

## **Update from the Weir Meadow Working Group (WMWG) and Joint Projects Fund Raising Group (JPFRG)**

Since the last update (12<sup>th</sup> July 2023) one additional meeting of the WMWG and JPFRG has taken place (4<sup>th</sup> September). This update covers the period from mid-July to the beginning of September (2023).

### **Sports Pitches**

Weir Meadow has been transformed! Ed Mortimer undertook the initial phase of ground preparation and the phase 2 works (spring tining, power harrowing and drilling, rolling, liming and fertilizing) to prepare and sow the seed bed were undertaken by Sam Burdick of County Grounds Maintenance (CGM). A second spray of glyphosate to take out the weeds was not required as the false seed bed had not been down long enough (prior to final tilling). The prepared surface was sown with a sports pitch grade seed mix on the 6<sup>th</sup> September. New grass growth is already showing. Both contractors have done a great job with many thanks owed to Peter Skinner for sorting out the arrangements and communications with them.

Notices have been put in place to ask people to keep dogs on lead, not to walk across the meadow and stick to the perimeter path. It may, however, be necessary to provide further protection, as the playing surfaces become established, with some form of temporary boundary fencing.

### **Meadow Entrance and Car Parking**

Subsequent to the last meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> July it was decided that it would actually be a good idea to make repairs to the entrance area sooner rather than later so that machinery to create the playing surfaces could gain easier access. The works were undertaken at the end of August and involved the removal of soil from the entrance and infill with rubble/hardcore. The materials were supplied free of charge via Russell Lowton of BT Jenkins and the groundwork undertaken by Bob Lowton. The pile of soil left over from the works was in the way of the final tining/ sowing works and following some back breaking digging and spreading by hand, James Romain kindly arrived with a tractor to spread the rest of the material out. The area to the east of the entrance where this soil has been spread out will now need to be seeded by CGM.

### **Northern Fields**

The IPC, at its last meeting, agreed to accept early release of the tenancy for Northern Fields provided that the full rent due for years one and two were paid by the tenant. Rent in arrears had not been paid (at the time of the WMWG meeting). A subsequent call with Richard Parr's PA established that there had been changes to their financial system and the outstanding rent would be paid ASAP. Terms for release from the tenancy have yet to be agreed.

Initial contact with the administration unit for the England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) has been made (via the EWCO website). Stuart Brooking has also spoken with one of the Woodland Officers (Forestry Commission) who says that they are very busy at the moment dealing with applications and would be unlikely at this time to undertake a site visit. The consensus at the WMWG meeting was that we should make an application in the first instance and this would then, at least, trigger a response from the FC to engage with us further to explore options.

David Howe reported that he has investigated some of the requirements that companies managing the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain Units have in place. Northern Fields may be too small to be of interest to some of these companies, but David will undertake further discussions to determine if this is actually the case and whether there are options for sales directly from the landowner.

### **Pedestrian Bridge**

Works to provide greater structural resilience to the old brick bridge over Fordland Brook have been completed by Bob Lowton. The revamped bridge looks great, especially with its new wooden handrails.

### **Japanese Knotweed**

The patch of Japanese Knotweed has been sprayed (thanks to Peter Skinner) with glyphosate. Subsequent applications will be needed to knock it back further.

### **Next Meeting**

The next combined meeting of WMWG and JPFRG is scheduled for the 6<sup>th</sup> November. A separate subgroup meeting to discuss lease arrangements between the PC and the sports clubs is scheduled for the 23<sup>rd</sup> October.

From Richard Cottle, Chair WMWG – 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2023.