

Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers

Minutes of the AGM - 29th April 2019

Present :	Colin Melhuish, John Robinson, Pip Robinson, Mike Saynor, Liz Reed, Gareth Reed, Sheila Hunt, Derek Harding, Diana Poole, Jessamy Wilson, Lao Holland, Peter Amor, Valerie Givan, Arlene Du Preez, Karl Boddy, Cathy Boddy, Robin Ashton, Munirah Ahmad
Apologies :	Candy Taylor, Bernard Paddison, Jordan Sinclair, Juliet Davis, Hilary Jenkins, Miguel Ogilvie.
Minutes :	The minutes of the previous meeting were available for inspection and accepted as a true record.
Matters Arising :	<p>Email Addresses: It was agreed at the first work party that members were happy for their email addresses to be visible to other members on HCCV emails and as such the use of bcc in HCCV communications for privacy purposes would not be required.</p> <p>Wokingham in Bloom: Holt Copse was on the judging route for Wokingham in Bloom last summer and a work party was organised to smarten things up prior to the judge's visit. The bloom committee very much appreciated our efforts. The Copse will once again be on the judging route this coming July.</p> <p>Display Board: The display board contents were changed following last year's AGM but subsequently have not been updated for a long time. It was agreed that someone needs to be appointed responsible for keeping the contents current.</p> <p>Post meeting note: RA has volunteered to help with this role.</p>

Work Party Summary 2018/19 CM	<p>SUMMER ACTIVITIES:</p> <p>A moth Survey was held in July in the garden of 11 Larch Avenue (which backs on to The Copse). Highlights were: - 64 different species recorded, 197 moths counted (plus approx. 600 water veneer). Results in spreadsheet format have been uploaded to the website.</p> <p>Newly planted hazel was watered on three occasions.</p> <p>Repairs were made to both footbridges with rotten end posts being replaced.</p> <p>AUTUMN/WINTER ACTIVITIES:</p> <p>CM reported another busy year in which we undertook two major projects, the regeneration of a section of compartment 6, and the laying of a length of hedge alongside The Copse.</p>
----------------------------------	--

WORK PARTY STATISTICS:

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 34 individual members active over the season (up from 26 last year). That's eight new faces this year.

There were 12 scheduled Saturday work parties equating to 168 'person mornings' and an average turnout of 14 members (up from 150 and 12.5 last year)

There were 11 scheduled midweek work parties equating to 102 'person mornings' and an average turnout of 9.2 members (down from 111 and up from 7.93 last year).

PROGRESS:

Work began in the autumn in compartment 6 removing holly and coppicing what hazel survived in this neglected compartment. This was the main task for the winter occupying most work parties. Several hundred hazel were subsequently planted in this area along with some small oak and hawthorn.

Maintenance was also carried out in compartment 3 (last year's clearance) and the top end of compartment 1 removing bramble and holly re-growth.

One session was spent clearing the regrowth of willow scrub and brambles on Connaught Avenue. Two small red oak trees were subsequently transplanted into The Avenue and a medium sized dead red oak felled.

Hedge laying alongside Jubilee Avenue was carried out by small groups lead by JR in parallel with the main coppicing tasks with 40m of hedge being laid. The remainder of the hedge will be laid next winter.

We also spent some time in compartment 2 carrying out maintenance in the form of bramble bashing and tidying up felled timber and brash following a visit from WTC's tree surgeons.

Towards the end of the winter we spent several work parties clearing laurel from compartment 7 (behind the children's playground). Some large overgrown hazel in this area was also coppiced and a quantity of new hazel planted.

One session was spent clearing bramble and planting 42m of new hedge alongside the "Bermuda Triangle". Plants, canes and protection spirals were donated by The Woodland Trust.

A dead hedge was constructed at the main entrance on Jubilee Avenue to restrict the width and deter any potential unwanted access by vehicles. The base of the main hedge was cleared out and the area re-seeded with grass.

The annual nest box survey was once again carried out over several sessions (see separate report).

This winter the WTC contractor (Mac) has kept the paths blown and in good condition and so our involvement with leaf blowing has been minimal this time.

	<p>Some temporary strengthening repairs were made to the “top” wooden boardwalk to reduce the amount of “bounce” in the planking. All boardwalks have subsequently been removed and replaced with hard paths incorporating drainage pipes beneath. This work was funded by WTC and carried out by Burrows contractors.</p>								
<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 read through the accounts highlighting major income and expense items. DH clarified that the Haines Hill donation for the drainage project was immediately paid on to WTC who were the commissioning body for this work. Income this year was predominately provided by WTC and donations from Aviva and JPRA. The largest items of expenditure were on insurance and bridge materials (both reimbursed by WTC), hazel plants 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. This is currently our third year and a fresh application will be required from us this summer.</p> <p>MS will apply for the Waitrose community matters scheme once again this year as our two year exclusion period is about to expire. ACTION MS</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> <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
Coordinators	Mike Saynor and Colin Melhuish								
Treasurer	Derek Harding								
Tools Management	Colin Melhuish / John Robinson								
Refreshments	Pip Robinson								

<p>Training</p>	<p>DH will require a refresher first aid course as his certificate is about to expire. ACTION DH, CM</p> <p>It was felt that we currently have a sufficient number of trained first aiders for our needs (those being BP, DH & LR)</p>
-----------------	---

<p>Work Plans 2019/20:</p>	<p>Summer:</p> <p>Ad-hoc work parties will be organised to water the newly planted hazel and oak as required according to the weather conditions.</p> <p>The laid hedges will require a light trim in late spring.</p> <p>The Copse will once again be on the judging route for Wokingham in Bloom this summer. A work party will be required to tidy up prior to the judge’s visit in July. ACTION MS to organise.</p>
----------------------------	--

	<p>The Joel Park Residents Association (JPRA) will be holding their “Party in the Park” once again this summer on 30th June. It was agreed that HCCV attendance at this event in some form would be good for our community involvement. CM suggested setting up a gazebo with the “tryptic” and giving guided tours of The Copse. DH suggested that he could possibly bring along his ferrets as an additional attraction. ACTION CM to liaise with JPRA.</p> <p>Post Meeting Note: DH and ferrets are un-available for this event as this date clashes with the Hurst Show.</p> <p>Autumn Winter:</p> <p>We will be carrying out our regular tasks of coppicing and hedge laying this coming winter.</p>
<p>Website, Flickr and Other Publicity :</p>	<p>CM has paid for the annual website domain name registration for 2019/20 (£12).</p> <p>The website has been updated with the 2017/18 progress reports and the blog has been updated regularly with snippets of news and observations.</p> <p>Photos of the summer drainage works have been uploaded to our Flickr page.</p> <p>The Facebook group has been a little more active this year with posts from IH and CM. We now have 20 members up from 13 last year. Facebook posts by CM are also copied to our blog on the website.</p> <p>CM has occasionally posted to the Joel Park Residents Facebook page when there has been significant news to report. Feedback is always very favourable with the community showing gratitude for the work that we do.</p> <p>CM sent articles about the benefits of coppicing and our annual nest box survey to the JPRA for inclusion in last summer and this spring’s community newsletter, copies of which were available to read.</p> <p>We will once again attend the Wokingham Volunteer Fair in the autumn.</p> <p>MS suggested that our standard leaflets be updated before the WVF to highlight more the health and wellbeing benefits of volunteering. ACTION MS, CM, PR</p>
<p>Bird Boxes :</p>	<p>MS had previously distributed the report on the use of nest boxes for 2018 and confirmed that usage was greater than 75%, much in line with previous years. Unfortunately this year many boxes had been damaged, vandalism being suspected in most cases. Conspicuous boxes have subsequently been moved and some additional donated boxes have been installed.</p> <p>Mike Smith has provided us with GPS co-ordinates for all the boxes and is in the process of finding us a suitable app to utilise this data.</p>
<p>Work Party Dates 2019/20 :</p>	<p>CM will schedule Saturday and midweek (Tuesday/Friday) work parties and circulate the selected dates to members via email and update the website accordingly. ACTION CM</p>

<p>AOB :</p>	<p>VG commented that the path between the top boardwalk and Holt lane was liable to flooding in the winter months. LR acknowledged that this was highlighted last year and will endeavour to ascertain if some suitable planings can be sourced to fill the dip in the path. ACTION LR</p> <p>LR commented on the rampant spread of yellow archangel in compartment 2. MS proposed that we tackle removing this invasive species as part of our winter work schedule.</p> <p>MS sounded out the idea of installing a bench or two in The Copse. It was agreed that this was an excellent idea and should be followed up. MS has requested details of benches installed at Dinton Pastures from Duncan Fisher at WBC Countryside Service.</p> <p>CB suggested that the Hedge and Woodland Conservation (HAWC) group may have funds available for groups such as ours. CB will make enquiries at the HAWC AGM in August.</p> <p>The formal part of the meeting closed, after thanks to Pip & John for hosting the meeting.</p>
<p>Post meeting activity :</p>	<p>The evening was rounded off with a very entertaining and informative presentation by GR and LR on the wildlife of New Zealand.</p> <p>Those present were introduced to the many and varied species of birds, including the Kiwi, along with their Maori folklore. GR talked about his recent experiences working as a volunteer with the New Zealand DoC surveying, trapping and tagging bats, the only mammals native to the islands.</p> <p>The presentation was very well received and thoroughly enjoyed by all.</p>