



Minutes of meeting held 3rd March 2022 via Zoom

Present: Peter Cummings (PC), Judy Rogers (JR), David Howlett (DH), Michael Southworth (MS), Leigh Weston (LW), Mick Parker (MP), Laura Parker (LP), Jonathan Heath (JH)
Apologies: Sue McWhinney, Paul McWhinney, Mark Kerr

Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2022 were agreed as a true record.
There were no matters arising.

Action points from previous meeting

Action points from the previous meeting were handled within the context of each of the agenda items.

Update on Tree planting and maintenance

YDMT has decided to continue with its Together for Trees concept but with a different emphasis. It will concentrate on small woodland work, continue to encourage the upkeep and creation of hedgerows, plant up to 150 landscape trees, support four community groups, and work with people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Landowners will be encouraged to apply for trees direct from the Woodland Trust but support in such applications will be provided by YDMT¹. It became clear that discussions with landowners need to take place between now and September when applications and orders for trees must have been submitted. This will enable delivery and planting of trees from November 2022 onwards. Training in woodland issues will also be pursued, including the employment of trainees with the aim of enabling young people to develop a career in woodland management. MEG was asked to identify what help it might need.

This led to discussion about where further trees might be planted during the 2022/2023 tree planting season and revealed several promising locations. **Action point 1:** several members of the group undertook to follow these up over the coming months.

The National Trust has donated MEG with some 400 young trees which it over-ordered for its 2021/2022 planting season. Some of these trees will be retained in protected surroundings to ensure they are robust enough to plant successfully next season, the remainder will be planted during March 2022 as replacements for failed trees planted up by one local farmer since 2019. **Action point 2:** PC and MP to organise the planting of these trees as soon as possible. No tree guards will be used as the areas concerned are well fenced off.

¹ Carol Douglas, Tree Officer at YDMT has offered the following clarification to this sentence:-

Trees can still be obtained directly from YDMT if the site has approval for planting from YDNPA. If funding is required for fencing, landowners can apply for a woodland grant from YDMT who can help organise planting events for MEG.



As regards plastic tree guards, all the National Parks have now agreed to make their woodlands plastic free but at the same time², it has to be accepted that young trees will still need to be protected as the extent of failure of unguarded trees is at unacceptable levels. An approach to Friends of the Dales which actively encourages the elimination of plastic tree guards revealed that its main thrust is campaigning for prohibition of the use of such guards rather than actual collection of discarded tree guards from the countryside. MEG only wishes to be involved in the latter activity.

Since the last MEG meeting, YDNPA donated five trees to the Parish and these were planted on the banks of the beck opposite the Old Barn Café. Two oak trees about 15ft high were gifted to MEG and these have been transplanted to the Malham Beck Plantation.

MEG gave a presentation about its work to Airton WI and received a donation which was directed to PC funds for environmental purposes. The meeting was reminded that the PC holds £2500 for environmental works within the parish which MEG can apply for. As a result of the presentation, MEG was able to introduce the YWT to the residents of Airton Mill who are reviewing how best to manage their woodland.

Progress on the creation of the sensory garden at Malham Chapel continues. Plants have been supplied by YDMT and the flower beds continue to be prepared. A dedication service will be held at the garden on 18th March after 1:00pm. Further details to be provided nearer the time.

Update on promotion of value of sheep's fleeces for multiple uses

Enquiries on local media in the past couple of months have shown there might be an interest in the purchase of about 40 fleeces up and down Malhamdale. JH explained his experience last year in trying to sell sheep's fleeces for horticultural purposes along the lines of the experiment conducted by Clapham Sustainability Group. It was reported that some local farmers are prepared to make sheep's fleeces available for sale but the key problem that needs resolution is how to proceed successfully against a background of lack of time and human resources.

Discussion led to an outline plan as follows:

The Horticultural Section of the Malham Show 2022 be invited to include a class for plants grown using sheep's fleece as a medium (**Action point 3**: DH to follow this up).

Leaflet to be produced promoting the uses of sheep's fleeces for horticultural purposes and to be used throughout the subsequent promotional efforts. (**Action point 4**: PC and JR to pursue).

A day to be selected after the sheep shearing for the season is over at which time fleeces for sale will be deposited at a central point locally and those who have requested them can collect them that same day. (**Action point 5**: PC and JR to pursue)

The "sale" day be used to create publicity for the concept (of fleeces for horticulture). (**Action point 6**: PC and JR to pursue).

² Carol Douglas, Tree Officer at YDMT has offered the following clarification to this sentence:-

It is the National Park Societies such as Friends of the Dales that are campaigning against plastic guard use. The national park authorities have not gone plastic free as this is currently unrealistic. However, YDMT and the authorities are working together to find sustainable solutions.

If anyone would like to find out more about the work on forest plastics please click on the following link to join an email update list: <https://link.edgepilot.com/s/a338e7a4/w4l4w7CV60mBKxiw47tiqg?u=https://tinyurl.com/ForestPlastics>



On the day of the Malham Show, suitably promote the concept and make a few available for sale.

(Action point 7: Unallocated)

Consider outcomes and plan for future developments based on experience to date. **(Action point 8:** All).

This outline plan is to be honed over the coming months so that it can be effectively carried out in July/August 2022.

Update on the Bee Together project

YDMT has widely issued notices about webinars and site visits to promote an understanding of bees and the habitats they need. All MEG supporters have been circulated with the information but the links to find out more and apply to join the webinars are at:

<https://www.ydmt.org/events/meadow-workshop>

<https://www.ydmt.org/events/ydmt-bumblebee-workshop>

<https://www.ydmt.org/events/wildlife-gardening-workshop>

<https://www.ydmt.org/events/Identifying-solitary-bees>

<https://www.ydmt.org/events/yorkshire-moths-course>

<https://www.ydmt.org/events/intermediate-bumblebee-ID>

On 15th March at 3:00pm and starting at Kirkby Malham church, there will be a walk round Hanlith to look at possible bee friendly sites.

Hubbub and the promotion of sustainable energy

At a review meeting that took place on 28th January, Hubbub indicated that it is preparing presentations and webinars on home energy savings and retrofit. Further information is awaited.

Article for the Parish Magazine

A request has been made to the National Trust to write about the work it is doing on preserving and restoring peatbogs. In reserve for the April issue will be an article on MEG's progress in promoting the sale of sheep's fleeces.

It is hoped that for the May magazine, an article will have been written about the plight of curlews.

Other Business

PC explained that he still wished to step down as MEG Chairperson but pending a new Chairperson being found, he was prepared to continue until the end of the summer.

There was discussion about where manure for the garden could be supplied locally.

Date of next meeting

The next MEG meeting is on Thursday 31st March via Zoom at 7:30pm.