a secondary school in Montesson has been abandoned as LWS now has a new relationship, in its second year, with a school elsewhere in France.
 - * The Thame twinning facebook page has 41 members, and is going to be updated and changed from a 'group' to a 'page' so that others can upload posts and images. Members are going to be asked to set up Standing Orders so that the treasurer doesn't have to chase for cheques, etc to be sent.
 - * Discussed the need to explain that the group is independent from the council and not 'a jolly for councillors' - a frequent comment - but an independently funded group where members pay the whole cost of a trip to Montesson themselves. Will add to the 'About' section of the FB Page.
 - * It was agreed to invite the Mayor, to visit with the group in September? (likely to be 13th to 15th)
 - * Future Events discussed - A Swishing event:
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You're itching to know more, aren't you? Like how one of these events would actually work? Your standard Swish will come in three parts: 1) the drop off, 2) the sort and 3) the opening of the Swish.

During the drop off time the Swishers (guests of the Swish) go to the venue to drop off their items. The Swisher exchanges clothes for tokens which are used to 'buy' their new-to-them wardrobe.

All the items swapped for tokens are sorted onto hangers and put out across clothing rails ready for the opening of the Swish. The time during the sorting is ideal for entertainment or refreshments.

Once everything has been sorted the Swish is declared open, and the shopping begins! Swishers check out the range of items hanging on the rails looking for great new outfits to take away with them, while they say goodbye as their old clothes go off to a new home. Having made their choices Swishers then hand back the tokens in exchange for some delightful new additions to their wardrobe.

Funds are raised by charging an entrance fee. GREAT way to recycle clothes and reduce carbon footprints!

Thame Good Neighbour Scheme (Cllr Midwinter)

Nothing received as at 15.7.19.

Thame Town Cricket Club (Cllr Champken-Woods)

Playing membership is up +20% this season from 236 to 283 players. Of which 190 are juniors.

Now settled into the new clubhouse with our new partners, Thame Netball, Thame Cycling and Thame & District Day Centre.

Two plaques one for LEADER and one for All Supporters are in the process of being designed and installed.

Nets project has been completed and we are very happy with the finished product.

Finances are positive in the main and we are delivering on our borrowing commitments.

Chinnor RFC (Cllr Bretherton)

Nothing received as at 15.7.19.

Music in the Park (Cllr Jones)

Nothing received as at 15.7.19.

Thame Sinaia Friendship Association (Cllr Bretherton)

Nothing received as at 15.7.19.

Thame Museum Trust (Cllrs Cowell & Emery)

Adrian Dite Chairs 2019/20 AGM held on 29 June 2019. Don Butler stepped down after many years of constructive dutiful service.

Strong financial budgeting and controls in place. First quarter financials in-line with expectations.

- Q1 website expenditure £400 not budgeted for.
- Utilities; previous company in administration; new companies costs budgeted for.

The Way Forward project; Museums are being visited to investigate how they operate and can we learn from them. Open Day 16 July to attract additional volunteers and creative input to the running of the museum.

Towersey Festival (Cllr Tipping)

Nothing received as at 15.7.19.

Thame Town Music Festival (Cllr Wyse)

The third Thame Town Music Festival (TTMF) was a great success, all the venues were packed and the crowd around the main stage seemed to be larger than previous years.

On Friday evening there was a world class concert in St. Mary's Church performed by Jennifer France and pianist Finn Downie-Dear.

At the same time there was TTMF Song Writers Final in Christ Church. Of the ten finalists Zach Johnson was judged the winner with his song "Memories". Zach was awarded £500 cash and he performed his song on the main stage mid-way through Saturday afternoon.

Our Town Mayor Ann Midwinter opened the festival on the main stage at midday followed by the "Deadbeat Apostles" who started the town rocking. The music carried on through the day at the various venues and culminated on the main stage with the "Neville Staple Band"

I am sure everyone went home happy, another triumph for our great town! Save the date - next year's event will be on Saturday 11 July 2020.

Thame Shed (Cllr Wyse)

Nothing further to report, the group continue to look for suitable premises.

Thame Sports Club (Cllr Jones)

The Sports Club plans to start the rebuilding project in late August. Demolition of the old building should take about 3 weeks. Construction of the new clubhouse will then commence aiming for completion at the end of February. The club has received the first instalment of the S106 money from SODC from all earmarked sites, except for The Elms.