

FRIENDS OF THRINGSTONE

MINUTES OF MEETING 11 October 2007

In Attendance:

Nita Pearson, Pam Porter, Dave Everitt, Chris Mellors, Bernard Lee, Lorraine Whitehurst, Ray Neal, Jan Cufflin, Margaret Smith, Jo Johnson, Ann Petty, Cllr Pam Clayfield, John & Karen Smith, Sandie and Tony Newton, Rowena Summers, Tracey Foulds, Denis Baker & Geoff Wilson.

Apologies recieved from:

Janet Stevenson, Colin Perritt, Geoff Walker, Alan Burgess, Ray Woodward & Jane Wilson.

Minutes of last meeting:

Accepted as circulated.

Treasurers Report

Balance b/wd	£1,115.69	
Receipts	£250.00	NWLDC plants for Main Street
Expenditure	£60.28	strimmer
	£300.00	calendars
	£100.00	event insurance
Balance c/wd	£905.41	

Secretary's Report

No correspondence received directly.

NP delivered to the secretary:-

Letter from CVS confirming our Associate membership of that organisation. This will enable us to carry out CRO checks when required

Information from NWLDC on Temporary Events Licences.

Website report

John Smith reported that the website is now up to date, and includes within it details of all that is happening at the community centre, and on the home page are details of other activities happening within the village. Nita said that the community centre groups are advertised on the useful numbers page by clicking on the line next to the entry for the centre. She hoped that our web side would become a 'one-stop-shop' for people interested in the village as a whole, and also reported that craft fayre details are now on the projects page.

John informed the meeting that we seemed not to be generating as many 'hits' as we should and that this may in part be due to the fact that we did not own a domain name thus missing out on searches through search engines such as Google (other

search engines are available). Nita had researched this, and found that UK2.net have all the possible friends of Thringstone addresses available for purchase. Friends of Thringstone.com would be £7.49 for a year whilst friends of Thringstone.co.uk would be £3.98 for 2 years. It was agreed that we should purchase the domain such as FriendsOfThringstone.co.uk.

It was further agreed that the website should carry information on local facilities like the Community Centre, useful telephone numbers etc making it a focal point for village information.

History Project

Ann Petty and Ray Neal are field walking The Barney on Talbot Lane, with the agreement of the landowner, and have found some artefacts. Ray is now going to go along with a metal detector to see what comes up. Jan Cufflin has told Rowena of a lady (presently on holiday) who is connected to people who were involved in the Whitwick pit disaster, and Ann has given Rowena other information on which to work. Rowena is also looking to get permissions from people whose properties have blue plaques on them that we can take photos and use them for publicity purposes, and is also liaising with local people over photographs they have of the village, together with Nita..

Councillors' Reports

Cllr Dave Everitt reported that he was pursuing the council officers in order to raise the standard of maintenance on the Melrose estate which seemed to have had scant attention paid to it in the past and would continue in this direction.

Cllr Pam Clayfield announced that she needed our help in that she had received a complaint concerning bushes and hedging adjacent to the village sign on Talbot Street as you leave Whitwick and enter Thringstone, and would be glad to have any comment from members before she took any action.

She further reported that she had attended a meeting at Ibstock Palace to organise a temporary film idea, which would allow films to be shown at the Community Centre. It now seemed clear that funding for a permanent set up was unlikely to materialise.

It has become clear as a result of a campaign to target poverty that there is a serious drug problem in Coalville and a drugs worker has now been appointed to coordinate efforts to contain and deal with the problem. 'Turning Point' in Coalville deals with alcohol related problems but is unable to deal with people who are 'Poly users'

The Jet Station on Talbot Street was granted an Off Sales Licence but not extended trading hours or permission to serve hot food. A meeting has been held to deal with the noise and nuisance problems which this business seems to generate.

It would appear likely that the Miners Welfare Club will succeed in finding the funds to develop their facilities and have an architect ready to start work immediately on confirmation of this funding which is likely to be after a meeting to be held in mid November.

Guest Speaker – Denis Baker – Swannington Heritage Trust

Denis opened by telling us that he had been involved in local history and preservation projects for over 35 years being an active member of the Leicestershire Industrial History Society for the last 30 years . The twin aims of this society are to

promote interest in industrial history and archaeology by the publication of booklets and essays and the organisation of conferences

It began when he was running a course on transport at what was then Coalville Technical College, this being of particular local interest because Coalville and particularly Swannington was a major interchange between the road, canal and rail systems on which the local coalmining was so dependant to move its output and products. It became clear that the people who were running British Coal at the time were about to demolish Moira Furnace as being of no further use or interest.

A local action group was born which insisted that a fresh look should be taken as the furnace was the only virtually complete example of its type in the country and was therefore of very significant historic value.

It was in need of attention if further deterioration of its condition were to be avoided. Denis undertook a photo-survey of the structure and the group was so successful in this argument that the powers that be finally saw the sense of what was being said, agreed to spend the necessary £500,000 on restoration and preservation and the continued existence of the furnace as a public amenity and historic tourist attraction which attracts large numbers each year attests to that success.

When the Swannington Heritage Trust was formed Denis was naturally right there from the off as a founder member. However the Local District council was very involved and tended to over-manage the trust's affairs which eventually led to a decline in volunteer activity and a salutary lesson was learned

In 1982 it was decided locally to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the passing by Parliament of the act which brought into existence the Leicester and Swannington Railway.

A week long festival was arranged with talks, displays, exhibits etc. (for instance the old school house was re-dressed in period decorations), fixtures and fittings, culminating in a costume ball and a family treasure trail all rounded off with a final combined church commemorative service. 9,000 copies of the village trail were sold. The whole event was immensely successful even showing a profit of £1,000. 1983 saw the 150th anniversary of the Whitwick Snibston and Swannington railway which coincided with the purchase by George and Robert Stevenson of the nearby Snibston Estate which became their base.

A week long exhibition of photographs showing early Coalville, which at that time was a totally new development, was arranged and nearly 700 photographs were assembled. This collection has continued to grow and now numbers over 1900 covering Coalville and the surrounding villages including Thringstone. It has over time provided source material for books and leaflets including a Silver Jubilee edition which is now available.

The next few years brought the publication of village trail booklets and leaflets covering walks around Swannington and Coleorton. 9,000 copies were produced in all. There is now a totally new book which covers local history in text, photos and maps which is available in pubs, bookshops and Snibston Discovery Park.

Information is also available in the Tourist Information office in Ashby de la Zouch and is now produced in a tri-fold A4 to make it easy to use and carry on the walk which covers about 4 miles.

The main aims for the future are:

- To preserve the industrial heritage of the area for the local population and visitors.
- To improve the local environment for the benefit of the local population and visitors.

Projects have covered the following:

- The 750 yard Incline
- Rebuilding 3 bridges previously knocked down
- Swannington No 3 Mine
- Tree planting – over 200 trees
- Village amenity area
- Gorse Field at Swannington Common, an 800 year old area which had never been cultivated or developed next to the windmill.
- Removal of hawthorne and bracken to create a wildlife site
- Exploration of local open-cast, bell pit and horse-gin mines.

An example of this work is what is being done at Califat (aka Coleorton No2 Mine) Colliery which eventually closed in 1910 following an earlier disaster. As a memorial to those who lost their lives the area was planted with silver birch trees but these only live for 80 to 90 years and therefore need to be replaced. A ten year programme commenced in 2000 to replant the area in three tranches to produce a traditional hardwood forest with specimen trees.

Another project which has been ongoing for some time arose from the compulsory purchase in 1999, by NWLDC, of Hough Mill, a grade 2 listed building which was being allowed to fall into disrepair by a village family trust. This acquisition was then passed on to the local organisation for the consideration of £1.

The group set about raising the funds necessary to restore the mill initially obtaining grant aid of £72,000 to put on a cap and to put in floors. Further funding is now being sought to restore the mill further so that the fantail will rotate the head as it did when it was a working mill.

The mill is open for visitors, manned by volunteers, on Sundays and Bank Holidays, April to September from 2pm to 5pm or for parties by special arrangement. Entry is free and the mill attracts around 1,600 visitors each year.

Denis told us that the group has no HQ building but a 'friend' has provided finance for the construction of an Education Centre next to the mill at a cost of £39,000.

Current projects include the setting up of web sites, the production of CDs as teaching aids and organising talks on specific subjects for example 'Local Soldiers and the Great War'.

He finished by advising the group that we should be aware of the possible advantages of 'Trust' status and of linking with other local and regional organisations such as the Leicester Museums Forum.

The members showed their appreciation for the information which Denis had shared with us and for the most interesting presentation.

Events meeting

Another event meeting was held on 27th September, and the minutes were available for people who haven't had them, although they were being circulated. The situation regarding stalls for the Christmas Craft and Gift Fayre is now complete, and we have 20 confirmed, including meat sales, wine sales and craft and gifts. The fairground organ will be there for the full event, there will be hot food, it is possible that the scouts will have an open day at the same time to draw in crowds, and we have a good variety of entertainment organised. The chairman of LCC is opening the event, and letters have gone out to all the stall holders confirming the situation. Insurance

has been paid. We are still working on the summer event. Members need to supply Sandie with details of the food they are bringing for the Christmas Party, and we also need people to consider donating raffle prizes and also food for the hamper we have as the main prize, as well as donations of wine for the wine and water stand. So far in the hamper we have meat, pickles, Christmas pudding, marmalade and wine.

Publications update and distribution returns

Tony Newton reported that most of the outlets for our publication had been visited with good results.

Planting at the side of 181 Main Street.

The funding came through for this in the sum of £250 from NWLDC, Bernard and Ray have ordered cherry and hornbeam trees which should be ready later in the month, and we are likely to have money left over which will allow us to plant things in areas previously worked where others have been stolen. Ray Neal agreed to confirm with all the local residents that they are happy with what we are planting.

Strimmer

We have managed to get the strimmer repaired for £60.28 which is less than the original quote. It is now in our possession and being used to good effect.

Calendars

As agreed at the last meeting, we have had 100 calendars printed. We have orders so far for around half of these, and are hopeful that members who have not already ordered will do so. We will be keeping a copy calendar in our own archives, as local people and groups are featured and in the future, it will be nice to look back on who was doing what and where.

Logo

We agreed that our logo should be a globe, very similar to what was originally put to the meeting and which revolves on the website. This is now being used on letterheads and will be used on the first newsletter generated next year.

Funding sources

The WI have voted to fund us in some respect, and are going to get back to us to let us know how much they can let us have. We are likely to use this money to get the transcripts of the tapes put into printed format, and will, of course, put the WI logo on anything printed.

Newsletter

This is being drafted, with advert from Ben Stanley from Blackbrook Longhorns with a discounted rate because of bulk advertising. Hopefully the newsletter will be

available to distribution in November, and needs to be done well before our Craft Fayre as that is featured heavily within it

EMOHA forms

Extensive completion of forms was required by EMOHA before they could register our tapes in their catalogue and put them on their website. This is now all done and was submitted to Colin Hyde thanks to Ann Petty's hard work. Colin is pleased with all the paperwork and will get the tapes onto his site shortly.

AOB

Meeting dates for 2008

These are: January 10th, February 7th, March 6th, April 10th, May 8th, June 5th, July 10th, No meeting in August as usual but we will have events meetings, Sept 11th, Oct 9th, Nov 6th, Dec 11th

Primary School Sponsored Walk

Ella Roberts has told us that there is to be a sponsored walk for the primary school to leave the school at 1.30pm on Thursday 18th October. If anybody would like to go along, they should just turn up for the 1.30pm start. Nita has asked that a notice informing people of this be put on the website. Sandie is doing this walk, and would welcome sponsorship.

Debris in Gracedieu Brook

Rowena Summers now has a contact at the Environment Agency who can and will organise removal of debris.

Public house sales in the village

The landlords of the Queens Head are leaving to go to Shepshed, and new landlords will be sought for this. The Rose and Crown is also looking for new landlords. The position regarding The Fox is not quite certain, as there are now rumours it is to be knocked down. Nita is going to try to get to the pub to take pictures of it as it now is for future archive purposes.

Swannymote Wood

There are plans for improving a wetland habitat area of land to be known as Swannymote Wood which is near Cademan Wood. The National Forest are looking for volunteers to do planting, conservation work, bat and bird box building, put in footpaths, plant trees, fence areas and do dry stone walling in October or November. If anybody is interested, please tell Nita and she will contact the organisation.

Miner's welfare update information

We have been forwarded details of the continuing developments to update and improve the Miners Welfare. These are available for inspection after the meeting for anybody that wants to view them. See also Cllr PC's report above

Promotion

NP has done an editorial for Village Voice magazine which should appear in the next issue, with photographs, and also promote the Christmas Gift and Craft Fayre.

Date of next meeting

15 November at the Community Centre 18.45 hrs