

Notice of Meeting Amenity Committee



Notice Date: 26 February 2025

Members of the Amenity Committee

Cllrs Paul Day, Katie Dover, Hilary Doyle (Chair), David Ellis, Andy Fish, Katherine Giles (Deputy Chairman), Ian Leake, Amanda McLean and Kiran Meka

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the AMENITY COMMITTEE to be held on **Tuesday 4th March** commencing at **8:00pm**. This meeting will be held in the meeting room at the Parish Office, Benetfeld Road, Binfield, RG42 4EW. The public and press are most welcome to attend.

Yours sincerely

C Rance

Ceri Rance

Clerk to Binfield Parish Council

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Agenda

Amenity Committee



The meeting will be held at Binfield Parish Council Office at 8pm on Tuesday 4 March 2025

No. Item

1 **Apologies for Absence**

2 **Declarations of Interest**

To declare any interests in relation to matters to be considered at this meeting.

3 **Public Participation**

The meeting will be adjourned for 15 minutes which is set aside for the public to ask questions or make comments.

4 **Reports for Decision**

4.1 Open Spaces Schedule – the Committee are asked to consider the maintenance schedule for the coming season.

4.2 Removal of unused bus shelter – the Council is responsible for a disused bus shelter on the corner of St Marks Road and London Road. Following some complaints from residents, the Council are asked to consider removing the shelter down.

4.3 Request from RR tenant to move to a site closer to their residence – committee members are asked to consider the request and the process if agreed.

4.4 Rental Charges for the Blue Mountain Allotment Site – as the work for the new allotment site is underway, the committee are asked to consider the rental charges for the plots.

5 **Reports for Information**

5.1 Update Report – to receive report covering ongoing open spaces contract work and other miscellaneous updates.

6 **Future Agenda Items**



Amenity Committee Meeting

Date: 4 March 2025

Agenda Item/Title: 4.1 Open Spaces Grounds Maintenance

Purpose of Report: Comment and Decision

1 Purpose

To consider how the open spaces work should be managed for the coming year, FY25-26.

2 Decision

Members are asked to consider the following.

- Does the committee wish to proceed with one of the options as presented?
- If not, how would the committee like to proceed with the management of the open spaces?
- Does the committee wish to propose any changes to the current Financial Regulations?

3 Information

BPC have been working with the current contractor for a year. The level and quality of works have been of a high standard.

The committee are asked to consider how the management of the open spaces should be handled moving forward.

4 Options

4.1 Grass Cutting

Due to the number of open spaces that need to be cut between April and September, it would be more efficient, from an operational point of view, to have one contractor dealing with this aspect. Our current contractor has fixed their prices this year.

Does the committee want the Amenity Officer to obtain other quotes for the grass circuit?

4.2 Additional tasks for Open Spaces

1) Entering into a contract for all additional tasks – the committee could go out to tender for all additional tasks for open spaces maintenance. These tasks include, flailing, weed spraying, path clearance, leaf blowing, hedge trimming.

2) Working with a preferred supplier for all additional tasks

Note: the office will have to obtain 3 quotes for any tasks costing over £3,000 as per the Fin Regs.

3) Obtaining quotations from 3 trusted suppliers as and when required – the office will work with 3 local firms (of good repute) and ask them to submit quotations for any additional tasks as and when they arise.

5 Budget spend for 24/25

Activity	Cost
Grass cuts (11 circuits)	£14,950
Hedge works	£ 1,750
Flailing	£ 6,180*
Other Tasks in Open Spaces	£ 2,270
TOTAL	£25,150

*£2,400 taken from 21/6/1 Allotments Red Rose and £3,780 taken from 21/5 Tree Work



Amenity Committee Meeting

Date: 4 March 2025

Agenda Item/Title: 4.1 Open Spaces Grounds Maintenance

Purpose of Report: Comment and Decision

6 Financial Implications

The budget for Open Spaces for FY 25/26 stands at £26,000. As the flailing costs were taken from different budget lines, for this financial year (24/25) the spend was **£18,970** from the Open Spaces budget line.

Taken from BPC Financial Regulations (Adopted 2024) – Section 5 Procurement

- 5.5 *Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 5.11) obtain prices as follows:*
- 5.6 *For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation¹ regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts.*
- 5.7 *For contracts greater than £3,000 excluding VAT the responsible officer must seek at least 3 fixed price quotes.*
- 5.8 *Where the value is between £500 and £3,000 excluding VAT, the responsible officer shall try to obtain 3 estimates which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.*
- 5.9 *For smaller purchases, the clerk shall seek to achieve value for money.*



Amenity Committee Meeting

Date: 3 March 2025

Agenda Item/Title: 4.2 Removal of unused bus shelter

Purpose of Report: Decision

1 Purpose

To update members on the condition of an unused bus shelter, which is a BPC asset, situated on the corner of London Road and St Marks Road.

2 Decision

Do members agree to have this bus shelter removed? Quotes will be tabled at the meeting if received in time.

3 Background

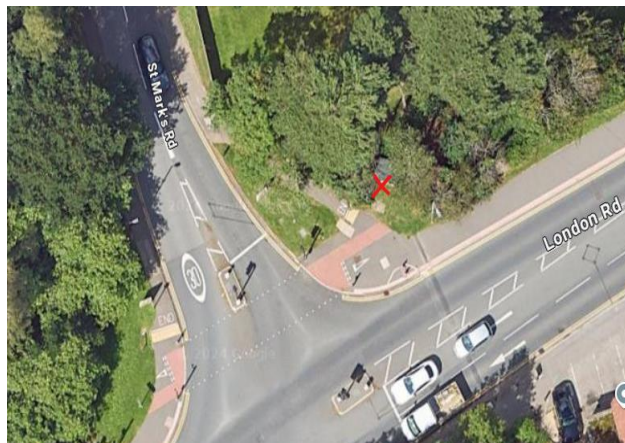
The wooden bus shelter on the corner of St Marks Road and London Road has been out of use for several years. Nearby residents have often complained about the amount of litter left behind, which attracts rats. Comments have also been made about the overgrown vegetation in the vicinity and most recently, a resident has complained about people urinating there.

I have reported a Bus Shelter on London Road/St Marks Road/Binfield to Bracknell Council, it has not been in service for years....it now attracts drinkers, people who urinate and leave rubbish. Also, the area has a lot of dead trees, which could be a fire hazard with smokers.

Bracknell Council has emailed myself to inform me the Bus Shelter comes under Binfield Parish Council. I would be grateful if this could be looked into.

The Parish Warden regularly checks the shelter and following the most recent complaints received, took some photos to show the condition of the shelter. BFBC have not maintained the area to the best level and as the overgrowth is making the shelter more secluded and therefore attracting anti-social behaviour.

Even though this facility can be seen as a spot to sit down, there is a bench on the opposite side of the road, and another bus shelter, which is in use, on London Road westbound.



4 Financial Implications

The cost of removal will be taken from budget line 24 – Amenities Maintenance and Improvements. Works will be carried out in the new financial year.



Amenity Committee Meeting

Date: 4 March 2025

Agenda Item/Title: Request from Red Rose tenant to move to different
Binfield allotment site

Purpose of Report: Decision

1 Purpose

To inform members of a Red Rose Allotment tenants request to move to the Pocket Copse Allotment site as it is closer to their residence. Members to decide whether this is a reasonable request and what should be the agreed process.

2 Decision

- Members to decide whether to allow the tenant to move to a different allotment site
- Whether the tenant takes priority over those already on the Pocket Copse waiting list
- The RR Plot that will be vacated is a large plot so do members agree to have the plot split?

3 Background

A tenant on the Red Rose allotment site has requested that they would like to move to the Pocket Copse Allotment site as it is closer to where they live. It does not state in the rules whether this is allowed therefore members are requested to comment and decide if they are able to do so. The factors which members should consider is that the waiting list for Pocket Copse is very long (44 residents) and most of them live on the estate. This tenant is on the waiting list (number 42) therefore will have at least a 3-year wait if they were to get a plot on Pocket Copse.

The tenant has suggested that maybe someone on the Pocket Copse waiting list would like to move to Red Rose but as mentioned before, most of residents on the Pocket Copse waiting list live in Amen Corner and surrounding area.

4 Financial Implications

None.

5 Recommendations

To inform the tenant that they are to remain on the Pocket Copse waiting list and wait until their name is at the top of the list.



Amenity Committee Meeting

Date: 4 March 2025

Agenda Item/Title: 4.4 Rental charges for the Blue Mountain Allotment Site

Purpose of Report: Decision

1 Purpose

To update members on the progress of the development of the Blue Mountain Allotment Site and to agree the rental charges.

2 Decision

Members to consider rental costs for the BM Allotment Site per square metre.

3 Background

It is recommended that tenants are charged per square metre as there are various plots of different sizes as opposed to part/half/full sized plots in the other two allotment sites. According to recent data, the average charge for an allotment per square metre in the UK is around 40 – 50p (depending on location and council) with water charges typically added on separately at a lower rate per square metre.

A half plot on the Red Rose site is approximately 90sqm. The current rental charge is £32.00. On this basis, the average cost per sqm would be 35p. This does not take into account the water rates, which are yet to be determined.

The table below shows the measurements of each plot on the allotment site. As this is a brand-new allotment site, calculations are made at the suggested cost of 50p per square metre. These are the plot sizes which will be on the Blue Mountain allotment site

BLUE MOUNTAIN ALLOTMENT Version 8	SIZE OF PLOTS							Total cost per plot size
	Length metres	Breadth metres	Volume sq metres	No. of plots	Total Area by type	Charge @ 50p per sqm		
Type A	16.00 m	5 m	80 m ²	13	1040	£40.00	£520.00	
Type B	10.00 m	6 m	60 m ²	1	60	£30.00	£30.00	
Type C	10.00 m	5 m	50 m ²	1	50	£25.00	£25.00	
Type D	8.80 m	5 m	44 m ²	1	44	£22.00	£22.00	
Type E	8.30 m	6 m	52 m ²	2	104	£26.00	£52.00	
Type F	13.30 m	5 m	67 m ²	5	333	£33.50	£167.50	
Type G	7.62 m	5 m	38 m ²	8	305	£19.00	£152.00	
Type H	5.50 m	6 m	33 m ²	3	99	£16.50	£49.50	
Type J	12.80 m	5 m	64 m ²	1	64	£32.00	£32.00	
Type K	18.00 m	5 m	90 m ²	1	90	£45.00	£45.00	
Total No of Allotments			36					
Total Area of Allotments			2188					
Total income for rental year @ 50p per m2			£968.50					



Amenity Committee Meeting

Date: 4 March 2025

Agenda Item/Title: 4.4 Rental charges for the Blue Mountain Allotment Site

Purpose of Report: Decision

4 Financial Implications

The cost of the development of this site is £83K. BPC does not currently make a profit from the existing allotment sites. Members to consider the rental charges for this allotment site.

5 Legislation/Legal

6 Recommendations



Amenity Committee Meeting

Date: 4 March 2025

Agenda Item/Title: 5.1 Update Report

Purpose of Report: Information

1. Purpose

To update members on any amenity related issues since the last meeting, for information only. Members would have received the Parish Warden and Open Spaces Maintenance log for reference.

2. Play Equipment Repairs and Safety

2.1 Wicks Green Spinner

Unfortunately, the part that was ordered was incorrect. Having contacted the supplier to discuss returning the item and ordering the correct part, they said there would be a 50% restocking fee. The Amenity Officer asked where this was stated in their T's & C's and they confirmed that they were yet to update their website with the updated document, therefore in this instance they would waive this charge. The item was returned with the P & P cost of £13.45 taken out of budget line 56/1. A credit note was received. The correct part has been ordered, costing £82.30 and Bracknell Town Council will install it. Costs for installation will be £256.30. The costs will be taken from budget 24.

2.2 Foxley Fields Play Tunnel

Following the approval to replace the timber posts on the edges of the play tunnel at the agreed cost of £650 the works were completed in January 2025.

3. Allotment Updates

The following sections focuses on any allotment issues on Red Rose and Pocket Copse

3.1 Waiting List

Allotment Site	Waiting List end of February 2025
Red Rose	10
Pocket Copse	39
Blue Mountain	44

NB: Numbers relate to residents choosing respective site as their first choice.

3.2 Inspections

Regular checks will commence at the beginning of April.

3.3 Renewals

The agreed rental rates were approved at January Council. Following the renewals, a total of 5 tenants relinquished their plots (1 from Pockets Copse and 4 from Red Rose) All the plots have been reallocated (bar Pocket Copse at the time of writing this report)

3.4 Sheds

Some Red Rose tenants have asked about shed allocation for their plots. Historically the shed spaces are allocated along the boundary hedges of the site. The plot layout plan was constructed in 2021 and at each renewal stage, tenants have been asked whether their plot allocation is correct – does it show the correct placement of their shed/greenhouse/composter etc. However, it is unclear which shed belongs to which plot so the office will investigate this further to make sure that the layout plan is correct.

4 Tree Updates



Amenity Committee Meeting

Date: 4 March 2025

Agenda Item/Title: 5.1 Update Report

Purpose of Report: Information

4.1 Tree Survey – outstanding works

Following the recommendation of the tree survey report last year, the cut back of the Indian Bean Oak in Silver Jubilee Field was completed on 26/11/24.



4.2 Cut back of trees along tennis courts

As approved at Amenity (dated: XXX min: XXX) the tree works along the boundary fence of the tennis courts on Foxley Fields were completed on

4.2 Leaning tree on Forest Road

09/12 The Parish Warden reported that a tree is leaning over Forest Road and requested that the office contact Wokingham Borough Council to investigate as a lorry had hit it. An online form was completed on their website



4.3 Update on unhealthy tree on Beehive Road

Members were informed in the October Amenity Committee of an email received from a resident regarding their concerns of an unhealthy tree on Beehive Road, close to the substation. They were worried that the tree had been blighted by diesel fumes from a mains generator which operated 24hrs a day for about 3 weeks a couple of years ago. The Amenity Officer had raised this concern with BFBC who said that their contractor would look and take the necessary action. They said that they would not discuss the decision with BPC.

On 21/01, the resident informed the Amenity Officer that the tree has been felled. They also asked respectfully whether the electricity company can be approached with a view to funding a replacement and planting of a new tree. The Amenity Officer has forwarded this request to the Tree Service at BFBC.

4.4 2025 Tree Survey

The Amenity Officer has contacted Merewood Arboriculturist Consultancy regarding a date for the tree survey for three of the parish owned areas – Wicks Green, Silver Jubilee and Knox Green, at the agreed cost



Amenity Committee Meeting

Date: 4 March 2025

Agenda Item/Title: 5.1 Update Report

Purpose of Report: Information

of £495. Members are reminded that the trees in Foxley Fields, York Road, Red Rose Allotments and Mutton Oaks were surveyed last year and will be due to be inspected in May/June 2026.

5. Amenity related correspondence

5.1 Email from Probation Services

I hope this email finds you well.

My name is Ella, and I am reaching out from the probation services. I work within the community payback department (community service). Part of my role involves finding placements / sites for the community payback teams to complete work within the community. This includes things such as gardening, painting, etc.

I have recently set up work with Luke Taylor the Rector at Binfield All Saints, and he suggested reaching out to you as I am currently looking for some sites within the Bracknell area.

I am just wondering if this is something that would be of interest to yourself?

I look forward to hearing from you.

A reply was sent to say that this could be something BPC can get involved in as there are many jobs that can be done around the parish, such as weeding, painting and litter picking.

5.2 Complaint about dog fouling on Knox Green

The office received two complaints about dog fouling on Knox Green.

Response from BPC:

Thank you for your email into the office. We are sorry you are still experiencing trouble with the dog mess on the green. There are signs up as you enter the green. We will get our Parish Warden to pop some additional signs up next week on the lamp posts around and I have forwarded your concern on to the Parish clerk.

Many thanks

Alisa

5.3 Concern of uneven edges along footpath in Wicks Green

An email was received from a resident (verbatim):

I'd like to report a hazard that I deem dangerous due to a very uneven muddy/grass area either side of the path that runs alongside the zip-line in Wicks Green park. A child could easily twist or break an ankle when they run across it.

The office replied saying that our Parish Warden will check the following day. They confirmed that the uneven surfacing was due to the works carried out last year, but the soil is still soft, and it will settle. The footpath is clear of any trip hazard.

5.4 Issues along FP9 (Emmets Park)

A resident came to the office (19/02) to express their concerns about the increase in dogs fouling along FP9, close to their residence. They had also uncovered a large amount of waste rubble and metal fence posts whilst cutting back the hedge to protect their fence. They had sent in photos which have been shared with the footpaths officer at BFBC. The resident emailed back on 21/02 to confirm the waste had been removed and to express her thanks to us for sorting it.



Amenity Committee Meeting

Date: 4 March 2025

Agenda Item/Title: 5.1 Update Report

Purpose of Report: Information



The same resident also raised concerns about the increase in dog poo bags left littered around the area. The Amenity Officer has been asked to investigate the reason behind BFBC removing the dog bin which was situated along Forest Road close to the parade of shops. They will be asked whether they can reinstall it.

6 Binfield Environment Group

Below is an update from BEG regarding the work parties which have taken place from December to March.

6.1 December work party involved clearance round specimen trees in Silver Jubilee Field, clearance round the rhododendrons, coppiced some hazel and used the arisings to repair one of our hazel fences, checked the trees planted over the last couple of years, and picked some litter.

January work party involved the clearance of brambles and blackthorn, coppiced hazel, building a dead hedge, planted trees and wildflowers, picked litter and started to clear the ditch between the two fields.

The dead hedge fills the gaps left as elm trees die and will help to nurture the next generation of trees that will grow in the protection of the hedge. If the parish council are happy with how this looks, they will extend it in the next Wicks Green work party.

For the February work party at Popes Meadow, 24 people turned up despite the cold damp day. They built a stag beetle city, extended a dead hedge and started work on a new one, cleared a ditch, pruned an apple tree, cleared round trees planted three years ago, built protective "twigwams" round coppiced hazel, cut back hedges that were growing over paths, picked litter and ate donuts. They were thanked by visitors to the park for the work we were doing.

Next work-party will be on Saturday 15th March and will be working in Pocket Copse and probably doing some more fence-building in Popes Meadow or Foxley Field.

6.2 The group would like to put some tree labels on some of the specimen trees around the Parish. This will help with the co-ordination of the Binfield Tree Trail and to highlight some of our glorious trees within the Parish. They have agreed to buy Bradenham labels - small plastic tag with English name, Latin name, and a tree trail reference (e.g. Binfield Tree Trail T24). They will use BPC money for this and will attach the labels to trees with a nail and spring. They have asked BPC if they are happy for them to do this. They are black acrylic labels (51 x 76mm) and can have up to three lines of text. They cost £3 each.





Amenity Committee Meeting

Date: 4 March 2025

Agenda Item/Title: 5.1 Update Report

Purpose of Report: Information

7 Non play assets

7.1 Removal of Linden Homes sign on KGC

The sign was erected on Knox Green Corner when the homes were being developed around Knox Green. The sign was removed by the handy worker in December 2024, at a cost of £40, taken out of budget line 24 Amenities Improvements and Maintenance.

7.2 Lamp posts along path on Foxley Fields

The works were completed in January at a cost of £2, 784.60 taken out of Open Spaces Reserves.

8 Litter Update

8.1 Regular update from local resident

03/12 More fly tipping at the bottle bank. Rejected donations from the charity shop. Two items found at Knox Green corner - Binoculars and a black / dark navy-blue hat with a metal poppy brooch found in the hedge. I have left them on the metal seats. You will be aware of the passport handed in by another resident.

01/02 I have also done a blitz on Tilehurst Lane....again. Fed up with the dog poo bags hung in the hedges next to signs saying no dog foul... This was before the new signs went up earlier in the month on Knox Green.

These litter picks are in addition to the regular circuit from Knox Green to the Church and back via Wicks Green Lane. Typically, 4 or 5 times a week.

No sooner had the mess (following a Facebook post) around the bottle banks been cleared than someone left a large glass container with rope handle probably used for candles.

14/02 Collected 2 bags "for life" mostly cans, plastic bottles and a couple of glass bottles. This was after a blitz on the Oakmede car park... mostly takeaway rubbish but lots of plastic bottle and cans dropped by the corner of the Binfield Club nearest the public car parking. (Another 2 "bags for life" full).

17/02 My second litter pick on walks to Hill Farm and back. 3 bags of litter collected today. One of general takeaway rubbish, cigarette packets, crisp and sweet wrappers etc. 40 plus empty cans of cider, discarded with the cardboard sleeves, and a "bag for life" full of various empty cans. More to clear. Grateful for the large orange Bracknell Forest bags provided by Angela.

25/02 More fly tipping at the bottle bank at Oakmede. Printer "hidden" behind bottle bank, bag of clothes (wet clothes can't go for recycling) supermarket bag with miscellaneous rubbish and a collection of "bags for life". Litter picked around car park and hedges. Food waste in grit bin.

Walk to Hill Farm and back via Wicks Green Lane. A "bag for life" filled with discarded cans - now recycled.

"Bag for life" full of rubbish and dog poo, plus 4 empty beer glass bottles, and litre spirits' bottle. Glass recycled; rubbish binned. Most of the rubbish collected on the stretch between the Church and Stubbs Hill. I last cleared this last Tuesday. More to collect. Binfield resident in car stopped to say thank you.

Cleared route to Church and Wicks Green yesterday Monday (and Friday) - takeaway rubbish/food etc.

8.2 SAS litter pick

PW collected a total of 6 bags from Cain Road 02/02

8.2 London Road Litter Pick



Amenity Committee Meeting

Date: 4 March 2025

Agenda Item/Title: 5.1 Update Report

Purpose of Report: Information

The Amenity Officer, along with volunteers from BEG took part in a litter picking stint along the London Road, between St Marks Road and the Old London Road. 6 volunteers helped to collect a total of 15 bags and 5 'bags for life' which contained bottles and gas canisters. This was after a request from a resident, who contacted 'Keep Britain Tidy' asking for the area to be litter picked as it was full of rubbish.

Litter pickers were loaned from BFBC and they collected the filled bags (by arrangement)

8.3 Posters about litter

Some of our Sponsor a Street volunteers have raised concerns that after their efforts in litter picking, it is disappointing that litter is thrown in the same area the following day. It is evident by the reports sent in by the regular picker (item 8.1) and more recently, a volunteer who litter picks along Foxley Lane.

The Amenity Officer asked BFBC if there was any scope in having posters made to say something like 'This area has been litter picked by volunteers... please dispose your rubbish in litter bins' They have said that they are looking at producing corrugated A-frame signs which can be moved to different areas.

8.4 The Great British Spring Clean

This initiative is 10 years old, and this year, it will be held from 21 March – 6 April. They are asking for Litter Heroes across the country to show they love where they live by making a pledge to pick a bag or more. The office will send out emails to local schools and groups to highlight this initiative and lend our litter picking kits where required. The Sponsor a Street volunteers will also be contacted to ask to make a special effort in this week.

9 **Open Spaces**

9.1 Knox Green Corner

The Parish Warden has been maintaining this area once a month. Some more bulbs were planted at the end of February and some wildflower seeds will be scattered in the first week of April.

9.2 York Road

11/12 The Parish Warden noticed some tyre damage on the grass in York Road. There were also some scrape marks on the barrier. The dug-up hole had been filled in.



However, there were more tyre marks the following day. It does look like there are BMX tracks. Another hole had been dug up as well. The Parish Warden taped off the area and added topsoil.

The Amenity Officer sent an email with these pictures to the PCSO. They visited the office in January and said they will monitor the situation and to keep informing them if anything similar happens elsewhere in the Parish.



Amenity Committee Meeting

Date: 4 March 2025

Agenda Item/Title: 5.1 Update Report

Purpose of Report: Information

10 Women's Institute Environment Group

We have been asked to share the following information with the Amenity Committee:

Survey of Foxley Fields, January 2023 onwards

Notes for the Parish Council, February 2025

Introduction

The Women's Institute Environment Group (WIEG) was formed at the suggestion of Mike Coker, Co-ordinator of the Binfield Environment Group (BEG). Since January 2023 the Group, which has 16 members, has met monthly. Its focus is to survey Foxley Fields, looking for things that fly, i.e. birds, bees and butterflies. In addition, flowers in bloom which are needed by pollinators and other related things of interest are noted.

The results of the survey are listed in full in the monthly notes, and in brief on a spreadsheet which is sent to Mike Coker who collates the results from all the village survey sites. The spreadsheet showing results from January 2023 until February 2025 is attached.

Methodology

Foxley Fields is divided into five zones. Members of the group work in pairs for one hour, using *Field Studies Council Guides* and apps such as *Picture This* and *Merlin Bird ID* to aid identification. Photographs are often taken if identification is difficult or if something interesting is found. Correct identification can be difficult, particularly of bees, and can depend on individual knowledge. In the second hour of the meeting pairs report their findings to the whole group, pointing out unusual findings and sharing knowledge.

Results in Brief

Total species:

Birds - 27

Bees - 10

Butterflies - 6

Flowers – 179*

*The Group maintains the Mindfulness Garden at the Foxes' Den, where planting has helped to improve the year-round interest for pollinators. There are now up to 30 species in bloom at one time.

Conclusion

Very few pollinators are seen, so continuing to select plants to attract them is very important. This ongoing monthly survey, with its detailed results from each of the five zones within Foxley Fields, could be of value in future planning for planting in the area.