

**Manor Woods Valley Group
Committee Meeting Number 2
Wednesday 11th September 2019, 7 pm
Zion Community Arts Space, Bristol**

Present : Seventeen members including Chair, Martin Grant, Vice-chair and Ecology Adviser, Peter Loy-Hancocks, Secretary, Cheryl Loy-Hancocks, Planning Adviser, André Coutanche

Apologies : Treasurer, Davina Blake and Website Manager, Bethan Grant

1. Welcome and Introductions

Martin opened the second meeting of the Manor Woods Valley Group (MWVG), welcomed everyone and introduced the committee members:

2. Brief Report on Activities Since the Last Meeting

Martin gave an overview of the group's activities since the last meeting including work party volunteering, guided walks, training in health and safety and the use of power tools, meetings, nest box building, apple juicing and planning winter work. A selection of the nest boxes for birds, bats and solitary bees were on display.

3. Manor Woods Valley Orchard Presentation

Peter delivered an illustrated presentation on the history and habitats of Manor Woods Orchard. We learned that the area occupied by the orchard at the northern end of Manor Woods Valley, was farmland until the end of the nineteenth century. At that time a brick and tile works was established on the site. The associated clay pits grew ever bigger and deeper, until the works closed in the early 1960's. The pits were then filled with domestic waste and the building replaced with the current light industrial and warehouse units along Vale Lane.

The 32 apple trees and 6 pear trees in the orchard have been 'tagged', plotted and measured. They mostly date from just after the brickworks closed. None are true varieties, but rather have grown from seedlings, possibly grown from apple cores discarded by the last generation of workers on the site. All the trees are productive and recently some apples have been collected to turn into juice and cider. The first of a new generation of mixed fruit trees were planted in the spring of 2019.

Manor Woods Orchard has a rather mixed management history. It was regularly mown by Bristol City Council until the mid 2000's, at which time mowing ceased and Brambles rapidly took over. There were occasional efforts made to clear the Brambles, but they soon grew back without follow-up work. The Brambles were re-cleared three years ago, and volunteer efforts to maintain public access and a rough grassland habitat are now on-going.

Future plans for the orchard include planting more assorted fruit trees, getting involved in community and nature conservation projects.

The orchard area has a chequered planning history. Following its designation as a landfill site in the 1960's, in the 1990's it was earmarked for industrial development; as a result part of the orchard was lost to the extension of the Wring's yard in 2009. The industrial use designation on the rest of the orchard has now been removed, to be replaced by designation as Local Green Space in the local plan that is being prepared at finalised at the moment.

Peter ended his presentation with a description of the rich and diverse range of wildlife that is now thriving in the Orchard and surrounding area.

4. Treasurer's Report

Cheryl presented an overview of the Financial Statement of the Group covering the period June to September 2019 as follows:

STARTING BALANCE

Balance as at 11 June 2019	£774.99
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INCOME

Slow-worm project – transfer from MVCG	£4070.10
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EXPENDITURE

Bank charges	£0.80
Timber – Woodland Path project	£191.14

Triodos Bank Account Balance	£4653.15
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Cash in hand	£23.04
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END BALANCE as at 11 Sept 19	£4676.19
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5. Planning Report

André defined his role in MWVG i.e. studying and reporting on planning applications that might affect Manor Woods Valley. There are currently no relevant planning applications. André is following closely the proposals for the Household Reuse and Recycling Centre on Hartcliffe Way, and any possible impact on Manor Woods Valley LNR, in particular with regard to potential fly-tipping.

Tea/Coffee Break

6. Geocaching in Manor Woods Valley

As a result of the interest shown in Geocaching at the June meeting, Holly Taylor spoke about this world-wide phenomenon and the benefits to its devotees in being in the great outdoors and discovering nature. Holly will update give us an update on progress at the next meeting.

7. Priorities from last Meeting and Future Work

Martin drew attention to a handout (attached) detailing the list of ideas proposed at the previous meeting. These have been categorised as high, medium and low priorities and separated into the following groups :

- Nature conservation
- Learning and fun activities
- Infrastructure
- Funding
- Community relations and
- Communications

Some have already been implemented and others are in the pipeline. Martin reminded the meeting that the first priority of MWVG, as befits a nature reserve, is working for the benefit of wildlife, and this is reflected in the categorisation. Martin encouraged people to take a lead on items in which they may have some interest or expertise, or are willing and able to take on. More suggestions were also welcomed.

8. Open Forum

A discussion took place on how local schools are using the LNR. It was reported that Parson Street School and Early Years groups regularly use it. Last year Zion held an event, with MVCG, for 3-5 year olds. A group of 14-15 year olds from St Mary Redcliffe School had visited earlier this year. The Young Rangers initiative also had great potential for involving young people (16 – 25 year olds) in the planning of activities in MWV and it is anticipated that a group of newly-trained Young Rangers will become involved with MWVG imminently. It was agreed that activities for children and young people are a high priority for the Group and that we need volunteers to help with the organisation of this aspect of our work.

The possibility of producing leaflets identifying flora and fauna was discussed, which crosses over with the My Manor Woods Valley book and the proposal to offer this in slimmer ring binder, possibly with some updates. The potential use of QR codes around the LNR was proposed and briefly discussed.

9. Minutes of Last Meeting

These were circulated for any comments. None were made.

10.AOB

André reminded those present of the two future meetings of Malago Valley Conservation Group, to be held on 19th September and 7th October at 7pm in Zion Community Space, with a view to winding up the group.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

Date of Next Meeting: Monday 2nd December 2019, 7pm at Zion Community Space, Bishopsworth Road.

Suggestions from June meeting (with some subsequent additions):

Top priority and manageable

Desirable but needs someone to lead

Long term (probably unrealistic in the short term)

Nature Conservation

1. Continue to improve habitats (Slow-worm project, orchard project, coppicing, etc.)
2. Improve aquatic life of the Malago
3. Continue eradication of non-native invasive weeds
4. Create more glades by coppicing
5. Plant trees
6. Continue to support student nature conservation research studies
7. Install bird nesting, bat roosting and bee boxes
8. Reopen the Malago downstream of the Interceptor (re-establish its course)

Activities (education and fun):

1. Harvest and juice fruit
2. Run wildlife walks – e.g. owls, bats, fungi
3. Establish Young Rangers Group
4. Organise "Forest Bathing", Green Days events
5. Continue to support Forest of Avon Trust Wellbeing courses
6. Tackle fly-tipping and continue litter-picks
7. Become more skilled (health and safety, power tools, fundraising, etc.)
8. Re-establish Geocaching
9. Establish youth groups (including a youth gardening group)
10. Organise Treasure Hunts with small prizes (Booted-up Bristol used to do this)
11. Manufacture Hazel goods (fencing etc.)
12. Plant Willow as a crop
13. Continue to run guided tours
14. Organise walks/talks on uses of plants & folklore
15. Organise a medicine plant event

Infrastructure projects:

1. Rebuild/repair the Woodland Path and keep all paths free of obstructions
2. Establish a bridge or other crossing downstream of the dam
3. Re-establish the now silted-up Pond
4. Establish a children's playground

Funding:

1. Investigate the Co-op's and Sainsbury's Community Funds
2. Investigate Police Commissioner's community fund
3. Use Community Payback
4. Investigate funding from local businesses
5. Organise plant sale or swap
6. Organise a sponsored dog-walk
7. Become a charity

Community Relations:

1. Establish contact with Neighbourhood Beat Manager, Thomas Thompson
2. Take part in of Festival of Nature
3. Work with schools
4. Liaise with small-holders, allotment groups etc,

Communications:

1. Produce a calendar of activities and events with dates, times and meeting points
2. Continue to improve social media, website and poster use; set up Mailchimp