



The Friends of Thringstone

Chairman: Nita Pearson
20 Springfield, Thringstone, Leicestershire, LE67 8LT.
Telephone: 01530 223434
<mailto:nita.pearson@ntlworld.com>

Visit our website at: www.friends-of-thringstone.org.uk

Agenda for meeting to be held at Thringstone Community Centre on Thursday 26 Feb 2009 at 6.45pm

Present Nita Pearson, Jan Cufflin, Tracy Foulds, Pam Clayfield, Rowena Summers, Brenda Simpson, Ron Hill, Sandie Newton, Janet Stevenson, Maggie Smith, Bernard Lee, Colin Perritt, John and Karon Smith, Ann Petty, Pam Porter, Geoff Walker, Geoff Wilson, Ray Neal, Tam Bream, CSO Jim Sorrel, Lorraine Whitehurst, Gillian Squires (speaker)

Apologies Roy Hill, Ian and Diane Bull, Ray Woodward, David and Julie Everitt, Chris Mellor, Jane Wilson, Pauline Bolstridge, Ann Baxter, John and Helen Dickinson

Nita's Correspondence and publicity report – Letters, emails etc:

- Submission to **Footprints Challenge** of 32 page portfolio detailing the planting and rubbish clearance work of FoT from Feb 06-Jan 09 (copy of first two pages available)
- Letter to NWLDC regarding concerns over **Local Development Framework** and several subsequent emails to membership with updates on this issue
- Email to NWLDC Streetscene manager about **dog fouling** on Woodside Estate and around Grace Dieu Road (reply is that they will put up more signage)
- Approach from **Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society** to have stall at their event in Oadby (declined)
- Received **Breathing Places newsletter** (forwarded to committee). Paper copy available
- Joined the **Low Carbon Innovation Group** so we receive details on lowering carbon emissions etc.
- Information put on website and sent round by email on **Coalville Adult School Drama Group** production in March (poster available)
- Subscribed to the **Environment Agency's quarterly environment newsletter** in paper format for members without email (copy now available)
- Received detailed information from **Enable**
- 2 emails sent to **LCC regarding funding and voluntary groups**
- Contact with several local residents via letters and email re **Local Development Framework**. Phone and several email contacts with another resident about **police issues**. Phone contacts with a 3rd resident regarding problems with vandalism and theft
- Email to members telling them that you can now book to see your **local police beat office** or CSO at the police station to discuss crimes etc
- Emails and information from **OPEN Forum** network to discuss under AOB
- Email contacts from lady wanting copies of **old photos of the village** which was passed to John Dickinson
- Contact from a non-political group wishing us to join their campaign (answered no as campaigning against being political becomes political in itself)

- Info sent to all on email about the **closure of the welfare advice line** (copy available to other members)
- Email received via NWLDC about **Green Driver Training**, passed to committee and also to webmaster. Copy available to other members. Andrew Barnes from Energy Saving Trust is our April speaker.
- Emails with **Citrus Group about Fox site** to facilitation of meeting with residents affected by proposals and Citrus. This may not now happen.
- Email contact with **Groundworks Leicester and Leicestershire (formerly Environ)** to see if we can link together or they can come to talk to us at a future meeting
- Letter from **Leics. Volunteer Centre Network** inviting us to event on 12th March (declined). Event subsequently cancelled anyway.
- Letter of support to **St Andrew's** for them to use in their funding bids to get a toilet and kitchenette at the church
- Contact with NWLDC over **funding for smart meters** for the group to loan out.

Promotion:

- All **FoT walks** for the year are promoted in NWLDC's Active Together brochure
- Completed form for RCC with details of our walks, to go in their newsletter, on their website and in publications
- Checked and made slight spelling changes to the walks to be listed in the **National Forest Walks Festival brochure** prior to it going to print
- Article provided for **Enable** (Care for your Environment) newsletter produced by Leicestershire County Council
- Promotion for the group in the **Community Centre's latest newsletter** for which we thank Lorraine

Other:

- Meeting at NWLDC to discuss possible **Thringstone Forum**. This forum, proposed for 17th Feb., is now on hold because of the by-election and other issues. Email received from NWLDC thanking us for all our help in this anyway. It will now happen later in the year.
- Investigate the possibility of funding through the **Biffa Awards**, but to be eligible, we needed to be within 10 miles of a Biffa site, and we are 15.4, so can't apply.
- Petition generated to remove the build out (as part of the traffic calming in the village) by The Bull's Head sent to **Highways Forum** meeting 12th Feb with substantial amount of signatures.
- Filmed with **BBC East Midlands Today** going round pubs in Whitwick and Thringstone talking about pub closures, and how to keep pubs open. Ended at George and Dragon to talk about their hopes and plans for their facility during this period of recession

Treasurer's Report – Tony Newton's computer is down, so Sandie distributed a summary of the bank statement for the period 31 December 08 to 30th January 09, which showed a balance of £1712.38.

Miscellaneous payments in of £185 were shown and one payment out of £20. Full details will be available when the computer is repaired.

From now on the Treasurer's Report will always be a month behind. Tony has agreed with Nita to present only the full month's report.

Due to the fact that we receive the bank statement at least a week into the following month, it is impossible to give a 100% accurate statement for the actual month that the meeting is held so the March meeting will be presented with the full report from February, and what is presented at the meeting will always tally with the bank statement.

Nita is endeavouring to find an auditor for the accounts before the year end.

Publications and calendar report – Sandie said that after much hard work by the committee, all calendars had been sold with the exception of one faulty one, and two given away (to the school and to The George and Dragon). It was decided to do Christmas cards

next year and Karon Smith offered a photo of a snowman. Publications are selling well. The lady mentioned above who wanted old photographs of the village had bought one publication to say thank you and given a donation.

We are still considering a booklet of photos of the village in the past with photos of the village now. John Dickinson is dealing.

Web report – John Smith. The website is up to date and has information about the local development framework on it, plus other details of events coming up.

History – Ann Petty apologised for having been out of touch for a while but was congratulated on now being a grandmother. She and William Newton have put up an excellent display about Charles Booth in the community Centre. She has given some press cuttings from the Coalville Times and the parish Magazine to Jan Cufflin about the marriage of Imogen Booth to Eric Gore Brown on August 8th 1912. She hoped that if they were sent to the Gore Brown family it may encourage them to help with the restoration of Charles Booth's grave. Jan had given them to the church.

A heritage centre in Diseworth is opening shortly. This has come about as a result of national funding, and will contain information on life in that village, including photographs from years gone by. A link to the site will be placed on our website for those interested in the history of local villages.

Discussion took place on whether we should have a road show/drop in Heritage event this year, as there is unlikely to be an event at the Community Centre as there has been in the past. Various venues have expressed an interest in hosting this. Ann and Nita will discuss dates etc. out of meeting and put together a programme for these drop-ins for the next meeting. These will then be advertised in our newsletter and in the press.

Councillors' 5 minutes

In the absence of both councillors, due to a council meeting, Nita read from a prepared report.

Ray Woodward was elected the new Thringstone councillor last week.

Both Ray and Dave Everitt wish to say that they will be working together as a team to improve the lot of the people in the village.

Several major issues were raised by people during the run up to the election, and these are now being prioritised and will be dealt with.

A petition of 150 signatures, collected by Nita, Ray Neal, Tam Bream and Ray Woodward, regarding the traffic calming by The Bull's Head (which is considered dangerous in its present form) was presented by Ray Woodward and Cllr. John LeGrys to the Highways Forum meeting of the County Council on 12th February, and they are now looking at this issue further. (See below for other information on this)

The council has various challenges in the coming year, due to the economic recession, less funding from central government, less income (for example reduced attendances at Leisure Centres), increasing energy costs and increasing costs of services. In order to find a solution to these difficulties, the council will be looking at vacancy management, savings from procurement (suppliers etc), maximising income opportunities, and looking at service providers who can offer to deliver a quality service at a lesser price.

A recent independent review by the Improvement and Development Agency has concluded that the council has the potential to be one of the best in the country, and it is pleasing to know that residents of the district have saved 4.5 million kgs of CO2 through recycling. This is equivalent to 1.4 million party balloons worth of CO2 per day.

From 1st April, people paying rent or council tax by means other than direct debit will be able to pay at post offices and shops displaying the PayPoint sign and the cash office at NWLDC is to close. This will be a free service and with 59 locations across the district lead to a more convenient method of payment, with longer opening hours.

From 1st April, Hermitage and Hood Park Leisure Centres have signed up to the government's initiative of free swimming for under 16s and over 60s during public swimming sessions. Pool users must have an Activ8 card and may be asked to have their photo taken and confirm their date of birth. The photo will be stored on the computer system against their name. No-one will be able to access free swimming without production of their Activ8 card.

Guest Speaker - Gillian Squires from NWLDC's sustainability unit

Gillian explained the District Council's Footprints challenge is an initiative based on five areas:

1. Reduction of carbon footprint
2. Waste/recycling
3. Transport
4. bio-diversity/wildlife
5. CO2 production

It had been launched in April 08 and is now gathering momentum through networking with families, schools/colleges, businesses and individuals. 2009 plans included emphasis on composting in May-June, water saving in July and the Big Switch Off in the week commencing 12th October. This would be better advertised than last year. The Footprints awards for which FoT had applied would be presented in May at the Civic Ball.

She explained about reduction of CO2 by car sharing, and other transport issues, answered queries on other energy issues, and her talk provoked much discussion which showed the concern members had about these issues, and raised such issues as green driving training, incentives rather than sanctions and the wastefulness of haulage businesses running empty return journeys and the issue of surplus packaging.

She is keen to recruit other businesses in the area to take part in the footprints challenge.

She mentioned that the Council is hoping to encourage local residents to work out their carbon footprint and then lifestyle changes to reduce it where possible. One family in Coalville is already subject to a test of this principle, and it is working well.

From other projects run, Gillian has found that personal contact is the best way to encourage people to participate in schemes like this.

Gillian wondered whether the group might be interested in this sort of project. Would it work for the local community? Would the group's input lead to it being amended/improved.

The aim is that people will use the carbon calculator on the Footprints website to work out their footprint.

<http://footprints.nwleics.gov.uk>

This figure will then be in-put onto the Footprints website, say for example 9.7 tonnes of CO2 per year. The Council will then provide people with a list of ways they could help reduce this footprint and they would pick a number of simple challenges to help them achieve this.

Later, perhaps six months on, they would calculate their footprint again based on the changes they have made and hopefully it will have reduced. They would then send this figure through to NWLDC, and hopefully again after 12 months. This would allow them to actually calculate the combined CO2 savings for (hopefully) a large number of local residents across the District.

The important thing though is to encourage as many people as possible to take part.

One idea (very much just an idea at this stage) is training a number of people in a local community group such as FOT to work out their carbon footprint, then encouraging them to do the same with 3 friends, colleagues or family. In this way NWLDC would hope to 'spread' the footprinting idea to as many people as possible across a number of communities.

Friends of Thringstone automatically sprang to mind as a good pilot group for this as we are a very well established and organised group and clearly have a lot of respect and trust from the local community.

Gillian mentioned urged everyone to get involved and to pass the message on, and asked interested parties to talk to Nita, who is already interested, about this, who would then pass the information on to NWLDC.

From Previous Minutes

- **The Fox site** – The group does not think there is anything more that FoT can contribute to this discussion. Members expressed concern about arson, litter and rats on the site. These have been reported to the company owning the site.

- **School Litter Pick** (22 Jan). Pam Porter said that the very cold weather had adversely affected the turnout, but 12 bags of rubbish had been collected. It had also affected the **bulb planting** in the churchyard. The next FoT litter pick would be on March 15th. Meet 10.00am on The Green. Nita will tell the school of our date. Sandie agreed to find information on the dates of the next litter picks the school are intending to run.
- **Police report** and anti-social behaviour update. Jim Sorrel attended the meeting and gave the crime statistics for the last month. Over the Whitwick and Thringstone beat, there had been 43 crimes in the 30 day period, of which 33 were in Whitwick, leaving Thringstone with the low number of 10. These were 2 sudden deaths (non-reportable), 1 damage, 2 assault/ harassment both with suspects, 1 male arrested, 2 burglaries (one home, one shed), both with suspects both of whom had alibis, 3 damage to a motor vehicles with 2 suspects, 1 arrested and charged and in addition there had been 2 speeding incidents. People were requested to report all incidents to the police or crimestoppers and if they involved anti-social behaviour, also to the community safety team at NWLDC headed by Anne Marie Brannighan on 454545.

Police reports were especially needed concerning the traffic calming gateway into the village near the Bull's Head. This was thought to be very dangerous and the petition sent into the Highways Department was now being investigated by County, but they will check against any accidents or near misses reported to the police, and this could determine the outcome.

Concerns about the fires in the woods were also raised and again people were asked to inform both the Fire Service and the police for each incident so that a pattern could be discerned.

The police have been presented with a problem when some young people were caught in connection with theft from a garage in the village, and the restorative justice procedure had been considered. With this scheme there are three possible ways forward. The perpetrators can write a letter saying sorry, can be asked to pay money to offset the cost of the theft (often paid by the parents, not the person who has done the theft), and/or do voluntary work in the community. This issue provoked serious debate. The victims had asked that these youngsters put something back into the village. The victim had suggested that they be allowed to join a FoT litter pick but there were concerns about supervision, as the police did not have the resources to do this, and Nita had expressed concern on behalf of the group. As it happened, in this case, the restorative justice process had been left behind as a result of further crimes being committed.

Pam Clayfield felt strongly that voluntary work for the community should not be equated with punishment, but should be seen as an example of community pride.

- **Litter** - Discussion took place on the amount of litter in the village, about litter near the shop at the corner of John Street, and about litter from local fast food franchises on the A512 (and around the area as a whole), and about the lack of litter being collected by the council from grass verges, pavement areas etc.. Nita has already reported to the council her concerns about litter on the A512, but agreed to talk to the council again about this issue as a whole, as it obviously impacts on any litter picks the group carry out, and the success of these.
- **Sponsorship** – We are waiting to see if we have been successful in our funding bid to NWLDC for Smart Meters. Flowerbed signage is an ongoing issue with which Nita is dealing. This signage needs to be in place before the East Midlands in Bloom judging which takes place between 6th and 17th July.
- **Renovations to Charles Booth's grave** – Jan Cufflin said a faculty had been applied for by the church to allow permission for work to be done.
- **AGM plans** – There was no interest in a trip out, but Nita will explore venues for a social gathering and meeting and report back to the next meeting.
- **FoT Events in 09-** Nita is unwilling to organise this by herself, but as reported earlier, is working with Ann to present a Heritage Road Show which could start at the George and Dragon and be taken round the village. General discussion took place on what organising

an event involved, and despite some queries, it was agreed that there are not sufficient volunteers to do the work this year to put on a big event at the Community Centre. Jan Cufflin suggested an **Open Gardens day** with plant sales, but hoped others would come back to her on this. Plants could be sold at this type of event. The Community Centre is keen to be involved, and it may be that this forms the basis of any events for FoT in 2009. Lorraine will liaise with Jan directly on this, as Jan will possibly open her garden anyway. Nita will update the group on this at the next meeting.

It was noted that the gardening team will be busy getting things ready for the **East Midlands In Bloom** judging and will be doing more planting during the run up to this. Sandie has agreed to do a plant and bric a brac stall at the **Grace Dieu Event** on 5th July. Other volunteers will be needed to help man this. Roy Hill has already started collecting bric a brac. The gardening/environment team were asked to help source plants to sell.

- **Picnic in the Park** This is now a bi-annual event and will not happen this year.

AOB

- **OPEN Forum** information was available to read. This initiative stands for Older Person's Engagement Network, and encourages the participation of older people in a wide variety of decision making processes and meetings. If people are interested in this, they are asked to contact Nita who will put them in touch with the Older Person's Forum.
- If anyone has any information about the re-development of the **Queens Head** or the possible closure of the Rose & Crown, please tell Nita
- **Hail and Ride minibus service** Nita is exploring what this is with the County Council as no one seemed to know what it was but it was known to be operating in the village.
- Pam Clayfield is working hard as the **Arts and Community** representative for the group. She has started a women's group called Loose Women 2. A first meeting has been held at the Community centre and 12 people had come. It is a forum for any ideas or activities which women want to undertake. The next meeting is on 10th March with shared food. She also advertised lectures on Art and Literature which will be given by Ray Sutton at the Community Centre on Wednesday afternoons starting on April 15th. These will cost £2.50 and include a cup of tea. The Centre Stage initiative encourages live performances and the cinema club on Mondays is also still running, but were both in need of support. It is a case of 'use it or lose it' and Pam urged people to come to events at the Centre. She was exploring the idea of a happy drinkers club with outings by minibus to find real ale and pleasant watering holes!
- Some funding has been discovered which could help with the provision of the **patio on Bob's Closs** and volunteers were asked to liaise with Lorraine if they could help. Ray Woodward, Bernard, Colin and Ray Neal will help, and possibly Russell Love, who had mentioned this at a previous meeting. Lorraine will consult with these and sort prior to submitting the funding application.
- The postponed **consultation meeting for the Local Development Framework** will now be held on 4th March at King Edward VII School from 6.30-9pm and there is also a drop in opportunity at the Hermitage Leisure Centre on 5th March from 2pm -7pm.
- John and Karon Smith said that Bob's Closs and Grace Dieu Woods were now sites for **Geocaching**. This is a game for adventure seekers of all ages played with GPS devices. Sat Navs and some mobile phones could be used if the correct devices were not available. More information was on www.geocaching.com. It is hoped that this will bring more visitors to the village, who might then also visit local hostelrys/businesses.
- Jan Cufflin advertised an **organ recital at St Andrews** to showcase the newly refurbished organ. Tickets are free but needed to be booked in advance.

Next meeting: 12th March 2009 at 6.45pm at Thringstone Community Centre. No speaker. The discussion for the next meeting will centre round what our action plan is in 2009.