

## Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers

### Minutes of the AGM - 16th April 2018

Present :	Colin Melhuish, John Robinson, Pip Robinson, Mike Saynor, Juliet Davis, Liz Read, Bernard Paddison, Sheila Hunt, Derek Harding, Diana Poole, Christine Artus, Liz Webster, Jessamy Wilson, Lao Holland, Jon Cole (St Paul's Churchyard Tree Succession Project).
Apologies :	Mike & Valerie Davis, Valerie Givan, Jordan Sinclair, Peter Amor, Paul Hucklesby, Helen Hucklesby.
Minutes :	The minutes of the previous meeting were available for inspection and accepted as a true record.
Matters Arising :	<p>BP attended first aid training over the summer and reported that it was worthwhile course.</p> <p>The newly planted trees and saplings were watered during dry spells over the summer months.</p> <p>CM contacted HAWC to arrange hedge laying training.</p>

<p>Work Party Summary 2017/18</p> <p>CM</p>	<p><b><u>SUMMARY 2017/18:</u></b>  CM reported another busy year in which we undertook two major projects; the regeneration of a section of compartment 3 and the laying of a length of hedge on Jubilee Avenue alongside "The Bermuda Triangle".</p> <p><b><u>STATISTICS:</u></b>  Work party statistics were improved upon again this year. There was an increase in attendance for both Saturday and midweek work parties compared to last year with 26 individual members active over the season.</p> <p>There were 12 scheduled Saturday work parties equating to 150 'person mornings' and an average turnout of 12.5 members (up from 147 and 12.25 last year)</p> <p>There were 14 scheduled midweek work parties equating to 111 'person mornings' and an average turnout of 7.93 members (up from 87 and 7.25 last year).</p> <p>This equates to a total of 261 cups of tea/coffee and a staggering 522 biscuits.</p> <p><b><u>PROGRESS:</u></b>  Pre-season activities were arranged for the early autumn to acquire some training in hedge laying. CM, MS and DH attended a H.A.W.C. hedge laying session and gained practical experience laying a section of hedge at Larks Hill in Bracknell.</p> <p>MS also arranged small ad hoc work parties to water newly planted trees during the dry summer months.</p>
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Work began in the autumn in compartment 1, tidying up the debris from a large mature oak tree that fell in the previous spring. Four new oak trees were planted in compartment 1 as replacements for the tree lost.

Coppicing work continued in compartment 1 to provide poles and binders to be used later when laying the hedge along Jubilee Avenue.

One session was spent clearing the regrowth of willow scrub and brambles on Connaught Avenue.

Most of the remaining work parties were spent regenerating a section of compartment 3 (coppicing hazel, removal of holly and bramble) and laying the hedge along Jubilee Avenue.

Several hundred (>350) hazel whips were subsequently planted in the cleared area of compartment 3. Spare whips were also planted alongside the main path in compartment 4.

The hedge laying was a great success and proved to be very enjoyable with 60m of hedge being laid. Most volunteers were involved at some point and gained practical knowledge of use of a billhook for laying the hedge as well as preparation of poles and weaving of binders to strengthen the hedge. Feedback from the local community has been extremely positive.

We also spent time in compartments 3, 6 and 2 carrying out maintenance in the form of bramble bashing and actions to cut back any holly re-growth.

The annual nest box survey was once again carried out over several sessions (Details MS).

Volunteers also took part in the RSPB "Great Garden Birdwatch" lead by IH. Results can be seen on our facebook page.

A litter pick was organised to coincide with the "Big Wokingham Litter Pick" weekend. Several bags of rubbish were collected.

Leaves were blown from the footpaths to reduce the amount of rotting leaf litter that usually builds up through the winter. This winter it would seem that WTC contractor (Mac) has kept the paths in good condition and so our involvement has been minimal this time.

Bluebell seed gathered in the summer was scatted in bare areas of The Copse.

Some temporary repairs have been made to the wooden footbridges over the ditch as rotting timbers have begun to pose a potential hazard. More work will be required over the coming spring to finally replace all the rotten timbers.

A vandalized nature watch sign has been removed. This will be repaired and re-installed within the next few weeks.

<p>Treasurer's Report. MD</p>	<p>The Treasurer's summary of the annual accounts had been circulated earlier and these were accepted.</p> <p>DH reported that following last year's record inflows and outflows related to the Tesco path project things had returned very much back to normal this year. Income this year was predominately provided by WTC and Waitrose. The largest items of expenditure were on insurance (reimbursed by WTC), hazel plants, nest boxes and tools.</p> <p>DH reminded us that as a WTC 'service provider' organisation we now only need to apply for our support grant once every three years. DH &amp; CM recently attended the Town Hall meeting at which grants are distributed for 2018/19.</p> <p>MS reported that we have obtained promises of funding for the Connaught Avenue drainage project from The Wokingham Society, The Haines Hill Charitable Trust and WTC which will hopefully boost our income next year. WTC will commission the works which will enable VAT to be reclaimed.</p>								
<p>Election of Officers :</p>	<p>Officers were all prepared to stand again, so with no further nominations all were elected for another year.</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="363 902 1182 1048"> <tr> <td>Coordinators</td> <td>Mike Saynor and Colin Melhuish</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Treasurer</td> <td>Derek Harding</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tools Management</td> <td>Colin Melhuish / John Robinson</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Refreshments</td> <td>Pip Robinson</td> </tr> </table>	Coordinators	Mike Saynor and Colin Melhuish	Treasurer	Derek Harding	Tools Management	Colin Melhuish / John Robinson	Refreshments	Pip Robinson
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<p>Training</p>	<p>BP attended first aid training last summer and it was felt that we now have a sufficient number of trained first aiders for our needs (those being BP, DH &amp; LR)</p> <p>CM, MS and DH received some "on the job" training in hedge laying with HAWC prior to our working season.</p>
<p>Safety &amp; Data Security</p>	<p>The need for HCCV to comply with the new European data protection regulations (GDPR) was discussed. This requires that members are informed as to how their personal information is used and maintained by HCCV and that they are in agreement with this policy. LR volunteered to draw up a suitable document which would be used in conjunction with our current emergency contact form to comply with this regulation. <b>ACTION LR</b></p> <p>The most extensive list of HCCV related email contacts is currently maintained by MS. It was agreed that MS would produce and distribute an email which would prompt the recipient to respond if they wished to continue receiving email communications from HCCV. <b>ACTION MS</b></p>

<p>Work Plans 2018/19:</p>	<p>Summer: Ad-hoc work parties will be organised to water the newly planted hazel and oak as required according to the weather conditions.</p> <p>Wokingham in Bloom is returning this year and The Copse will be on the judging route once again. A work party will be organised to tidy up prior to the judge's visit in July. <b>ACTION MS</b></p> <p>Autumn/Winter: The usual leader's tour of The Copse will be carried out pre-season in order to identify and prioritise potential winter tasks. <b>ACTION MS, CM, LR, JR, JD</b></p> <p>Coppicing and holly clearance will continue over the coming autumn/winter.</p> <p>We will also be laying the hedge alongside The Copse and Jubilee Avenue.</p>
<p>Website, Flickr and Other Publicity :</p>	<p>CM has paid the annual subscription for the hccv.org domain name (£12). Hosting of the website is still obtained for no cost.</p> <p>Information outlining progress made during 2016/17 has been uploaded to the HCCV website as an ongoing record of work completed.</p> <p>The website blog has been regularly updated with up to the minute snippets of news and information.</p> <p>The facebook group has been a little more active this year with posts from IH and CM. We have 13 members. CM also copies facebook posts to our blog on the website.</p> <p>CM has regularly posted to the Joel Park &amp; Emmbrook Community Facebook page when there has been significant news to report. Feedback has always been very favourable with the community showing gratitude for the work that we do.</p> <p>CM sent an article about our hedge laying activities to the JPRA for inclusion in the latest community newsletter.</p> <p>The display board has not been updated for many months and is at present still displaying the progress report prepared following last year's AGM. Content needs to be reviewed more often. <b>ACTION CM, MS, JR</b></p>
<p>Bird Boxes :</p>	<p>MS had previously distributed the report on the use of nest boxes for 2017 and confirmed that usage was approximately 75%, much in line with previous years. Once again this spring MS is conducting nest material preference experiments this time with red and black coloured wool. Last year red wool was found in nests up to 120m away.</p>
<p>Work Party Dates 2018/19 :</p>	<p>CM suggested that as spring seems to be arriving earlier each year we might consider starting our winter schedule a little earlier next autumn and finishing earlier in the spring. It was decided though to keep the start date as is for now.</p> <p>CM will schedule Saturday and midweek (Tuesday/Friday) work parties and circulate the selected dates to members via email when available and update the website. <b>ACTION CM</b></p>

AOB :	<p>LR raised the poor state of the path at the dip just before it reaches Holt Lane. This stretch has been flooded for many weeks due to the bad winter weather. It was agreed that topping up with additional planings should rectify the problem. LR may have access to some suitable planings and will enquire as to the quantity and availability. An ad-hoc work party will be scheduled as and when required. <b>ACTION LR</b></p> <p>The formal part of the meeting closed, after thanks to Pip &amp; John for hosting the meeting.</p>
Post meeting activity :	<p>The evening was rounded off with a very interesting and informative presentation by entomologist Jon Cole on the invertebrate wildlife surveys at St Paul's Churchyard.</p> <p>It was suggested by Jon that a survey of moths might be the most productive and enjoyable way of introducing HCCV members to conducting wildlife surveys of The Copse.</p> <p>The presentation was very well received and thoroughly enjoyed by all.</p>

Colin Melhuish

29th May 2018