

**DRAFT Notes from Shurnhold Fields ‘Friends of’ Group Meeting at
St Barnabas Church, Beanacre on 6th September 2018 at 7pm**

Several members of the public were in attendance with representatives from both Melksham Town Council (Cllrs Adrienne Westbrook, Terri Welch and Pat Aves) and Melksham Without Parish Council (Cllrs Richard Wood and Paul Carter)

Cllr Richard Wood welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the first item on the agenda, which was to form a committee for the “Friends of Shurnhold Fields” group and elect a Chairman in the first instance.

- 001 The Committee was formed with the following members:
- Robin Lydall
 - Roy Dobson
 - Claire Bainton
 - Phil Mason
 - Sarah Woodruff
 - Ray Woodruff
 - Shelia Roberts

Andrew Hamilton (via message, not at meeting)
Tia Smith (via message, not at meeting)

Both Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council would appoint a representative to sit on the committee too.

There were other residents present who wanted to get involved in more practical ways, but didn’t want to be on a committee. There were 11 residents in attendance.

- 002 The following people were appointed to positions on the committee:
- | | |
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| Roy Dobson | Chairman |
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Cllr Wood handed the Chair of the meeting to Mr Dobson.

Sarah Woodruff	Vice Chair
Phil Mason	Secretary
<i>Vacancy</i>	Treasurer

- 003 The Chair and Secretary agreed to look at the sample constitutions supplied and draft a suitable version.

- 004 The Notes from the last meeting held on 24th July, were accepted as a true record, with the words “to clear” taken from the following sentence.

What about the Himalayan Balsam and Black Thorn on the site. ***(This will be investigated and appropriate action taken to clear) TO NOW READ (This will be investigated and appropriate action taken).***

Both the parish and town council offered to host the minutes of the “Friends” meetings on their websites, so easily accessible to all. This was agreed.

005 The group received feedback on the Site Visit on 8th August with the “Natural Flood Management” team which had the following people in attendance, as well as representatives from the “Friends” and parish and town council.

Alasdair Maxwell, Wessex Natural Flood Management Co-ordinator,
Environment Agency

Harriet Alvis, Project Manager, Bristol Avon Rivers Trust

Danny Everett, Wiltshire Council Principal Drainage Engineer

The members had also received the notes from the meeting from Aly Maxwell, and the original Ecology report from the initial planning application for the George Ward housing development which did cover “Shurnhold Fields” and was described as “Playing Field land” on the report.

It was agreed that it had been a good meeting, and useful to have all the experts together. Some indications had been drawn on a map of the area, showing the best place for any attenuation pond and swales and that the trees could really be planted anywhere, as long as meeting with the advice from the Environment Agency regarding trees being planted at least 8 metres from the river banks.

The Chairman asked about the legal transfer of the land. The MWPC Clerk confirmed that the land transfer would be from Persimmon to Melksham Without Parish Council (as lead council of the joint project in conjunction with the Town Council. There would be a payment of £97,385.75 from Persimmon for maintenance of the open space. The money would be held by the Parish Council and the “Friends” would apply to the Working Group made up of representatives of both councils for funding as and when required. The funding was provided for maintenance in perpetuity.

Any flood attenuation works would be paid for by grant funding being applied for by Wiltshire Council and the Environment Agency to DEFRA as part of a larger suite of measures in the catchment area.

006 Mark Malins, Woodland Officer, Forestry Commission had been unable to attend the Site Meeting but had sent the parish council his advice of the best trees to plant from a Natural Flood management perspective from the range available from the Woodland Trust WW1 tree packages. The reports would be supplied to the “Friends” from the parish council but in essence:

“If the tree species have a dark green dot against them then they are ‘very suitable’, a green dot ‘suitable’; red is ‘unsuitable’. You have a range of broadleaved trees that would be suitable including Rowan and Silver Birch which are good early establishing species. Birch also has the benefit of quicker growth and thus will give a ‘wooded environment’ effect more quickly, especially if planted in groups. Small-leaved Lime and Wild Cherry would also add variety. Alder and Willow could feature along the stream boundary and could later be coppiced.

We can no longer plant Ash because of Ash Dieback, but Sycamore is likely to be its replacement. It also hosts a number of lichens found on Ash. Oak would be very suitable, but of course is slow-growing.

The parish council Clerk, Teresa Strange, advised that the trees had been ordered by the required deadline of 15th August, and comprised of:

1 pack of "Small Copse" 30 saplings (*silver birch, rowan, wild cherry*)

2 packs of "Medium Working Wood" 105 saplings per pack (*rowan, silver birch, wild cherry, common oak, field maple, grey willow*)

This would give a total of 240 trees, with an approximate number of 187 WW1 fallen. The surplus could be planted elsewhere on the site, or donated back to other community groups.

They would initially be delivered to the parish council at their premises at Bowerhill (as with all trees for the Melksham area for this project) from 1st to 9th November. The tree saplings would be delivered with tree guards and canes.

- 007 The group spent some time considering different aspects of where best to plant the trees, and in what type of arrangement, and how close together. It was agreed that this would be best done at the next meeting and to invite some local tree wardens to see if they could attend and give their advice.

It was also agreed that the grass would have to be cut in the area the tree saplings were to be planted in.

ACTION: The parish council to obtain a quote from their grass cutting contractors for grass cutting (the grass was considered too long for the Town Council staff to cut with their machinery).

ACTION: The parish council to contact Persimmon to seek permission to cut the grass ahead of any land transfer.

ACTION: Sarah Woodruff offered to research "yellow rattle" planting and whether land needed to be harrowed before planting. Yellow rattle is used to weaken grass and allow other wildflowers to flourish.

An area designed for wildlife meadow planting may need to be fenced off. The trees may benefit from mulching with plant material (bark chippings) and members were aware of chippings tipped locally on land.

- 008 The "Friends" agreed that they would like to plant the trees themselves as a group activity, on Saturday 10th November. The council members advised on the "Melksham Remembers" project, and that the "Friends" were most welcome to join the activities in the afternoon in the Town Hall with refreshments and a WW1 exhibition; following their tree planting.

009 The next meeting of the "Friends" would be held on Monday 1st October. The MWPC Clerk to send details of possible venues to the "Friends", with the Asda Community room a good possibility. The MWPC Clerk offered to send paperwork to the Friends Chair/Secretary of trees ordered, ecology reports etc

Meeting closed at 8.30pm.