# MINUTES OF FRIENDS OF TYTHERINGTON & ITCHINGTON COUNTRYSIDE GROUP HELD ON THURSDAY 12th MARCH 2026 IN THE BAPTIST SCHOOLROOM

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# Attendance

Present: Sally Gordon
Andrea Barrow
Jean Aellen
Richard Cornock
John Daly
Matthew Lipton
Tony Boak
Rob Trowell

# 1. Apologies for Absence

None

# 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

**The minutes of the Countryside meeting held on the 16th October 2025 were signed as correct.**

# 3. Reports from Wardens

## Common Alm

There is currently no warden for the Common Alm. Matthew Lipton requested that anyone who is out for a walk in the area could assess the condition of the Common Alm and report their observations. He encouraged individuals to inspect the site and share any findings regarding its state.

## Hardwicke Field

Crossways were contracted to clear the overgrowth along the pathway leading up to Hardwicke Field and to remove cotoneasters that had begun to dominate certain areas. The warden expressed satisfaction with the quality of the work completed, noting improvements to the area.

Despite these efforts, the ground remained muddy, which continued to pose a challenge for access, especially during wet weather. In addition, Matthew Lipton cut back a significant amount of overgrowth along the field border and opened up the car park area, allowing for more vehicles to park during events. This improvement was welcomed as it provided greater accessibility for attendees.

### Itchington Common

#### Fencing and Grazing Arrangements

The installation of fencing at Itchington Common has been completed. The warden is currently waiting to hear whether Graham Barthard would like to utilise the field for grazing his sheep.

#### Flood Management Proposal and Site Meeting

FWAGSW has been in contact with the Parish Council regarding a proposal to construct dams using debris along Owls Nest Brooks. The intention is to help alleviate flooding on Shelland Lane. A site meeting has been scheduled for Friday, 20th March at 10:00. The warden advised that an alternative, easier route to the brook is available, which avoids the steep and muddy pathway.

The Clerk noted that the Local Plan designates a parcel of land near the motorway for maintenance by the Quarry. The Quarry periodically tests the water in this area and is aware of the FSWAG request. Access to the site can be gained via the path situated on the motorway side.

## Tytherington Hill

- Path obstructions have been cleared, especially overhanging fallen trees.
- An unsafe rope swing was removed.
- The lime kiln area was cleared. Small trees growing inside need removal to prevent destabilisation of the internal structure.
- Rotten fence posts along the quarry edge have been replaced.
- A meeting was held with Matt Byrne from Severn Rivers Trust to discuss pond restoration and creation, focusing on developing a suitable habitat for Great Crested Newts under Natural England's District Level License (DLL) scheme.

## Stidcott Platt

Stidcott Platt remains under stewardship management, scheduled to conclude in 2027. Richard Cornock has managed the area for twenty-six years, initially under a DEFRA ten-year agreement before the current stewardship arrangement. From 2028 onwards, a new agreement will focus on controlling the spread of scrub, particularly brambles. Spraying is not permitted, so the recommended approach is a hay cut; although the hay is unsuitable for feed, it can be used for bedding. Typically, the area is mulched in February with a hedge trimmer, but this year wet ground prevented the work. The site will stay in its current state until winter, when another hay cut may be possible. Brambles and hemlock continue to spread, and there was a case of hemlock poisoning in cattle last year due to seeds washed onto the nearby farm. The stewardship agreement for 2028 will not provide further funding, but Stidcott Platt continues to support a wide variety of flower species.

# Baden Hill Common

## Woodland Management

A group of neighbours assisted in clearing diseased or damaged trees, carried out hazel coppicing, and removed additional self-sown sycamores. Fallen branches from winter storms were piled up to create insect hotels.

## Snowdrop Planting

In the road triangle and deeper woodlands, native snowdrops have been split and replanted. The colony is becoming more established as they self-propagate through bulblets and seed.

## Future Transplanting

Next year, bulbs from established areas will be transplanted to the roadside margins above and below the road triangle.

## Foxglove Planting

Seedlings from native foxgloves planted in 2024 have thrived. Although foxgloves are biennials and this summer's display may not be as spectacular as last year, annual sowing will continue.

## Brambles Management

The main activity this spring will focus on clearing brambles that have overtaken much of the grassland area.

# Funding Allocation for 2026/2027

**The Clerk advised there was £5000 shared between the wardens.**

# Discussion on the Way Forward for T&I's Green Spaces

The Clerk reported having been in touch with Claire Dinsdale, previously with TCV and now running her own company. Claire is enthusiastic about returning to work for Tytherington Parish Council, and her contact details will be circulated to the Countryside Wardens.
Sally Gordon noted the possibility of engaging Rolls Royce services but would need to clarify the exact nature of the work required.
The Clerk also contacted South Gloucestershire Council regarding the Robbo Cutter and Thornbury Town Council to see if their equipment could be hired for use. She has also approached CVS to enquire about local volunteers and expects feedback soon.

# Discussion on River Severn Trust Proposal: Pond Creation for Great Crested Newts on Tytherington Hill

The group considered a proposal from the River Severn Trust to excavate new ponds on Tytherington Hill, aiming to enhance habitats for great crested newts.

The group discussed the prospect of creating additional ponds to further support the breeding and wellbeing of the newt population. The River Severn Trust's proposal involves excavation and annual maintenance of the ponds, which would reduce the Council's workload.

The Clerk advised that the land is owned by Heidelberg, so the Parish Council cannot make decisions regarding developments on the site. The ground may consist of solid rock, posing potential challenges for excavation. The group was asked to consider the merits of the proposal, especially the benefits to local biodiversity and the encouragement of nature through new habitat creation and maintenance but the final decisions on the land will be made by Heidelberg, who are aware of the situation.

There being no further bunsess the meeting closed at 8.40 pm