

**SOUTH EAST SHEFFIELD COUNTRYSIDE AND ECO ADVISORY GROUP MEETING
ON WEDNESDAY JANUARY 23RD 2013, 1.30PM AT REIGNHEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL
(MEETING HELD IN MOBILE CLASSROOM THAT CAN BE ACCESSED OFF GRANGE
ROAD BEIGHTON, NEAR BLACK AND WHITE BOLLARDS IN ROAD, ENTER SCHOOL
SITE VIA BACK GATE, ECO ADVISORY MEETING WILL BE LABELLED FROM THIS
POINT)**

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for Absence.**
- 2. Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday September 19th 2012.**
- 3. Matters Arising.**
- 4. Presentation on recent Environmental Projects in South East Sheffield involving Sheffield Landscape Trust and the Local Community.**
- 5. Shire Brook Conservation Group Report.**
- 6. Friends of Shirtcliffe Report.**
- 7. Moss Valley Wildlife Group Report.**
- 8. Crystal Peaks Centre Eco Update.**
- 9. Tommy Rush, South East Community Assembly Officer – A brief introduction to his role in South East Sheffield.**
- 10. Community Forestry for the 2012-13 seasons in South East Sheffield by Leonie Kapadia, Community Forestry Project Development Officer, Trees, Woodlands & Countryside, SCC.**
- 11. Calendar of SLT Public Events for 2013.**
- 12. Any Other Business.**
- 13. Date of Next Meeting.**

Please contact Karl Knight and Helen Mitchell (Landscape Planning Officers)

For any further details Tel: 2735030

MINUTES OF SOUTH-EAST SHEFFIELD COUNTRYSIDE AND ECO ADVISORY GROUP

MEETING HELD ON 19th SEPTEMBER 2012

PRESENT:

Karl Knight:	Environmental Planning, Sheffield City Council
Helen Mitchell:	Environmental Planning, Sheffield City Council
Councillor Ian Saunders:	Elected Member Beighton Ward
Adrian Burke:	Sheffield Landscape Trust
Lee Greenwood	Centre Manager, Crystal Peaks Shopping Mall & Retail Park
Pat Howells:	Friends of Shirtcliffe
Mike Howells:	Friends of Shirtcliffe
Leonie Kapadia	Community Forestry Development Officer
Roger Marsh:	Owlthorpe Community Forum
Debbie Matthews:	Reignhead Primary School
Richard Pearson:	Shire Brook Conservation Group/Friends of Shirtcliffe
Peter Wolstenholme:	Shire Brook Conservation Group/Woodhouse Forum

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Councillor Karen McGowan:	Elected Member Birley Ward
Brian Armstrong:	Biodiversity Section, Sheffield City Council
Gary Dickson:	Planning Department, Sheffield City Council
Don Ellks:	Beighton Environment Group
Jean Glasscock:	Sorby Natural History Society
Christine Handley:	Shire Brook Valley Heritage Group
Ralph Hebden:	Emmanuel Church Waterthorpe
Kevin Hill:	Sheffield Landscape Trust / Shire Brook Conservation Group
Celia Jackson:	Moss Valley Wildlife Group
Terry Jackson:	Moss Valley Wildlife Group
Mark Kirby:	Friends of Heathlands Park
David Luck:	Area Assembly
Tessa Pirnie:	Westfield resident
John Stonard:	Urban Design & Conservation Team, Sheffield City Council

2.0 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY MAY 30th 2012

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

3.0 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Sheffield Bio-blitz 2012 Update

Karl Knight read out an update supplied by Derek Whiteley (Sorby Natural History Society), which stated that the unofficial total was just over 1100 species, but that data checking and data entry to Sheffield Biological Records Centre was still ongoing and when duplicates and dubious entries had been sorted out, Derek would expect the total to lie between 1000 and 1100 species.

3.2 Ongoing ecological surveys and potential future additional controlled grazing for educational and biodiversity benefit

Helen Mitchell confirmed that the ecological surveys referred to at the last meeting had been completed by Mike Guy and a full report had been received. As well as the main

grazing areas, the survey also covered two new areas just north of Moorhole Lane that are not under any management at present. These objectives of the surveys were to monitor the impact on the grassland species following the recent highland cattle grazing, and so be able to devise the most suitable grazing regime on the areas in future to allow biodiversity to improve and flourish.

Helen Mitchell provided a summary of the findings of the surveys for each of the areas covered which basically found that dominant grasses in Phase 1 and Phase 1a fields have been dramatically reduced as a result of grazing which has produced more open ground to allow wild flowers to take hold. It is particularly hoped that harebells can become established in Phase 1, and that the small amount of Himalayan balsam found in Phase 1A will be monitored. Phase 2, meanwhile, has a significant ragwort problem making it currently unsuitable as a grazing field. Graves Park Animal Farm had intended to cultivate and reseed this land, but due to delays caused by the wet summer weather, this work will be programmed in for next year instead.

As for the two new areas of potential grazing land, one was found to be in a very overgrown state and would be a lengthy and costly process to convert to grazing land. The other, however, was deemed to be very suitable for restoration and inclusion in the grasslands grazing project. Sheffield Landscape Trust is currently working with local resident, Graham Stepney, who has recently acquired a licence from Sheffield City Council to actively graze this land. Graham has paid for the installation of a piped water supply, and has commissioned SLT to enclose the area with stock proof fencing which is being installed with the help of SLT volunteers. The plan for immediate grazing of this area is to use Highland cattle to crush and graze the area hard initially and remove the worst of the vegetation to open up the sward. Once this has been achieved, the grazing regime will be refined to promote biodiversity. The intention is particularly to use rare breeds to graze this land, in association with Graves Park Animal Farm. Graham has already obtained four alpacas and it is hoped this added attraction could really put the Owlthorpe Heritage and Nature Trail on the map.

3.3 Sheffield Development Framework Update

Gary Dickson provided an update for the meeting which stated that consultation on the additional housing sites included in the SDF should be reported to Cabinet towards the end of this year/early next year. **No decisions have yet been taken.** Ecological and archaeological surveys have taken place on the Woodhouse sites, but the outcomes of these are still being assessed. The key points are:

Beighton Road: there are no issues here other than the recommendation that certain groups of trees and hedgerows are retained within any future development scheme, which we'll seek to do. It has also been raised that public access to the Shire Brook Valley is maintained /improved.

Woodhouse East: a full hedgerow survey needs to be carried out here to determine the value of important hedgerows on boundary of site. If this site is to be allocated for housing, around one-third of the site area would have to be retained/improved as open space. The archaeological survey has revealed nothing so far that would prevent development, but further survey is required when the field crops have been harvested to determine presence/extent of "ridge and furrow".

Junction Road: a significant proportion (around 50%) of this site would again have to be retained as open space. The rare "Yellow Bird's Nest" plant has been found on a small

part of the site, and the recommendation is to leave this area undeveloped, which we will seek to do.

Owlthorpe: we are at the very early stages of preparing a Planning & Design Brief for the site, which is just the initial scoping of issues. The excellent work of the local community is fully recognised, and the continuing involvement of the local community and the Owlthorpe Community Forum will be a critical part of developing the Brief, but we are not at that stage yet. Contact will be made at the appropriate time.

Action: All to note and to link with Gary Dickson for further information

3.4 Designation of Phase 2 grazing area at Owlthorpe as a local wildlife site

As previously reported in the minutes, the proposed re-seeding of Phase 2 by Graves Park Animal Centre has not taken place as planned, and until it does, the area cannot be re-designated within the Sheffield Development Framework from “Countryside Area” to “Local Wildlife Site”. The new grassland mix chosen would be determined in conjunction with the Ecology Unit, and would also take into consideration the need to demonstrate substantive conservation value in order to still qualify for “Local Wildlife Site” designation in the future.

Action: Brian Armstrong/Pete Fletcher/Roger Marsh/Environmental Planning

3.5 Investigation of higher level stewardship funding in the future for Owlthorpe and Bridle stile grazing areas

Helen Mitchell reported that, following further investigation into the Higher Level Stewardship scheme and advice from Brian Armstrong (SCC Biodiversity section), selected areas of Owlthorpe and Mosborough Bridle Stile have been submitted for inclusion in the scheme. Granting of HLS will enable the continued enhancement and monitoring of these sites, and provide a small annual income for maintenance of features such as stock proof fencing and hedgerows, but will also give further recognition to these highly valued landscapes. So far, biodiversity surveys have taken place which demonstrate that the areas meet the stringent selection criteria.

Bridle Stile has been submitted in the Grasslands and Hedge Laying category whilst Owlthorpe has been submitted in the Grasslands category for Phase1, the hedge laying category, the cattle grazing category, the bramble and balsam control category and the bird and bat box category. In addition, the new scrape at Owlthorpe has been submitted from inclusion in the Wetland category, giving further protection to the green corridor adjacent to the proposed future housing development.

HLS is also a good funding source for educational visits, and will enable the Sheffield Landscape Trust to continue to deliver regular educational activities with local schools at both sites going forward.

Action: Brian Armstrong/Environmental Planning

4.0 PRESENTATION ON RECENT LARGE SCALE ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS IN SOUTH EAST SHEFFIELD CO-ORDINATED BY ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING INVOLVING SHEFFIELD LANDSCAPE TRUST AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Karl Knight and Helen Mitchell gave a review of recent public events and large scale environmental improvements taking place at various sites across South East Sheffield

involving many local community volunteers, school children, plus staff and volunteers from Sheffield Landscape Trust. Thanks were expressed to Peter Wolstenholme, Adrian Burke and Kevin Hill for supplying images of recent positive environmental action.

The presentation reviewed a two day dry stone walling skills training course which took place on 29th and 30th June at Owlthorpe thanks to funding secured by Roger Marsh. This was led by local expert Andrew Gray and supervised by Sheffield Landscape Trust, and the eleven attendees reinstated some 20 metres of previously derelict stone wall near the entrance off Moor Hole Lane. Also at Owlthorpe, two timber benches have recently been installed by SLT with a third still to be installed. Three new lengths of surfaced footpath, totalling 170 metres, have also been installed this month at Owlthorpe to improve links between the existing open space area and the housing estate to the north. In addition, the fencing works previously referred to as part of the rare breeds grazing project (see item 3.2) have commenced this month and are continuing well.

Jasper Pratchek has been employed to carry out maintenance works on hedgerows at Brunswick since the last meeting.

Judging for this year's Yorkshire in Bloom took place in July with photos being shown of the judging visit to Beighton Orchard. Roger Marsh and Lee Greenwood, who had attended the awards ceremony the day before the meeting, delivered the excellent news that Owlthorpe had won a GOLD Rose Award in the Urban Communities category, and was the only Sheffield entry to achieve the gold standard at both the spring and summer judging. Owlthorpe also scooped the Discretionary Yorkshire Rose Award for Conservation which is presented to the one entry, from all the entries in all the categories of the competition, which demonstrates the highest levels of conservation and a commitment to sustainable development. Crystal Peaks Shopping Mall & Retail Park won a GOLD Rose Award in the Shopping Centres and Retail Parks category and was the category winner, as well picking up the Sawley Trophy (for the individual promotion of Yorkshire in Bloom). Beighton Orchard achieved an Outstanding level in the Neighbourhoods category.

Mick Guy led a well-attended walk in July around a wet Waterthorpe looking at the increased biodiversity of two grassland areas following a relaxation of mowing regimes in areas adjacent to the housing. Future aims for this area include an extension of the areas under the new management, and continued survey work.

A timber bench has been installed on the Drovers' Road at Woodhouse, and Karl Knight informed the meeting that the spring issuing onto the footpath at Moorthorpe Way was being investigated after numerous complaints to Dave Luck about this matter. Karl has contacted Sheffield Housing department who intend to get their maintenance department to come up with a solution.

Action: KK to follow up with Sheffield Housing Department

5.0 NATIONAL ECO-SCHOOLS SHOW UPDATE

Sheffield Landscape Trust supported the National Eco-Schools Show which took place at the Motorpoint Arena in Sheffield on 26 June 2012. Karl Knight read out the report below which had been provided by Eco-Schools after the show:

“We had exhibitions, activities, workshops, sessions, performances and games led by a host of different organisations, all of which were enjoyed by the show’s visitors. But special praise must go to the young performers from Eco-Schools, who performed in front of the whole show. We enjoyed songs, dances and even an eco-fashion show.”
“The Lord Mayor of Sheffield certainly seemed to be enjoying himself: he reminded us all to take the Eco-Schools messages and good practice home to our families and praised the Eco-Committees for all their hard work and achievements. Steve Byers, long-term Eco-Schools supporter, had a surprise when he was the fifth person ever to receive our prestigious “Eco-Hero” Award.”

“Eco-Committees had a chance to make unique, recycled Olympic torches with Wastebuster in the Activity Zone and some enterprising schools even made their own torches before the show. These were brought together for our own torch procession, just hours after the torch relay passed through Sheffield. Our procession was led by an official torch, Wastebuster's marching Samba band, Olympic athlete [Donna Fraser](#), Team GB basketball player Jamell Anderson and world football freestyle world record holder Dan Magness. Hundreds of Eco-Committees also took their chance to pose for photos with the real torch (and Donna).

For many of us, the highlight was seeing the children at the end of the show, tired but happy, covered in the stickers and badges from all the activities they’d taken part in and people they’d spoken too. We hope everyone who attended the Eco-Schools Show came home with lots of energy, inspiration and ideas, and for those of you who weren’t able to make it, watch this space, we’ll be posting photos and sharing lots more about the day.

6.0 SHIRE BROOK CONSERVATION GROUP REPORT

Richard Pearson reported that the Shire Brook Conservation Group volunteers had been carrying out a variety of regular conservation work including: Himalayan balsam clearance at Red Hills and in the Silkstone Ravine; weed pulling from lengths of hedgerows; short lengths of new footpaths; pulling of ragwort; path clearance; mowing of wild flower sites; and strimming works to enable fences to be installed to a new grazing area. Peter Wolstenholme informed the meeting about a project called Community 10,000 run by the Department of Work and Pensions. The aim is to commit 10,000 hours of volunteer labour from DWP employees to local projects around the country. DWP staff from Sheffield and London committed a day’s work in July to some hedgerow maintenance tasks at Stone Lane. The Group were thanked for all their hard work.

7.0 FRIENDS OF SHIRTCLIFFE REPORT

Pat Howells provided a detailed summary of work that has taken place over the past four months at Shirtcliffe. Several large trees had come down into the brook in the Smelter Wood and a large dam of litter had built up behind this. Time was spent clearing this, but some of the trees were left in place to deliberately catch litter and make clearance easier in future. Two large trees had come down across the brook in Shirtcliffe Wood also which were causing a more serious blockage resulting in a new channel starting to be cut. Eight volunteers with the help of six rangers managed to clear the trees. Time was also spent clearing the access gate onto the TPT at Richmond Road, and keeping the bridle path clear. A guided walk was held in August led by Jim Flanagan (invertebrate expert from the Sorby Natural History Society) and over 70 species were identified on the walk. Pat reported that an ancient hedgerow which had been set alight last year in an arson attack seemed to be regenerating. A

tree pack had been ordered to assist with replanting of the worst affected areas. She anticipated that approximately two days work was needed to clear brambles and cut stumps back before planting could take place. Severnside Meadow must be cut in the next few weeks. The Group were thanked for their presentation.

Action: KK/HM to contact John Giplin to ensure the meadow is cut

8.0 MOSS VALLEY WILDLIFE GROUP REPORT

Karl Knight read out a report submitted by Celia Jackson prior to the meeting. The group had held a balsam pulling day back in June with the usual ditches being tackled as far as the Sheffield/Derbyshire boundary at Never Fear Dam. They are due to come back to clear an area extending down to the SSSI. The well known balsam hotspot at Plumbley Hall Farm Yard was checked and given the all clear in June, but a subsequent check in August found fresh growth which has since been cleared. Celia advised that the Plumbley Hall area should be targeted by SLT next year. Buzzards have been observed over Lady Bank Wood earlier in the summer, but recently two buzzards had been found shot. Investigations are going on but, but there are no leads as yet. Celia added that the SSI marsh is looking glorious.

9.0 CRYSTAL PEAKS CENTRE UPDATE

Lee Greenwood provided the following update regarding on-going initiatives at the Crystal Peaks Shopping Mall & Retail Park. The Yorkshire in Bloom judging result (reported under item 4.0) was extremely welcome news and a great reward to all the hard work of staff at the Centre. The fourth beehive recently installed on the roof at the Crystal Peaks Centre has a healthy bee population and doing well in spite of a couple of swarm incidents over the summer. The solar panel project was completed at the end of June and included approximately 425 panels being installed on the roof. This has so far generated some 28,000 kilowatt hours of electricity which equates to between 15 and 20% of electricity used by the Centre. Recycling rates are improving across the Centre and retailers are being educated through new recycling procedures being rolled out by the Centre. Julie Westfold visited the Centre over the summer to carry out a survey of the bee-orchids. Peter Wolstenholme asked if the swift boxes had been used at all over the summer. Lee replied that there was no evidence yet that they had been used by swifts, but there seemed to be a definite increase in swift population around the Centre and he was hopeful that next year, the boxes might be used for nesting.

10.0 SOUTH EAST AREA ASSEMBLY UPDATE

Helen Mitchell read out a written update provided by Dave Luck. The next public Assembly meeting will take place on 11 October 2012 at Beighton Miner's Welfare, 7pm start. The meeting in January 2013 (10 January 2013, 7pm, venue in Birley - TBC) will incorporate a 'Meet the Cabinet' session where people can put questions to Members of Sheffield City Council Cabinet.

The Assembly has an 'Emerging Issues' fund for 2012/13. Groups can apply for up to £3,000 as clear needs emerge. These are assessed at Member's briefings on a rolling basis as long as funds remain. Contact the Assembly team for an application form.

Email: communityassemblysoutheast@sheffield.gov.uk

Tel: 0114 205 3281

The Assembly is funding the following two projects this year:

- (i) **Green Apprentice Scheme** - Green Estates has a project (jointly funded with the East Assembly) to train two apprentices and carry out clean up work on grot-spots not on existing schedules. Forward any potential sites to the Assembly team.
- (ii) **Enforcement Officer** - this is the post filled last year by Chris Lukins. We are looking to appoint someone again on a short-term, full-time basis (until March 2013) to do pro-active work around issues like litter, dog fouling & fly tipping.

11.0 COMMUNITY FORESTRY SECTION UPDATE

Leonie Kapadia gave a comprehensive update on all the Community Forestry projects taking place during the past few months across a variety of sites in South East Sheffield. She explained that she is looking to secure funding to put together a programme of forthcoming projects in the four ward areas that she covers in the South East of Sheffield (Beighton, Birley, Mosborough and Woodhouse).

Beighton: whips are to be planted at Norcroft Cottages in November 2012 with the Beighton Environment Group, whilst there are an additional 3-4 heavy standard trees to be planted adjacent to the tram stop at Donetsk Way with the Owlthorpe Community Forum. Leonie informed the meeting that Trees & Woodlands have secured some funding from the NHS to undertake projects with schools that will help reduce obesity. The installation of some fitness trail equipment and associated tree planting is planned for after Christmas at Reignhead Primary School, Beighton NIJ School and Brick House Junior School.

Birley: no current projects planned in this ward.

Mosborough: Whip planting is planned with students at Westfield College in the grounds and the forest garden. Some funding has been obtained from Access to Nature which is a grant scheme to encourage people from all backgrounds to understand, access and enjoy our natural environment. The Community Forest plans to take students out to Ecclesall Saw Mill.

Woodhouse: The Community Forest is to assist with the hedgerow restoration and woodland maintenance works at Smelter Wood (already referred to in the Friends of Shirtcliffe report) using volunteer labour from Sheffield Hallam University. Two days are planned: Sat 20 October and Sat 17 November from 10am until 3pm. There is also a plan to link with the Orgreave Community Forum to plant trees near a new MUGA at Woodhouse Mill Park.

The Community Forestry team works with community groups across the city to raise funding and to enable planting of trees where the community requests them. They assist schools and community groups to identify the correct species for the site, provide advice and guidance on new tree planting and co-ordinate events, fund-raising and publicity, as well as enabling the planting of the trees themselves. They also act as a supplier for internal SCC departments and external clients such as Housing providers, undertaking small-scale contract planting for new developments.

Please contact Leonie if you have ideas for tree-planting on sites where trees are needed. They may be able to provide advice and guidance on planting, and how to arrange an event.

Action: Any groups with ideas for projects involving the Community Forest can contact Leonie on 0114 2734190, mobile: 07976 988627 or email: leonie.kapadia@sheffield.gov.uk

12.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 Harry Holland

The meeting was very sad to learn of the passing away last week of Harry Holland who had been a very active and respected member of the Mosborough Village Action Group. Adrian Burke reminded the meeting of the significant work that had been carried out as a result of Harry's passion and drive, particularly at Bridle Stile and the Joseph Stone Centre. He was one of the leading lights of the Mosborough Community and will be very sadly missed. His funeral will be on 25 September 2012, 11am at St Mark's Church, Mosborough.

13.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 23rd January 2013, from 1.30pm to 3.30pm at Reignhead Primary School, Beighton, Sheffield. Access via the Grange Road side entrance to school. Items for the agenda are welcomed to the chair one month in advance of meeting by contacting:

- Karl Knight (karl.knight@sheffield.gov.uk, 0114 2735030)
- Helen Mitchell (helen.mitchell2@sheffield.gov.uk, 0114 2735804)