

Shotover Users Forum
Tuesday 11th January 2011 at 6.30pm

<p>Council Representatives</p> <p>Natural England</p> <p>Local residents</p> <p>Apologies</p>	<p>Stuart Fitzsimmons – Parks & Open Spaces Manager</p> <p>James Dixon – Horticultural & Landscape Manager</p> <p>Daren Hindle - Horticultural & Landscape Supervisor</p> <p>Gary Clark – Countryside Ranger</p> <p>Anthony Roberts – Performance Officer</p> <p>Michelle Legg – Parks Development Officer</p> <p>Dr Rebecca Tibbetts</p> <p>85 approx</p> <p>7 who were unable to attend</p>	
Point	Discussion	Action
<p>Introductions</p>	<p>Stuart welcomed all to meeting and introduced staff from Oxford City Council's Parks & Open Spaces.</p>	
<p>Objectives</p>	<p>We want to bring together all interested parties so we can work on a management plan for Shotover Country Park. We want to discuss the future for Shotover, how we work with and involve volunteers, gauge feelings for a user/friends group and how we manage the site on a day-to-day basis.</p>	
<p>Presentation - Shotover is changing</p>	<p>James Dixon commented on a great turnout and highlighted that this is the first step in how Shotover should change. He then gave a short presentation into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction ▪ Council objectives & strategy ▪ Parks & Open Spaces objectives ▪ Summary of History ▪ Shotover Now ▪ Forces acting on Shotover ▪ Context ▪ Future Changes ▪ Risks ▪ Options for change ▪ Steering changes ▪ Proposed approach ▪ Shotover needs you – stakeholders ▪ Next steps <p>A copy of the presentation is available.</p>	
<p>Natural England</p>	<p>James introduced Dr Rebecca Tibbetts from Natural England.</p> <p>Shotover is a SSSI with extensive examples of wildlife and woodland, providing habitats for invertebrates</p> <p>Natural England</p> <p>The PSA (Public Services Authority) target for 2010 90% SSSI sites in favourable position. Shotover was assessed in summer 2010 and is not in as good a state as wanted. Areas have been reduced by secondary woodland scrub and bracken.</p> <p>The Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) has 10 years of financial support for partners to manage site.</p> <p>Natural England and Oxford City Council have a preliminary agreement; the management plan will follow and will identify which areas/habitats the money should be allocated to.</p>	
<p>Questions</p>	<p>The floor was opened up for questions:</p> <p>Q-Will the Management Plan include Magdalen Wood West?</p> <p>A-Yes it will and we are applying for additional funding from the Forestry Commission</p>	<p>Roger Jenkins - Wood Farm</p>

Shotover Users Forum
Tuesday 11th January 2011 at 6.30pm

	<p>Q-There has been other Management Plans in the past, this is nothing new. Thought the local government had disconnected with community A-the last Management Plan was written 10 years ago and has not been fully implemented. The environment has changed since then and we want to revise our way forward with input from all interested parties</p> <p>Q-This process started 3yrs ago, updated citation should've started. Shotover Wildlife's information needs to be included and the bio-diversity work that the Shotover Wildlife is working on. Council have broken down relationships with the group. A- We are looking to the future and Shotover Wildlife is one of many groups that we want to work with on this project.</p> <p>Q – Research has been carried out by Shotover Wildlife, why has this not been used in the past? A – The council has found that its access to some data has been restricted, but we hope to share data with any groups that have useful data.</p> <p>Q – Shotover Wildlife does not run Shotover A – All parties are equal and we will be talking to all interested parties and all users.</p> <p>Q – The heath land on Mary Sadler's Field is disappearing and the coppicing in Brasenose woods is the worst example I have seen and the bluebells are being killed off. A – The purpose of this group is plan and decide what needs to be done and where.</p> <p>Q – The Council needs to recognise that there is a crisis of confidence and lack of trust in the way they have managed Shotover. Over the past few years manpower and expertise has been lost, while we are still paying our taxes. More needs to be done with the information and records office, both for the site and species. A –In relation to the data available we will investigate further with County Council records.</p> <p>Q – We are fed up with red plastic tape being put up and stopping people from enjoying areas of the park. A – Some work has been stopped, due to health and safety concerns, to protect the public from unstable/high bank. We are drawing up plans for remedial works (for approval from Natural England). We intend to complete remedial works as soon as possible.</p> <p>Q – Once the management plan is developed how do you see it moving forward? A – Funding and development though the management plan, Further grants may be available for remedial works and to maintain long term management of the site. Natural England will provide resources and contractors will be sought to write the management plan, which will be a joined up approach. R Tibbett added that the procurement of contractors will be in line with Oxford City Council's own procurement procedures.</p> <p>Q – Is the HLS, is it specifically designed for this range of biodiversity?</p>	<p>Mike Tait</p> <p>Ivan Wright Shotover Wildlife</p> <p>Local Resident</p> <p>Caroline Jackson, Shotover Preservation.</p> <p>Local resident</p> <p>Sarah Gray, individual</p>
--	--	---

Shotover Users Forum
Tuesday 11th January 2011 at 6.30pm

	<p>A- With the management and maintenance of a SSSI biodiversity has a big input. Q – What is the balance of conservation (biodiversity) A – Consultants will be responsible for identifying this</p> <p>Q – Is there any chance of extending the bridleways so that some of them link up? A – We can look at these as part of the consultation and management plan.</p> <p>Q – Ashton Rowant meets around 4 times a year with local stakeholders and operates a similar set up, which is much faster. A – We hope to set up a user group/friends group for Shotover.</p> <p>Q – Are SODC the local authority involved in this process as they have an extended Shotover Management Plan A – They have been invited to this meeting but were unable to attend, They are on the mailing list and will be kept informed. Planning permission may be required.</p> <p>Q – We would like the countryside rangers reinstated. We have 3 countryside rangers. We do not have resources to recruit more. The Countryside team have been merged with the horticultural & landscape team so as well as covering all our countryside areas, and more specialised activities they are able to pool skills, policing, manpower and machinery. We are making the best of the resources available. We want to restart our volunteer programme and to recruit more volunteers.</p> <p>Q – What is happening to West Hill Farm and Brasenose Farm? A – We would like to sell both properties privately through our Estates team but will have to check any covenants before doing this.</p> <p>Q – If the properties are sold would the gate be removed? If so this would increase the amount of cars going up the lane? A – Several properties have been sold with written conditions that gates are to be locked. Any issues will be raised directly with the owners.</p> <p>Q - Is there a limit on the number of people? With public rights of way and free access we cannot restrict the numbers. Events are strictly controlled and there is a robust procedure Planning strategies and citing of entrances, benches will be covered within the management plan and will take into account of the pressures of acid grassland.</p> <p>Q – What checks with Natural England be making? A - Natural England will audit and check on the Councils work regularly.</p> <p>Q - Wanted to dispel a popular myth. Most human activities are compatible with biodiversity. People are preserving some areas due to the high use. Wildlife and biodiversity will be improved by proper management.</p>	<p>Julia Kidd Park User</p> <p>Tim King Ashton Rowant</p> <p>Janet Lever, Shotover Preservation</p> <p>Representative from Shotover Wildlife</p> <p>Ivan Wright Shotover Wildlife</p>
--	---	---

Shotover Users Forum
Tuesday 11th January 2011 at 6.30pm

	<p>Specialist conservation works are carried out on a site by site basis. The following works are scheduled at Shotover Park:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearance of vegetation from bridleways and paths • Cut and collect of meadows an Slade Camp field and Shotover Plain • Various grass treatments around the hill to encourage acid grassland and heath • Maintenance of notice board • A programme of coppicing in Brasenose Wood should recommence next season • Path repairs and remedial works to fences and gates as required. <p>Such works will continue for the foreseeable future. Site specific works may be subject to change. The recent scrapes made by Shotover will be reviewed and the ongoing management will be covered by the future management plan. Some of the vegetation that encroaches on the bridleways is not owned by Parks and Open Spaces and such works on rights of way may be the responsibility of the Highways Authority. We are reviewing the extent of our responsibility to ensure that our limited resources are spent as effectively as possible.</p>	
<p>Planning for Real Exercise</p>	<p>James Dixon introduced the Planning for Real exercises and invited attendees to spend 30 minutes to have a look at the 3d model and activity sheets so they could record their views. Staff will also be available to answer any other questions.</p>	
<p>Summing Up</p>	<p>Stuart Fitzsimmons asked for a show of hands of those interested in setting up a user forum/friends group. Headcount showed 11-15 interested people, although many people had already left.</p> <p>As the majority of public who talked to Officers during PfR exercise seemed positive about a User Forum it was agreed to take this forward.</p> <p>All those interested please leave details with a member of staff or email parks@oxford.gov.uk</p> <p>Proposal for next meeting March 2011 and we will find a larger venue and will hope to form group to move forward.</p> <p>We will feedback the outcomes of this meeting within 2 weeks.</p> <p>Meeting ended 8.40pm.</p>	

Next meeting scheduled for Thursday 17th March 2011.
Time and venue to be confirmed.