



**QTNWG: MEETING OF TRUSTEES 07/09/2023**  
**via Zoom, 7pm - 9pm**

Attending: Kim Creswell (Chair), Emma Etherington (Treasurer), Rowan Duffy (Trustee)

**1. CIO :** We now have official charity status! Reg.Charity No. 1204564, with the charitable object of:

“To promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in the parish of Queen Thorne in particular, but not exclusively, by undertaking research into the environment and its’ biodiversity, and disseminating the results for the benefit of the public.”

**Note:** financial accounts must be submitted no later than 10month after first year. As we intend to register with HMRC, in order to receive gift aid, we will aim to submit accounts every April at end of tax year.”

**ACTION: KIM AND EMMA to confirm all trustees as administrators via CC website this Friday. EMMA to approach HMRC to find out and instigate process for claiming Gift Aid.**

**Future plans:** Trustees agree a separate base for NWG is required, for administration, meetings and a water testing hub... The group has outgrown Kim’s barn and Sandford Orcas Village Hall does not have spare space. We will approach Ernest Cook Trust (Trent) to see if they have availability on their mini business park by Rose and Crown, either charitably or with funding.

**ACTION: ROWAN to find contact for ECT and enquire over availability and costs. KIM to draft request for charitable rental rates.**

**2. LOGO:** We now have a logo, designed by member George Matthews, who is branding the website to match logo, we need standardised fonts, letter heads and promotional material. Big thanks to George for her magnificent design!! Huge well done to Rowan who created the basis for the website!!

**ACTION: ROWAN to liaise with George to standardise letter head and website development.**

**T-shirts:** Trustees agreed the group should purchase 3 organic t-shirts with NWG logo in order to publicise NWG. T-shirts will be available to buy to enable fund raising. **ACTION: ROWAN to liaise with George to finalise T-shirt design and order so they are ready for boat trip with Chris Packham and Wild Justice - must arrive by 14th September.**

**3. Marketing NWG:** News of charity registration and logo must be publicised while still fresh news. Blackmore Vale Magazine; Western Gazette; Sherborne Times; Queen Thorne Magazine (**submission by 15th Sept**); Social Media platforms; News flash to members via e-mail.

**ACTION: KIM to draft press release by 15th, EMMA AND ROWAN to select images; ROWAN to approach publications with press package (editorial, images with captions, logo and date of inclusion).**

**Future plans:** Independent market in Sherborne - consider membership packs (t-shirts/ newsletter and membership) as xmas pressies; village fetes/events etc.

**4. BANKING** - JUST GIVING- have transferred funds £1470.91 after fees, we then had 2x membership fees making balance £1490.91. £1233.60 to be paid to Xylem. Current balance = £257.31

**NB. NWG RULE: BANK ACCOUNT SHOULD NEVER DROP BELOW £100 CREDIT.**

Unity Trust have said they require us to set up new account now we are charity. Which means that members who have set up standing orders, and all members who have received details of how to donate must be notified, as would Xylem .

**ACTION: KIM and EMMA to speak to Unity to request the same numbers are kept as we have distributed numbers to our members.**

**5. FUNDING:** Membership drive campaign - promote at Dorset COP ; boost instagram when logo and charity status are announced; approach local ethical companies for sponsorship - this would give companies the opportunity for good publicity and we would require those companies to provide us with a pledge to publish on our website along with their logo - this will offer more potential for group marketing; research available grants for environmental charities. Look for funding for office rental and equipment; a paid admin position; water testing equipment; on going running costs; one off awards.

**ACTION: ROWAN to approach Riverford to request details of potential funding; KIM to approach Castle Garden Group to enquire whether this may be an option; EMMA to research available grant sources to environmental charity groups ( to include Wessex Water Foundation Environment Fund; National Lottery )and seek details of their criteria and funding application procedures.**

**6. SOCIAL MEDIA:** Rowan is happy to continue but requests contribution from trustees and members. We may increase social media presence when we have a paid admin assistant.

**ACTION: ALL look for photo opportunities and send to Rowan.**

**7. MEMBERSHIP:** Another members newsletter is required to tie in with press release, including charity status and logo news ; request for social media information; ask members if anyone has experience in grant application process; inform members of research carried out by NWG associate Dr Tean Mitchell regarding Ash Die back; encourage members to make a representation in line with RSPB's advice to the DEFRA consult on hedge cutting (closing date 20th September)

**ACTION: KIM to draft members newsletter - to be sent 15th Sept**

**8. PUBLIC NEWSLETTER** to be distributed widely across the parish and available to the public at large to disseminate information found by research carried out by NWG into biodiversity and the environment in Queen Thorne Parish in particular, but not exclusively. To be available in hard copy and electronically.

**ACTION: ROWAN to liaise with George to design format of newsletter, and then to present template to KIM for editorial draft.**

**9. WATER TESTING:** Kick Testing is progressing well, with Site 1 and Site 2 being tested fortnightly, and Site 3 fortnightly. Site 3 is planned to be held concurrently with village hall cafe to increase community engagement, but when members are not available it may be done at other times. All of these test sites are currently in Sandford Orcas but we would like to encourage people in other parts of the parish to test their water courses regularly and can offer training (free to members). There is some early indication that site 1 is a lot more depleted that site 2 and 3, which may be due to a number of factors, including high silt deposits, nearby agricultural run off, and tree cover but it is too early to draw definitive conclusions at this point. NWG would like to raise funds for further equipment including waders / hi vis jackets / road warning signs / outstanding costs of kick testing kits (2x @£100e.). NWG has submitted a request to improve access to Site 3 behind village hall for ongoing testing.

Photometer testing Kim and member Clare have been getting to grips with the testing procedure and are working hard to ensure it is as accurate as possible, liaising with David Hall from Xylem. We have an issue with continuing in Kim's barn as it does not offer the clinical space required for accurate testing - it is important that we find a proper space (see above re. approaching ECT for office space). We are currently awaiting the receipt of further ordered equipment from Xylem which included calibration equipment vital for ensuring accuracy of results. We are currently only testing for phosphates (awaiting nitrate and ammonia reagents) and are establishing a baseline, which is generally low. We are keen to get this system properly up and running before heavy winter rains begin in order to assess potential agricultural run off problems.

**10. Queen Thorne Parish Council:** NWG has supplied QTPC with details of a DEFRA consultation on hedgerow management, along with guidance from RSPB on how to complete to encourage robust protection for nature. The QTPC will be considering this at their meeting (Agenda item 8h).

**ACTION: NWG to encourage the QTPC to act robustly in compliance with their declarations of climate and biodiversity emergency.**

QTPC are to discuss the possibility of an Environmental champion (EC) at their 11th September meet (Agenda item 7d.). Kim and Emma have researched previous decisions made by the QTPC and have earmarked areas where an EC may be of benefit to the decision making process of the QTPC.

**ACTION: EMMA to attend on behalf of NWG to update PC on charity status, charitable object of group and present suggestions as to how an EC may be of use, based on NWG research. KIM and EMMA to compile short presentation in advance of meet.**

Following correspondence with QTAgrri the NWG have concerns that DEFRA's 'Code of Good Agricultural Practice for farmers, growers and land managers' is not being followed on large areas of the parish to the East of the Marston Magna Road, with detrimental effect to biodiversity within the parish. NWG has posted and e-mailed a thoroughly researched letter to QTAgrri detailing these concerns and requested a meet to discuss, but have not yet received a response.

The trustees feel that as widespread land management strategies have a big impact on the environment and its' biodiversity, and the public in general, we must bring our concerns to the PC and request that they add their voice to ours in requesting a meeting with the directors of QTAgrri to survey the land in question.

The NWG is concerned about lack of mitigation for agricultural run off and top soil contamination into the adjacent water course (which has previously tested at 10x safe amount phosphates following heavy rain, and is showing signs of detrimental silting, and has had multiple observed pollution events over past years) the lack of headland/buffer strips, and annual hedge cutting during summer, during bird nesting season, over the vast area to the East of Marston Magna Road.

The PC may also be concerned with QTAgrri's practice of encouraging the fast flow of water off said agricultural land, with no mitigation measures in place (in contravention of the aforementioned Good Practice Guide), which may contribute to flooding events down stream.

We hope to meet with the directors of QTAgrri to discuss the findings of our research and encourage the directors to review their current systems in order to mitigate the potentially damaging effects of agriculture on the local environment and its' biodiversity. The NWG would like the PC to be involved as representatives of the parish electorate.

**ACTION: KIM to present the above research and request to the QTPC during the open forum.**

Kim and then NWG has previously encouraged QTPC to adopt recognition of climate emergency (c.2018) and biodiversity emergency (2022) which they have done, but the NWG has been frustrated by the lack of decisive action following these declarations of emergency, and has been

encouraging the PC to be more proactive, providing suggestions and research findings to facilitate implementation of action. We are pleased that the QTPC now appears to be taking these matters with more gravity and are keen to support said work. We have previously asked each parish Cllr. to make clear their personal position on Climate and Biodiversity emergencies, as elected representatives of the parish, but were informed by the QTPC chair that individual Cllr.s are only obliged to make their views known at election time. NWG then submitted a FOI request to ascertain when the QTPC last election was and found that there has not been an election for over 30 years. We are concerned that the lack of community engagement and long term practice of Cllr.s coopting their friends on to the parish council may have led to a systemic bias within the council which may be preventing proactive development of strategy to deal with the climate and biodiversity emergencies. We are keen to support a robust democratic process and support community engagement with local politics in order to enhance the positive work which may be done locally to protect the local natural environment and its biodiversity. We will be noting the QTPC discussion re item 8f. - '2024 council election'

**ACTION: KIM and EMMA to note and report PC decisions re 2024 PC election**

**11. Liaison with local farmers/ landowners:** Positive and productive meeting, last July, highlighting good conservation work currently being carried out on that farm, and including discussion on what further improvements could be made to attempt to halt and reverse the local loss of biodiversity. It was noted that said farmers are liaising with Dorset countryside ranger, NWG consider it would be useful for us to liaise with said ranger to ensure we are not contradicting each other.

**ACTION: ROWAN to approach ranger to see if a meeting with NWG would be possible; KIM to draft letter of thanks on behalf of group, summarising matters covered and sharing research which may be helpful in mitigation against damage from agricultural practices.**

Correspondence is ongoing with a number of local farmers/ landowners

**ACTION: KIM to draft letters of response from NWG, for amendment / approval, with details of relevant research, and keep trustees up to date.**

**12. Networking:** Kim has requested a surgery meeting with MP Loder, who has responded saying he is presently full but will get back to us with a date. NWG has been invited to attend Dorset CAN COP in Dorchester on 9th September. Kim will be holding a short presentation to represent NWG, about setting up the group, at 3.20pm

**ACTION: KIM, EMMA and ROWAN to attend Dorset CAN COP in Dorchester on 9th September. ROWAN making name badges and flyers and liaise with George to create trustee t-shirts.**

**13. Matters outstanding from last meet:**

**Website Centralised Log of Reports:** Same status as last meetings (see minutes from 13/04/23).

**ACTION: Add to website pages of different works the NWG group are doing with different sub pages for each group of animals/habitats e.g Skylarks, Amphibians etc.**

**Networking:-**

**Kim to e-mail T M with the evidence regarding glyphosate use that he did not previously receive.**

**Kim to arrange visit to Plotgate for NWG Trustees.**

**NWG to attend all future PC meetings with updates, so they include local ecology reports in the open forum minutes**

**Rowan to email Viv a NWG paragraph for parish mag, by 15<sup>th</sup> of every month.**

**11.Other business:-**

**Fox hunting:** can NWG make a statement on our position re. hunting with hounds in the parish of QT and effects on biodiversity?

**Badger Cull:** Is on-going, including in the parish of Queen Thorne. NWG is pleased that some farmers are now choosing to vaccinate and is supporting that program as a viable alternative to free shooting healthy badgers. What more can we do?

**FOI to EA.:** NWG are awaiting response from 2 FOI request made to EA: 1 - regular water course testing being carried out by EA in Sandford Orcas, 2- clarification of the use of glyphosates along the banks of rivers by the EA, as highlighted by member Jackie.

**NEXT TRUSTEES MEETING: THURSDAY 12TH OCTOBER, 7PM VIA ZOOM - PLEASE CONFIRM**

QT Parish Council: Dates of Future Meetings 2023: 11 September in Sandford Orcas, 6 November in Nether Compton.