

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 21<sup>st</sup> NOVEMBER 2011**

Present Cllr Terry Huggins – acting Chairman  
Cllr John Nicoll  
Cllr Simon West  
Cllr Andy Notman  
Cllr Peter Collins  
Cllr Bob Newell

Elizabeth Pendered – Clerk  
3 members of the public

- 120. Apologies and reasons for absence** – received from the Chairman Cllr Alistair Marr and DCllr Graham Bull
- 121. Declarations of Interest** – none received
- 122. Public Forum** – 3 members were from Natural Woodhurst so a report was received in item 127
- 123. Clerk's report** –
- Small Traffic Scheme – it was agreed by all to give the go ahead to the scheme at a cost of £287 (£1 per elector)
  - Telephone Box – Cllr Notman has received one quote for £1,275 + VAT. It was agreed that this will be left until the New Year now as the weather has turned.
  - Wooden Benches – In Cllr Marr's absence it was agreed to leave this also until the New Year.
- 124. Minutes** – The minutes of the meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011 were read, approved and duly signed as a true record of the meeting
- 125. Public Footpaths** – nothing to report. Cllr Andy Notman still continuing to chase Luminus about 13 Abbots Close. It was confirmed that there would be no funding from P3 this year. A representative from Natural Woodhurst offered help of their services to cut back the brush as they have now been trained in this skill as part of their funding.
- 126. Countryside Watch** – All surrounding farms are being subject to thefts. Suspect vehicle calls received daily. Lots of reports of oil being stolen immediately after a fill up.
- 127. Village Plan** – no further update to report.
- 128. Natural Woodhurst** – a report was received (see attached). Cllr Huggins raised concerns over the work carried out at Ridges Pond and the matter was felt dealt with. Cllr Newell raised concerns over the work carried out down Butt Lane and expressed opinions from others parishioners that the work was too severe. The matter was also felt dealt with as the team and their volunteers worked to their plan. Cllr Collins raised the matter of the boundary hedge at Clay Pits Conservation area and asked if we could find out whom it belongs to. Clerk will investigate the deeds for the Clay Pits field.

# Woodhurst Parish Council

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All agreed that better communication is needed between both parties, Parish Council and Natural Woodhurst so that mistakes aren't made in the future.

- 129. Quality Council** – Cllr Notman asked to hold this over to the next meeting.
- 130. Queen's Jubilee** – It was agreed by all that the Parish Council would like to provide a commemorative mug for the children of the village. The clerk will look into the costs.
- 131. 2012 Olympics** – it was felt that it wasn't appropriate for the Parish Council to support the Olympics however a meeting with Village Hall committee will investigate whether we host an event as there is a small grant available.
- 132. Correspondence**
- The Clerk Magazine
  - Clerks & Councils Direct
  - The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Beacons
  - HDC CCTV Funding
  - HDC Textile Recycling Bank and Paper Bank
  - CCC 2012 Small Grant scheme for London 2012 Olympics
  - Balfour Beatty Street lighting re Christmas Decorations
  - CPALC AGM notice
  - CCC re street lighting bill
- 133. Finance**
- Q2 report received and Budget for 2012/2013 approved
  - Precept to be requested was agreed by all at £5,000
  - Cheques approved and raised:
    - Village Hall Cheque no 879 - £40 - rent
    - Mrs P Newell Cheque no. 880 - £60 – bus shelter clean
    - Balfour Beatty Cheque no. 881 - £360.90 – Street lighting maintenance
    - CCC Cheque no. 882 - £396.90 – Street lighting maintenance and energy
- 134. Items for next meeting**
- Quality Council
  - Queen's Jubilee
  - 2012 Olympics
  - Donation requests from Natural Woodhurst/Village Hall and Church

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10pm

These minutes are unadopted by the Council

# Woodhurst Parish Council

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## 'WILD ABOUT WOODHURST'

### End of Grant Report to Woodhurst Parish Council

21 November 2011

#### **Big Lottery Grant comes to and end**

On the 24<sup>th</sup> November the Big Lottery Fund Grant awarded to Natural Woodhurst for our 'Wild About Woodhurst' project comes to an end. I would like to take this opportunity to update the Parish Council on how the project has proceeded and ongoing maintenance.

#### **A Brief Overview**

The Big Lottery Fund grant has enabled Natural Woodhurst to carry out its most substantial schedule of works to date. Grant money allowed for professional help to be bought in, enabling us to undertake projects we would otherwise have been unable to tackle. The grant application was for a total of £6068 fund the following activities:

Butt Lane Hedgerow Regeneration – to replace dead and dying trees  
Swan Weir's Pond Revetments – to reduce blanket weed by reducing nutrients in water  
Ridges Pond Scrub Clearance – improve water quality by letting in more light  
Wild Flower Meadow opposite Swan Weir – to create low maintenance display  
Claypitts Conservation Area – Meadow enhancement & maintenance.

The grant money, together with an additional £250 from Cambridgeshire Water and £100 from the sale of logs has also enabled us to purchase tools and training so that we can maintain these areas over the coming years.

A detailed breakdown of what the grant money was spent on is attached.

#### **Butt Lane Hedge Regeneration**

Western boundry of Butt Lane suffering with overgrown dead and dying hedging. Low light levels suppressing plant growth below. Trees will eventually collapse onto the footpath. Over 10 volunteers spent two days clearing scrub to allow contractors (funded by £870 of the grant money) to cut down the remaining trees. Volunteers planted a mix of native trees including some 'Dutch Elm Disease resistant' Elms. Trees were mulched with manure supplied by the stables in Butt Lane. Simon West burnt the remaining brash. The good Logs were sold for £100, the rest stacked on site to replace lost habitat.

**Current Status:** A dramatic change to the landscape when first cleared, the vegetation has grown back quickly, with many more wild flowers now the site has more light. All but a couple of the trees have survived and are growing.

## Woodhurst Parish Council

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**Ongoing Maintenance:** A work party on Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> will 'Beat Up' ie replace new trees that have not survived, cut back vegetation ½ metre either side of new trees to reduce competition and re-mulch and replace damaged tree guards. To be repeated twice yearly until trees established, at which point hedge can be 'laid'.

### Swan Weir Pond

The pond was suffering from an unsightly blanket weed problem that owners could not overcome. Diagnosis: nutrient levels in pond had become too high. Two pronged attack – additives and natural filtration. After many trials the Mayall's have finally found environmentally friendly additive that works. Over 20 volunteers worked v. hard to clear the blanket weed. £1120.50 of Grant money paid for professional to install two willow revetments. Reeds and marginal plants were part funded by the Grant and by the Mayall's, and planted by volunteers. The new reeds will act as a natural filter for nutrients washing into pond.

**Current Status:** New additive working well – pond much clearer than this time last year. Revetments quickly colonised.

**Ongoing Maintenance:** Revetments will need to be weeded in the Spring to allow reeds and other marginal plants the best chance to grow. Over time willow revetments will rot away as banks establish. Reeds will be cut periodically to maintain good filtration.

### Ridges Pond

The Dense vegetation on the southern bank was reducing light to the pond. Work was undertaken at western end to coppice the scrub to let more light in. Volunteers from the Environment Agency worked under Natural Woodhurst supervision. Grant money purchased additional pond plants to encourage bio-diversity now that light levels are improved.

**Current Status:** It is extremely regrettable that this work resulted in trees on Paul Clark's land being cut down without his permission. I have written to Paul offering our sincere apologies and Phil Clark has worked with Paul to come to an amicable solution which resulted in the willow panels being used to secure Paul's land.

We will continue to work closely with the Parish Council and land owners, to ensure all are kept up to date with our plans and permissions are obtained from the correct land owners.

**Ongoing Maintenance:** Within 18mths the vegetation will have grown up to hedge height and the willow hurdles will be removed if Paul Clark in agreement. Reeds to be reduced annually and grass at waters edge cut back for safety.

### 'The Green' opposite Swan Weir Pond

Obstructive flower beds replaced with a wild flower meadow, set well back from the road to provide low maintenance floral interest that would not impede motorist views. Combined with a backdrop of intermittently placed willow hurdles along the existing wire fence. Grant money purchased

## Woodhurst Parish Council

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additional plant stock to help establish meadow. £300 of Grant funded well attended willow hurdle making event in Feast Week.

**Current Status:** Ongoing issues with grass cutting have put a halt the wildflower meadow, as it is not possible to achieve the desired results. Stacked turfs and willow lengths have been removed from the site. Additional hurdles are required.

**Ongoing Maintenance:** White stakes to be removed. A further willow hurdle weaving event planned for spring, after which hurdles will be erected along the fence. The barrow will be maintained.

### **Claypitts Conservation Area**

£255 + Grant money funded contractors to pollard willows and wild flower planting in the meadow. BTCV volunteers opened up the circular path. Volunteers from the Environmental Services cleared reeds from the pond. Volunteers planted additional wild flower stock in the meadow. Woodchip stacked for future use on paths. Logs sold to Simon West – re-stacked and currently awaiting collection.

**Current Status:** Interpretation board – unfortunately we have been unable to complete by end of grant, so regrettably expect to return £800 of funding, unless we can get permission from The Big Lottery Fund to hold onto this money. Helen Brooke is creating design as an 'A level' project. We will look for further funding if necessary, so we can complete this part of the project next year in consultation with Parish Council.

**Ongoing Maintenance:** Continuing Phil Clark's rolling maintenance plan, including: annual meadow cut and reed reduction as necessary. Clear brash 1m each side path in 2012, to prevent it falling in on path again. Gradual clearance of brash over coming years to regenerate woodland.

### **The wider impact of the Big Lottery Grant**

As a result of the Big Lottery funded work, we now have a list of around 30 signed up volunteers to call upon. Plus many other residents who turned out to offer one-off help or take part in the willow weaving event.

Through the use of email and our Facebook page we are keeping in close contact with our volunteers and supporters, providing regular updates on our work. Already, we have a number of new volunteers from this group taking on responsibility for planters around the village.

The appointment of a Linda Spencer as the Church liaison has resulted in Natural Woodhurst offering the Church the £200 received from the Walk for Woodhurst, to help fund the essential tree works they need carried out.

As well as the chance to help care for parts of the village we love, volunteers report that they have really benefited from the educational and social aspect of the events. Plus the boost of a good few hours of physical hard work in the open air!

## Woodhurst Parish Council

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I would like to thank all the many volunteers and the Parish Council for their ongoing support of our work and in particular this year's 'Wild About Woodhurst' project.

### **Plans for 2012**

Our focus for the coming year will be on the planters and beds and tree seat within the village, and continuing to maintain the sites of this year's projects. To this end we have a full calendar of events planned.

In addition, there is potential for future work that could be implemented towards the end of 2012 / 2013. We look forward to sharing these ideas with the Parish Council and the wider community for discussion during 2012.