

Notes of the Public Consultation Meeting regarding Springfield Wildlife Site held in Cross Memorial Hall at 7pm on Monday 20th February 2023.

The meeting was opened by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Terry Mason.

Councillor Elizabeth Parker provided the following background information regarding the Wildlife Site.

(Due to the GDPR regulations all details identifying individual people have been redacted from the report).

In 1975, 48 years ago, Springfield Wildlife Site was just a corner of the County Councils Maintenance Site for their refuse vehicles and other equipment needing attention. It was a busy but quiet place with the pumping station next to it belonging to the Water board. The men that worked there were good customers to the local shop and post office which was just along the road past the White Hart.

When Sedgemoor decided to relocate this workplace a group of local people could see that there was a potential of creating a village green with community amenities and they worked hard to put these proposals to the relevant people but unfortunately or fortunately the developer Redcliffe Homes won the day and Chardet Place, Springfield Close became part of Cross and Compton Bishop. Happily the development included a plan for the Wildlife Site.

At the foundation of the Wildlife Site (redacted) took a lead in identifying all the plant life on the site and made a wonderful documentation of its flora and fauna and we still have these records today. (Redacted) was an influential and leading light in the early days of its formation.

In 2005 an agreement was ratified with SDC and CBPC with (redacted) representing CBPC and a management plan was written up. SDC would see to the heavy work pollarding and cutting down dead trees. The pond and its sluice would be the responsibility of Sedgemoor.

Last year thanks to several new residents there has been a renewed interest and involvement and the site has been looked after in a way that has let in a lot more light giving the flora and fauna a chance to thrive again.

The Parish Council had the opportunity to spend a considerable amount of money on a project that would benefit the community particularly the younger population. Such money in the past had been sent on to Axbridge to use in their recreational areas for young people. Finding something that would fulfil this criteria came about and it was approved to sympathetically introduce some educational items that would benefit children and not disrupt the ethos of the wildlife site.

Respecting the nearness of the houses next to the Wildlife Site nothing was purchased that would overlook them, cause an increase in noise, or disrupt the flora and fauna. It should give additional awareness of the beauty of nature in this spot and in the wider environment.

Compton Bishop Parish Council will continue to keep in regular contact with Sedgemoor District Council and to move forward together.

A question and answer session followed, where parishioners were able to express their views about the Parish Council's proposals for the wildlife site. Parishioners spoke for and against the parish council's proposals for the site.

Sedgemoor District Council has agreed that around £1000 of Community Infrastructure Levy money can be used to purchase wooden items for the wildlife site. These items have already been purchased. Details of these items were given at the meeting. There are currently no plans to install any additional equipment at the wildlife site.

The Parish Clerk reminded everyone that Sedgemoor District Council owns the wildlife site, and is responsible for its management, including Health and Safety and tree management matters. On 13th January 2005 an agreement was signed between Sedgemoor District Council and Compton Bishop Parish Council allowing the Parish Council to conduct activities on the wildlife site. The parish councillors feel that the agreement is now outdated and needs to be amended. The agreement can be viewed by [clicking on this link](#).

In April 2023 Sedgemoor District Council will no longer exist, and will become part of the new Somerset Unitary Council, who will then take over the ownership of the wildlife site. In August 2022 it was reported to the Parish Council that a Springfield Wildlife Working Group had been formed, had held their inaugural meeting, and will be producing a management plan for the site, to be presented to the parish council. This plan will be considered at the next parish council meeting on 8th March and, if approved, will then be presented to Sedgemoor District Council/Somerset Council for approval and inclusion in the amendments to the 2005 agreement.

The Parish Clerk also reminded the meeting that parish councillors are volunteers, who have been elected to make decisions on behalf of the people who live in the parish. There is a vacancy for a parish councillor, and the Clerk asked if anyone present would like to put themselves forward to become a parish councillor. No - one present showed an interest in becoming a parish councillor. All parish council business is conducted during open parish council meetings, where members of the public are invited to attend, and speak. Agendas and minutes from parish council meetings are posted on the parish council notice boards, and on the Compton Bishop community website. This is the way that small parish councils such as Compton Bishop consult with their parishioners.

End of minutes.