



Hawridge & Cholesbury Commons Preservation Society

Annual General Meeting 2nd December 2021

Hon. Treasurer's Report

The Accounts for the year to 31 October 2021 have been approved by the Committee and reviewed by the Hon. Examiner, Mr Mike Fletcher, whom I would like to thank for his diligent work. A copy of the signed accounts can be found in the 'Commons' website. They will be proposed for adoption by the Members following this report.

There was a small overall increase in members to 155 (2019-20 147) who contributed, together with Members' donations, a sum of £1,935 (2019-20 £1,720). It is good to see an increase and several new members have joined already in this new year. I do encourage all Members to 'sign up' their neighbours, especially those moving to the Hilltop villages who may know nothing of our activities. It really is amazing value!

We received £600 in other donations (2019-20 £200) comprising £350 from the proceeds of sale of 'Thomas' by the 'Thomas the Tank Fund'. As Mark has mentioned, it is to be used to meet the cost of bulbs to be planted in conjunction with the school of which £200 has been spent this autumn and planted under Christine's guidance. £150 was raised by Janet Hopkinson with her 'Don't scare the horses' event and £100 was from Barclays - by way of apology for appalling service!

I do want to thank Lindsay Griffin for her amazing efforts in not only maintaining the sales of calendars and cards during last winter's lockdown but actually increasing them, making a profit over the year of £1,807 (2019-20 £1,714). I must also thank those very talented photographers in the villages who have contributed some really great photographs. This comprises a major and vital part of our annual income.

After careful consideration over the previous year the Committee made the decision to sell the tractor. Whilst it was being used increasingly less, it continued to incur costs of maintenance and insurance. We had a reducing number of drivers and to



the inexperienced it was a hazard on the steeper slopes. We therefore decided that it is better to use an experienced contractor to undertake the necessary works to the Commons. The sale substantially increased our income in the year but is, of course, a 'one off'.

Generally, our expenditure was similar to recent years save for contracting. That increase was not due to the sale of the tractor as the work was undertaken by our contractor, James Jolliffe, in the previous season. The work itself was greater with two summer cuts of grass and bracken being necessary this year; it simply grew a lot! As I forewarned last year, and Mark has mentioned, there was a considerable amount of winter work to be done along the bottom ride and the removal of weed from Pallets Pond, a biennial task until other means of control are available. Neither were tasks that our tractor could have done. I expect the total contracting costs to be less in the present year but they will vary from year to year, dependent upon the necessary work.

I think all will agree that the Commons looked better than ever this year; our thanks go to Christine and Janet for their planning, to James Jolliffe for his execution of it and the strimmer operators who keep the paths clear.

At the end of the year the reserves of the Society were at their highest recorded of £17,306 (2019-20 £14,894). With the potential need to replace the tractor removed the surplus is very substantial. It means there are funds available for new projects and also to cover any significant expenditure that may arise unexpectedly. Given the reserves and the anticipated level of annual costs I am not proposing a change the present subscription, which has remained the same for a decade or more.

I or other members of the Committee will be happy to answer any questions on the accounts or other matters.

Philip Prettejohn