

**Shotover Users Forum**  
**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2011 at 6.30pm**

Council Representatives	Stuart Fitzsimmons – Parks & Open Spaces Manager James Dixon – Horticultural & Landscape Manager Michelle Legg – Parks Development Officer Ian Brooke – Head of City Leisure Cllr Mark Lygo & Cllr Graham Jones	
Natural England	Dr Rebecca Tibbetts & Leanne Smith	
Local residents	M Leeding, Cllr Graham Jones, Caroline Ruse, Julia von Havenschild, Philippa Logan, Roger Jenking, Andrew Burchett, Neville Baker, Peter Jones, Mike Tait, B Collins, W Young, A Austen, A Julian, Roger Parker, Samantha Branch, E Snelgrove, Di & Paul Rivers, Wendy Austen, Nigel Fisher, Dick Tolley, Heather Armitage, C Jackson-Houlston, Martin Harris.	
Apologies	Julia Kidd, Mrs Rushworth	
Point	Discussion	Action
Welcome	Stuart welcomed all to meeting. Minutes had already been circulated to those who had requested them. Copies available at <a href="http://www.oxford.gov.uk">www.oxford.gov.uk</a>	
Focus for meeting	Main purpose for meeting to set up user group	
Planning for Real feedback Michelle Legg	<p>Top 10 responses from last user forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working/management group to be set up 6</li> <li>• Need for dog walking areas 5</li> <li>• Good places for bird watching 5</li> <li>• Rare Butterflies and birds here 5</li> <li>• Footpaths used 4</li> <li>• Dog free zones needed 3</li> <li>• Bridleways used 3</li> <li>• Interesting place here 2</li> <li>• Car dumping &amp; burning problem here 2</li> <li>• Illegal dumping here 2</li> </ul> <p>Purpose of this meeting to address top issue and the others will be discussed using the user group.</p> <p>Top 10 activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking/dog walking 25</li> <li>• Bird watching 16</li> <li>• Art/craft photography 5</li> <li>• Running/orienteering 4</li> <li>• Picnicing 4</li> </ul> <p>With so many of you being regular walking or dog walking you play an important part of informing us of any problems or issues you see in the park.</p>	
Research James Dixon	<p>The Management Plan will require evidence based research. What plants, communities, key information are on the site We would welcome any information that people have already gathered. TVERC (Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre) will store and share information.</p> <p>The parks department had asked TVERC for information on Shotover. We received data that is quite old; unfortunately Shotover Wildlife's data was removed from TVERC. The information will help identify any rare species and help us to decide what to protect or remove i.e. Japanese Knotweed.</p> <p>We have been approached by an entomologist. Please contact the parks department if you are able to help.</p>	
Engagement Stuart Fitzsimmons	<p>The user group will include 1 representative from each of the many stakeholders.</p> <p>It will meet every 3 months to discuss issues concerning</p>	

<p>Questions raised</p>	<p>Shotover and how we manage these.  Decisions will not be made on the night, there will be time for the representatives to feedback to their group, and responses fed back either at the next meeting or via phone/email if responses needed quicker.  After 12 months we will look to vote in a chair, but this will be gauged nearer the time and with the agreement of the group.</p> <p>Q – This seems to be a fait accompli and individuals may not get a chance to have their views heard?  A – We are asking for representatives rather than individuals so that we get a manageable group. Otherwise it would be difficult to debate ideas with a large group.  We would hold an open meeting once a year.  There would be consultation via email/web.</p> <p>Q – Can understand why, but queries over ‘vested interests’  A – We are trying to get an equal representative  We may look at opening one or two spaces to individuals who did not belong to other groups, to cover their area of interest/expertise.</p> <p>The purpose of the group would be to work with Natural England to get Shotover SSI site into favourable conditions. The terms of reference would be formed and agreed by the group.</p> <p>Q – Minutes to be made public  A – Minutes will be passed to representatives, who will then feed these back to their areas.</p> <p>Q – How are you going to fill representatives for horse-riders etc?  A - We already have a contact for horse-riders and some of the sporting groups who use the area. If we find gaps we will actively try and recruit.</p> <p>Q – Forest Hill Parish Council need to be added  A – We have made contact with the Parish Council</p> <p>Q – There seems to be some animosity between the Council and Shotover Wildlife, the data Shotover Wildlife hold could easily be shared with a polite request, there is no need for back-door access to data. The information at TVERC was declined due to potential ulterior motives  A – We want to work with everyone including Shotover Wildlife and are trying to work with them.</p> <p>Q – Will the group be writing the Management Plan?  A – The group will be consulted on the contents of the management plan and will work with the consultants to deliver the management plan.</p> <p>Q – Will the County Council’s Ecologists be involved?  A – The actual role is no longer exists. We have made contact with the County Council, and they have been invited to the meetings. We will check to see who is covering the ecological area.</p> <p>Q – Was there a 20 year plan already in place?  A – The old management plan is now out of date because of changes to the site and Country Side Service.</p>	<p>Roger Parker  Shotover Wildlife</p>
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<p>Planning James Dixon</p> <p>AOB</p>	<p>Those present were invited to have a refreshment break. Nominations for the user group were collected after this break.</p> <p>Presentation given including: Summary of previous presentation Summary of requirements Main threats Increasing areas of high value habitat Timescales</p> <p>What are the plans for Magdalen Wood West? We may need to look elsewhere for funding for this area. The Wood will be included in the wider management plan, but this will be covered by a Forestry Commission Grant and any relevant processes.</p> <p>How will issues be handled? Oxford City Council has a statutory obligation, but most decisions will be made with agreement from the user group.</p> <p>How often will the group meet? Every 3 months, or as the group sees fit. This will be discussed at the meetings.</p> <p>What will happen after 10 years? The initial grant is for 10 year management plan, money will be required to undertake the work identified.</p> <p>How will volunteers be managed? It will depend on the job and the user group will decide how. There are many groups undertaking volunteer work, either direct as a volunteer, work with friends groups, BTVC/OCV. A countryside ranger will be supporting all volunteer activities There is also a permit to work process in place, which volunteers need to complete. Note; Attached volunteer agreement and permit to work as an appendix.</p> <p>Q - If Oxford City Council is the landowner of SSSI site do they have a statutory obligation to undertake work? A – We have limited resources as will do things as best we can. If we have the funding and the volunteers we have a good chance of being successful and getting things done quicker and better. We hope that the management plan and grants will act as a seed to attract further funding.</p> <p>Q – If money is given for the plan, it may fault on the current data. The focus on the management plan will differ depending on species. If historical data is not available this could take up to 2 years to get data. A – (From NE) We are aware that 1 year may not be enough and some records may not be available and could hinder the plan. Current grant includes the procurement of the management plan and day-to-day management. Using a consultant with good range of knowledge and good communication they should be able to gather most of the information and plan for the next 10-20 years. More money will be needed for habitat restoration and</p>	<p>Graham Jones</p> <p>Heather Armitage</p> <p>Robert Heritage Shotover Preservation</p> <p>NEAC/Wood Farm NAG</p>
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	<p>grass/heath land areas. There is huge potential on the site, and despite the re-structure at Natural England everyone hopes it achieves its goals.</p> <p>Q – Make Magdalen Wood West more attractive and increase access. Trim Trail no longer used. A – This will be looked at as part of the user group, funding will be sought differently probably through Forestry Commission.</p> <p>Q – Funding, are you planning on selling any land off? A – No. Corporate Assets are investigating the covenants on the two properties currently vacant. Q – Where will the money go? A – It will go to the Council, not sure if it will go directly to Parks &amp; Open Spaces.</p> <p>Q – If the management plan may take up to 2 years, will things stop happening until then. A – We hope not, birch encroachment etc, will be dealt with as part of our ongoing work.</p> <p>We will contact representatives shortly. Those who signed up were asked to make sure contact details were on registration sheets.</p> <p>Meeting closed</p>	
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Next meeting Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June, Council Chambers 6.30pm