

HAWRIDGE AND CHOLESBURY COMMONS' PRESERVATION SOCIETY
52nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
TUESDAY 26TH NOVEMBER 2019 AT CHOLESBURY VILLAGE HALL
MINUTES

PRESENT: Lindsay Griffin (Chairman), David Barnard (Vice Chair), Ben Lewis (Treasurer), Committee Members – Nick Brown, Isobel Clark, David Dennis, Sarah Higgins, Mark Hobbs, Janet Hopkinson (taking minutes) and Tim Watts. Christine Stott, Joan Barnard, Georgie Brown, Charles and Liz Firth, James and Louisa Jolliffe, Windsor and Paddy Thomas, Joan Walton, Margaret Walton,

1.0 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Lindsay Griffin welcomed everyone to the 52nd AGM of the Society. Apologies were received from Gill Fleckney, Sue and Mike Fletcher, Diana Garner, Ian and Sue Phillips, Philip Prettejohn, Dave Tarn, Richard Vasey and Rebecca Walton.

2.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM

The minutes of 2018 AGM held on 27th November had been posted on the HCCPS website, emailed to all those who had attended and hard copies were available at tonight's meeting.

It was agreed that these were a true and accurate record and were duly signed by Lindsay Griffin.

3.0 MATTERS ARISING

Contract work, Forestry Work, Ash dieback, Volunteers and Species surveys – these were all dealt with in the Chairman's report (see below)

4.0 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A copy of Lindsay Griffin's report is attached, the salient points being:

- Concerns at the beginning of Lindsay's chairmanship as to the funding of a successor to Duncan and Wesley to carry out contract work on the Common had been unfounded. James Jolliffe has since carried out two seasons of cutting using large and efficient machinery at an affordable price.
- A healthy bank balance due to subs, sale of cards and calendars, donations and the occasional grant have meant that subscription rates have again remained unchanged and work has been carried out as required.
- Removal of trees suffering from Ash dieback is currently the only unknown future cost.
- There have been no complaints at the cutting regime this year where James cut large areas with his bigger machinery, smaller paths with smaller machinery and volunteers managed the very smallest of paths using the wheeled strimmer.
- Locals have been most complimentary about the cutting regime and whilst the scraped areas to extend the heather beds looks a little unsightly, people are supportive of what the Society is trying to achieve in this area.
- Forestry Work: No further major work is planned although work continues in order that Christine fulfils the grant requirements of the Forestry Commission. This includes scrub clearance from Stoney Lane,

scallops along Hawridge Vale and scrub clearance along the bottom horse ride. Some areas currently look a little unsightly but the work needs to be carried out prior to the ground getting any wetter and before the birds start to nest.

- There were a few complaints regarding the mess but both Rupert van Hullen and Veronica Mash, with experience in managing land, have undertaken to talk to any of their neighbours who had expressed concern.
- Species Survey. David Dennis and Peter Bygate have continued with periodic moth trapping and have now recorded over 230 species on the Commons.

Dave and Mary Braddock are continuing their surveys, recording surviving species and also those new to the Commons. This increase goes against a general nationwide trend and proves that many of the current management practices are working. BORG continue to monitor bird boxes and there have been successful broods once again. Two more owl boxes have been put up on Hawridge Common.

- Community Involvement. Year 5 of the school approached the Society to help with the Make a Difference Project which included working with them to erect bird boxes, build a bug hotel and plant native daffodils with Christine's permission. There was also a very successful moth release with lots of fascinated little children.
- Committee – Ben Lewis is stepping down from the committee having kept meticulous financial records and made it possible to gather subs electronically which has been hugely beneficial. Janet Hopkinson is also stepping down but has agreed to remain as a co-opted member.
- We are pleased to report that Philip Prettejohn and Rebecca Walton have both agreed to stand for election to the committee. Veronica Mash has offered to continue with the website updates, Stephen Tricks to monitor the Society's insurance and Carol Filer with sales of calendars.
- Volunteers – thanks once again to the regular Conservation Volunteers, those who have carried out species surveys, litter pickers, photographers, sponsors and Susie Bell who continues to design the calendar.
- In September of this year these supporters were invited to join the committee at a BBQ generously hosted by Christine with members of the committee providing food, wine, marquees and doing the cooking! Despite a hugely disappointing change in the run of good weather it was enjoyed by all and thanks to the generosity of many, this event cost the Society nothing. It is hoped to run a similar event again next year.
- An unexpected but very welcome £200 grant has been awarded to the Society as part of a scheme organised by the Conservation Volunteers to carry out clean up activities that have a direct benefit to the environment, the funding made possible from the sale of single-use carrier bags from TK Maxx and Homesense. Any ideas welcome of how we can use this.....
- The Commons have looked at their very best most of the time in the past year and with a contractor on board enabling us to do much more than we managed previously, along with the goodwill from much of the community this has been achievable. Combine this with Christine's careful stewardship and our own efforts and it is hoped we can continue

to keep the Commons as a safe haven for the plant and animal species that live here and a constant source of pleasure for us humans.

5.0 TREASURER'S REPORT

A copy of the Society's final accounts for the year ended 31st October is attached. These have been examined and validated by Mike Fletcher. The salient points are:

- Income to year ended October 2019 was £4,569 with expenditure at £3,956.
- The Society's surplus for the year is £613.
- Membership remains buoyant at 150, very slightly down on last year (156)
- The one-off sale of the mower yielded £475.
- Calendar and card sales totalled £1268 of which calendars totalled £1086. Again this is largely thanks to the stalwart efforts of Lindsay Griffin
- Donations totalled £646 (£300 of which was via Christine Stott from a film production company which had used the Commons)
- A £500 donation from Bucks County Council (thanks to Chris Brown) was spent on a wheeled strimmer.
- The cost of running the Society's tractor versus the benefits of keeping it will be reviewed during 2020. Average running cost is approximately £1,000 per annum, including insurance and maintenance costs.
- Expenditure was £1120 more than last year reflecting an increase in cut & collect costs, work done on the tractor and also stump grinding.
- Insurance costs were slightly increased.
- Net assets remain strong at £14,820.
- Looking ahead, the membership fee will remain at £10 for a 9th year in a row.
- It was felt that overall the Society remained in good shape financially.

6.0 QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

There were no questions from the floor.

7.0 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

Chairman: Lindsay Griffin was proposed by Christine Stott and seconded by Janet Hopkinson. There being no further nominations Lindsay Griffin was duly elected.

Vice Chair: David Barnard was proposed by Paddy Thomas and seconded by Nick Brown.

There being no further nominations David Barnard was duly elected

Treasurer: Philip Prettejohn was proposed by Joan Barnard and seconded by David Dennis.

There being no further nominations Philip Prettejohn was duly elected

Minute Secretary: This position will be carried out by members of the Committee on a rotational basis.

Committee Members: Nick Brown, John Caple, Isobel Clark, David Dennis, Sarah Higgins, Mark Hobbs and Tim Watts were all prepared to stand for re-election en-bloc.

The committee was proposed by Liz Firth and seconded by Windsor Thomas.

Additional Committee Member: Following Janet Hopkinson's resignation there was one committee vacancy. Rebecca Walton who unfortunately could not attend tonight, was willing to stand for election, was nominated by Christine Stott, seconded by David Dennis and duly elected.

Hon Examiner: Mike Fletcher had agreed to stand again as Honorary Examiner and was duly elected.

There being no further formal business to discuss there was a break for refreshments at 8.10pm during which time subscriptions could be paid and merchandise bought.

Following the break Janet Hopkinson read out a small selection of the letters that had been written to Lindsay, David and John by the Year 5 children from Hawridge & Cholesbury School, thanking the three of them for the time they spent with them on the Commons. Three presentations followed – one regarding the heather expansion and one regarding Pallett's Pond, both given by David Dennis, with Lindsay Griffin concluding the evening with a round-up of activities throughout the year.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 9.45pm

Signed.....

Dated.....