

## **FRIENDS OF THRINGSTONE**

### Minutes of meeting 12\5\05

Cllr Pam Clayfield, Jan Cufflin, Ron Hill, Jo Johnson, Sarah Morgan, Ray Neal, Tony and Sandy Newton, Nita Pearson, Pam Porter, Rowena Summers, John Spencer, Jim Wilkinson, Cllr Ray Woodward.

Apologies from Cllr Rod Evans, David and Janet Stevenson.

The proposed format for the group and for future meetings: The Friends of Gracedieu have a constitution and proper set up and if we wanted to integrate with this group we would need to have the same.

A member present expressed the opinion that he wasn't for a designated format and couldn't we just be a group of villagers interested in their community.

Councillor Pam Clayfield said that the main advantage of having a proper constitution and framework was that opportunities for funding would be better as grant applications need a proper named group with aims and objectives.

Did we just want to talk about litter picks etc., or go for best-kept village and get tied in with the Gracedieu project?

Cllr Ray Woodward said that if we became involved with the Gracedieu project and worked together then we could help each other. We have learned from them about their plans around access and woodland because they joined in with the last meeting.

Guest Speaker Clark Robinson agreed with the idea of the format for funding purposes and for any possibilities of linking in with the local council. He gave an example of the Hugglescote forum with which he is involved. They have a bank account \ chairperson \ treasurer etc yet their meetings are very informal. If this group need to spend any money then they raise it. They have had successes as a group such as getting the sequence of the Grange Road cross road traffic lights changed. So it is possible to improve facilities and change things by having this formal footing, even if it is a basic one.

It was suggested that someone (to be decided) get information ready for the next meeting on how to formalise things, and then we could nominate a chairperson etc., and agree aims and objectives.

Cllr Ray Woodward said that he would like to bring Whitwick into the group and it was agreed that one didn't have to live in Thringstone to be in the group. The name would remain as Friends of Thringstone.

It was proposed that we have a newsletter to give details of the activities of the group and also to make villagers aware of other local events. We could try to get sponsorship from

local businesses to pay for printing costs. Everyone was asked to think of an idea for the title of the newsletter for the next meeting and Cllr Pam Clayfield offered a small prize to the winner.

Guest speaker: Clark Robinson is the Grounds Maintenance Officer for NWLDC. He is responsible for overseeing the maintenance of any of the Coalville \ Hugglescote \ Thringstone \ Whitwick \ Greenhill areas that are owned by the District Council, such as open spaces, play areas, sanitariums etc including the Hermitage Recreation Ground.

In Thringstone they have recently created 2 new play areas; one in the Henson Lane area and the other by Melrose Road. There has already been damage done to one of these. Open spaces that they are responsible for are the village green and the grassed area at the Lilybank end of Hensons Lane. Everything else is highway verge which is the responsibility of the County Council. A licence is needed to do anything to these areas such as planting bulbs \ tubs and they would then need maintaining, possibly by the County Council. The District Council are also not responsible for any areas beyond Lilybank and down to the George and Dragon.

As a community group we could hold an Open Gardens day. The Hugglescote group re holding one and have got 17 villagers to participate and are encourage all householders en route to display hanging baskets.

Mr Robinson did point out that the District Council budget was limited!

A member present asked about trees in Thringstone. He was told that there was no reason why we could not plant trees, although there is always the problem with vandalism. There has been quite a lot of tree planting in Greenhill. It was pointed out there The National Forest would only want indigenous trees to be planted.

Cllr Pam Clayfield asked Mr Robinson who he knew that could help us in this area. Simon Evans at National Forest and Tony Lockley at the County Council. The speaker also said that if we raised funds as a group, for initial tree planting, then we could ask the council to take on the maintenance, and this might be the best way to go.

A member asked about getting someone to water any tubs that were planted but there is a problem with an individual doing this due to public liability insurance if anything goes wrong. Mr Robinson did say that they very rarely had to water established plants and that if it was very dry there would probably be a hosepipe ban anyway. He suggested that the first place to establish a flower bed in Thringstone would be on the triangle opposite the Community Centre. Another prospective area being in front of the bungalows by the service road towards Whitwick. Cllr Pam Clayfield asked if the project was feasible if we pushed for it and Mr Robinson said that Coalville and Whitwick had flowerbeds, so there was no reason why not. Mr Robinson said that the existing feature on The Green does not look good any needs reshaping; the area needs looking at and could have more formal bedding. The group needs to send a letter to the District Council requesting any

action we want taking and we would be looking at autumn before anything would be done even if the letter is sent now.

As far as grant funding goes, we need to speak to Tony Locke. The National Forest are only interested in large areas of planting, not individual or small numbers of trees.

It was agreed that it would be a good start if the District Council would do The Green this year and Mr Robinson said that tubs and troughs would look good around this area. It would help to get healthy competition started amongst residents to make the area look nice. This raised the question from a member of the group if there would be any incentives to get this going, such as subsidised plant buying. (There is a subsidised hanging basket scheme in Coalville). Could we buy at cost from the District Council? Mr Robinson suggested that the Garden Club be given trade contacts to buy from if they could order reasonable quantities. He said it was cheaper to rent hanging baskets than buy them, but you would have to order a minimum of around 70.

A member asked about hanging baskets on lamp posts but it was pointed out that these could be dangerous if columns fell, and also it is expensive. Ibstock have them but have to have the columns tested to see if they are thick enough.

Mrs Newton brought up the question of the area near Springfield that is badly overgrown and said she was not sure if they were allowed to maintain this. Mr Robinson said that they should just cut it.

The Sustrans route would be a nice area for planting but it is difficult to find out who actually owns this; there is a permissive right but there is not technically a public right of way. This area is much better now after the recent litter pick. A member asked about the big stuff that was appearing due to fly tipping. It was recommended we get in touch with the District Council rather than move it ourselves; a permit is needed to go to the tip with a commercial vehicle.

Friends of Gracedieu next meeting is on the 26<sup>th</sup> May and they will be charging £5 to anyone who wants to become a member.

It was asked if anyone wanted to suggest speakers for future meetings and Cllr Pam Clayfield suggested John Dickinson to talk about Grace Dieu Priory. A member also suggested that that members take a walk around the village to look at prospective sites for future projects and it was thought that John Dickinson would be a useful person to have along when this was done.

Ms Pearson said that if we get the newsletter produced we can give it out at fetes and other village events and asked that if anyone had any ideas for this to send them to the Community Centre by the end of the month.

A letter has to be sent to Mr Fairbrother re the flowerbeds (copy to Cllrs Woodward and Clayfield)

BTCV will be discussed at the next meeting due to lack of time

The Rangers Club will be changing hands at the middle of next week. Westbury Leisure from the West Midlands will be taking over and Margaret Bell will be going back to run it..

Forest Lodge next to the Bulls Head. Penny Perry is doing a report to committee about the state of the grounds in an attempt to get an enforcement notice for the owners to improve the situation

**Next meeting:**

9<sup>th</sup> June at 6.30 to try to get a constitution \ format for the group. Also if the weather is nice, do an audit on a walk around the village. Meet on the Green and end up at The Rangers Club. If raining meet in the Community Centre.