Members' Activity Group Meeting

Venue: Clubhouse

Date: 16th November 2026

Time: 7 pm

Attendees:

Dawn, Kate, Matthew, Michael, Sylvia

Apologies:

Carl, Carol, Clare, Hilary, Jane, Karyn, Susan

1.

Tree Guardian Reports

Anne, Carl, Carol, Jane and Kate have submitted their updated reports on the planting in their squares. After receiving the reports from the remaining Tree Guardians, Matthew will circulate a summary stating for each species, how many were planted (Dec 2024 - Mar 2025) and how many have survived until now (Nov 2026). Preliminary finding are quite encouraging.

2.

Grassland Planting

Ten plug plants of each of twelve different grassland species were introduced into the two enclosures at the last work session thanks to the efforts of Hilary and the NT Volunteers. All plants have been labelled *in situ* in order to be able to track survival rate.

The twelve species were: betony, bladder campion, bloody cranesbill, clustered bellflower, field cranesbill, field scabious, greater knapweed, kidney vetch, lesser burnet saxifrage, meadow saxifrage, small scabious and wild basil.

3.

Trees

The NT Volunteers also cleared away several trees fallen over the paths and removed two sycamores shading the quarry floor. The sycamore seedlings from the mass germination event two years ago are now showing themselves prominently and it was decided that

they would be removed if they started smothering or interfering with the growth of other species.

Matthew will order 25-50 wild privet, field rose and guilder rose to plant along the line of the dead hedge around the quarry where it is hoped they will grow through the dead hedge and form habitat as the dead hedge itself disintegrates over the years to come.

Matthew will also order more wayfaring trees. The ones we planted originally were smaller replacements by the supplier for bigger plants that were not available. Although still alive, they are struggling and it is hoped that bigger plants will compete better.

4

Work Days

Dates for planting will be announced when stock is available. Meanwhile a work session is planned for Sunday, November 29th at 10 am when several plants that have seeded into the quarry floor will be transplanted to the sides to prevent them being killed when the water submerges the quarry later in the winter. Dog rose, hazel, dogwood, cotoneaster and white bryony are among the species marked up for transplanting.

5.

Forest School

Unfortunately this event had to be cancelled because of the severe weather on the scheduled day. It was suggested that the event be held earlier in the year if FoHW were going to continue sponsoring it.

6.

Water Safety

An enquiry to NYC about the provision of warning notices and safety equipment in the areas of winter standing water (quarry, pond) received no response and the general view was what water depths were not sufficient for life belts to be necessary or effective.

7.

Shed

At the request of the secretary of the Panthers Football Club the shed erected in the compound has been moved away from the back wall of the clubhouse.

8.

Rabbit Survey

No firm commitment has been made by volunteers to take part in a rabbit survey. This would involve monitoring a certain delimited area of the site for a fixed time at dawn and dusk at regular intervals throughout the year.

It was agreed that although it any results would be interesting, such a survey is not actually necessary to inform further planning as the need to address the issue in some way has already been established!

. . and Foxes

It was noted in passing that as no sightings of any fox activity had been noted on Hell Wath for many years, it seems unlikely that this could ever be an effective means of rabbit control.

9.

Work Placement

John's son, Ollie, is to do work experience on site, mainly centred around organising the hedgehog survey. Sylvia is to meet with Ollie's tutor to formalise the documentation.

10.

Commuted Sums

A meeting has been arranged with Fran Adamson, the NYC Communities Ranger. There are two sources of possible funds for major projects, both related to the new housing development adjacent to the site on West Lane.

Firstly, Section 106 funds are available. The discussion will focus on to what extent protective fencing can be installed at various places to attempt to give viability to the Local Nature Reserve which at present is not demarcated separately from the amenity areas on Hell Wath. The chairman of the Panthers Football club has expressed an interest in looking into fencing to protect the football pitches from rabbits and dogs and as one pitch is adjacent to Field Four, noted as being a conservation priority, there is a possibility of a joint approach of some kind.

Secondly, there is also the possibility of bidding for funds from the Community Investment Levy (CIL) in which a considerable amount of money (c.£750,000) is available for communities throughout Yorkshire to bid into.

There is a slight irony in that 15% of this fund is reserved for the parish in which the Housing Development is being built, viz. Littlethorpe, although the impact of the site will overwhelmingly be felt in Ripon parishes.

Any bid for this funding will most probably involve work on the two designated public footpaths through Hell Wath.

11.

Leaflet

Sylvia has designed and produced a draft copy of a leaflet introducing Hell Wath to prospective visitors as well as residents and possible new members. It was noted that many actual residents of Ripon were unaware of where Hell Wath is. Kate mentioned that the library was interested in having a stock of leaflets to give out in response to the many enquiries they get from people about places to visit in Ripon.

12.

Ripon Disability Forum

Jem has made a request that FoHW organise a Walk and Talk with the Ripon Disability Forum. This would help to publicise the work done on improving accessibility on the site.

13.

Christmas Social

John is looking into the arrangements for a get-together at South Lodge on 14th December.

14.

AGM

This is scheduled for Thursday 14th January at 7.30pm at the Methodist Hall on Allhallowgate.

Meeting closed at 8.17 pm