



NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 32 April 2014

We have suffered less from winter deluges than other parts of the country and Hob Moor has not been as affected by water-logging this year as badly as it was last. Although the Moor has been very muddy with some large puddles, there have not been any large enough for ducks to swim on this year and the banks of the beck have held up.

The three areas where the banks of the beck collapsed last winter along the north side of the Moor remain unrepaired and in the current economic climate that looks likely to remain the case unless there is any further damage. The areas seem stable and are gradually becoming grassed over which helps to prevent any more slippage. The banks and bushes alongside the beck were not trimmed in the autumn as they have usually been; again we can only assume that it is economic cutbacks which are to blame. This has meant that the spring show of snowdrops and daffodils on some areas of the banks has been partially hidden by last year's dead foliage.

The cows will not go onto the Moor until April or until the ground is dry enough. They went on early in March last year when the ground was still very soft and muddy and consequently their hooves caused a fair amount of damage and this is to be avoided this year.

Our Lady's School Site

This has been the dominant issue for the Friends. The Committee has been very active through the autumn and winter over the future of this area. The proposals are for intense housing development on the site. There is more information on the Council's website.

One of our members, Tania Durkin, sent us this 18th century verse, maybe with this issue in mind:

The law locks up the man or woman
Who steals the goose from off the common
But lets the greater villain loose
Who steals the common off the goose.

Our chairman, Peter Green, spoke about our concerns at the first planning meeting on November 21st when the issue was deferred on the grounds of sustainability. None of the issues which had been raised about the location of the site being within a Nature Reserve had been taken on board. At the next planning meeting on 19th December, the plans were amended by the reduction of just one dwelling to provide space for a playground, with no change to the sustainability issues or recognition of the wider environmental issues, and they were passed unanimously.

Natural England (the overseers of the Stewardship Scheme) has been contacted. They have confirmed that they are aware of the proposals but seem reluctant to play any part in preventing any development of the site.

One of the committee members, Sue Wherett, has been very active on behalf of the Friends, researching into the legal history of the site and trying to clarify the confusion and obfuscation about

a Restrictive Deed of Covenant imposed by the Land Registry in 1958 which restricts the use of the land to educational purposes only. In June 2009 the property was registered with no mention of this.

Sue has written to the Land Registry requesting that a Restriction which would limit the use of the land to educational purposes only be placed on the title deeds to the land. At this time of writing she is currently awaiting a response from the Land Registry.

Sue has also been in contact with the department of the Secretary of State and the Environment Agency as there are issues regarding historic land contamination. There are also land drainage issues as current plans show the proposed buildings to be too close to surface water drains.

The City of York gave the go-ahead for the development on 19th March. However, the City Planners have imposed conditions to be met before any work begins with regard to land contamination and drainage. This may be as a result of input from the Environment Agency.

We will keep you informed.

In Brief

- ❖ Electricity cables were successfully laid across the Moor early in the year with the trenches dug not as wide as we had been led to expect. The bare earth that has been left will be reseeded in April by the Council.
- ❖ We have agreed that permanent markers for Orienteering could be put up on the Moor, paid for by the Friends. These would be used by primary schools in particular, but of course would be available for anyone to use. We are still waiting to hear back about this.
- ❖ We have expressed an interest in supporting the development of the new Visitor Centre in West Bank Park. It might offer cross-promotional opportunities and our recently purchased (and now largely redundant) display boards might be useful.
- ❖ It is with regret that the Committee continues to feel unable to organise a summer fair on the Moor. Although we recognise that the fair served a valuable community function and will be a disappointing loss, the Committee has neither the staffing resources, expertise nor finances to take over its running. However, it is still open to discussions if other, more feasible possibilities are put forward about the future of the community fairs and we shall be attending West Bank Park and Foxwood Fairs (see below).
- ❖ The only aspects of the Stewardship Scheme still outstanding are the erection of the new Interpretation Panel near Lidl and the seeding of wild flowers on Little Hob Moor, both of which should be achieved this year.
- ❖ We are delighted that after the shake-up of Council personnel, Jenny Cairns remains as our Ranger, though now with the title of 'Smarter York Officer' (who thinks these things up?) and of course a bigger work load. Bob Missin has retired from the Council and the Stewardship Scheme is now being headed by Dave Meigh. As almost all of the changes funded by the scheme have been implemented, the grazier is now responsible for most of the Stewardship maintenance.
- ❖ Two of the committee members had noticed that hay put down last year by the gate of the new bridge to The Triangle had been left with the baling netting still attached. This caused problems to some cows last summer which was photographed by one member. The netting is still there, embedded in the hay, so impossible to pull out. The council has now been informed and is removing it, hopefully before the cows return.
- ❖ New hedging planted along the centre of North Lane Field has been pulled up but why and by whom is a mystery as there is no sign of the uprooted shrubs on the Moor.

Report on The Winter Solstice

The 20th & 21st December were glorious during the day so we were very optimistic for a clear dry evening for the solstice. The forecast wasn't very good so we had our fingers crossed. Around tea-time a breeze got up but we thought we'd be alright. 6.30pm, our starting time, was also the time the rain started and the wind increased, but we managed to light the candle and the lanterns, the table was filled with food & drink and there were 3 lots of mulled wine. 15 people eventually arrived out of the darkness and we all stood around the table to shelter it from the elements. We all had a good chat and put the world to rights. New people came and said they will come back for the summer solstice. When people got cold and decided to leave, gaps were left around the table and the lanterns blew out. At about 7.30 we decided to pack up, feeling that we had achieved what we had intended. We had a good time despite the elements and we will celebrate the Winter Solstice again next year.

Litter

Hob Moor has benefited from a Community Payback Spring Clean this March with litter being removed from fences around the edges of the Moor. Committee members still regularly litter-pick and there are a few members of the public who also remove rubbish.

Please inform the council about broken bottles on the Moor (phone 551551 or log it on the website and use the street cleaning link). This enables the council to build up a picture of areas that might be a problem and these will get more attention.

Virtual Friends

We now have a Facebook page, not surprisingly called 'Friends of Hob Moor'. It has 83 'likes' to date (75% female apparently) and we would like more people to 'like' it so we reach the 100 milestone. The website continues to be well visited although there is still a problem with its maintenance. There is a desperate need for someone to update the website and keep it routinely maintained. Can YOU help?

The Friends Committee

The Committee will be down to 6 members next autumn and there is a desperate need for new blood. The Committee fulfils an important role in helping to look after Hob Moor especially in this time of council cut backs. This can't be done without committee members – the more there are the less there is for each person to do, so please come along and sample a meeting with a view to joining. Please also encourage other people to join the Friends as members. It only costs £2 a year (or less) and the greater our membership, the louder our voice when we have to speak out about anything.

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Chris the Stockman 07979 613613

For removal of fly-tipped debris, litter, graffiti etc. York Pride 01904 551551

Contact us with comments and suggestions about Hob Moor and the Friends:

phone: Elizabeth or Ian on 10904 634512

email: friendsofhobmoor@yahoo.com

website: www.friendsofhobmoor.org.uk or www.fohm.org.uk

Walks & Talks on Hob Moor Spring & Summer 2014

Monday 28th April

7.00pm – 8.30pm

Meet at the Hob Moor Drive entrance to Hob Moor

Evening Birds with Bob Missin

Enjoy the evening birdsong on and around the Moor.

Saturday 21st June

4.00pm – 6.00pm

Meet at the North Lane entrance to Hob Moor

Bugs & Blossoms with Mark Tyszka

Join this always fascinating walk with Mark. Find the familiar; discover the new. Ask questions and be surprised. Meet the creatures and flowers of hedges and pastures. Count butterflies and admire the trees. Bring a camera and a notebook.

Followed by:

Summer Solstice Celebration from 6pm

Celebrate the Solstice with music, story telling and shared food and drink. Gather at the bench by the railway tunnel on the south side of the Moor.

Saturday 2nd August

1.30pm-3.30pm

Meet at the Hob Moor Drive entrance to Hob Moor

Butterfly Walk with Tony Fairburn

Hope for a still, dry and sunny day to see all the butterflies which live on the Moor.

Saturday 30th August

8.30-9.30pm

Meet at the Hob Stone, Little Hob Moor, Tadcaster Rd entrance

Bat Night with Clair Merrifield

Discover the secrets of the Moor at dusk! Come and spot the bats that come out just when you thought there was nothing to see on the Moor. You'll need a torch, suitable footwear and warm clothes. Booking essential.

Email: clair.suddaby@gmail.com

Phone: 07873 524239

Children are welcome at all these events.

Please note that they will not take place if it is raining heavily

Summer Fairs

Although there is no fair on Hob Moor this year, the Friends and gazebo will be at:

Foxwood Country Fair on Saturday 7th June 1-3pm in Foxwood Park on Bellhouse Way

West Bank Park Fair on Sunday 29th June 1pm-4pm

Do come and say hello to us there.