

Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers

Minutes of the AGM for Season 2020/21

Held online via Zoom – 28th June 2021

Present :	Colin Melhuish, John Robinson, Pip Robinson, Mike Saynor, Liz Reed, Derek Harding, Valerie Givan, Hilary Jenkins, Ruth Rudwick, Juliet Davis
Apologies :	Jessamy Wilson, Paul Hucklesby
Minutes :	<p>JD commented that the minutes from the previous AGM circulated prior to the meeting were marked as draft and did not contain her apologies for absence. CM commented that this was a document mix-up and assured her that the minutes issued to all earlier in the year and archived on the website were up to date and did contain her apology.</p> <p>Other than the above comment the minutes of the previous AGM were accepted by those present as a true record. MS thanked CM for taking the minutes.</p>
Matters Arising :	<p>MS reported that the back had been stolen from the rustic bench. A replacement has been ordered which we will collect and fit using anti-tamper bolts.</p> <p>Development of the wildflower meadow is currently on hold due to lack of funds at WTC.</p> <p>CM reported that ideas for use of the display board were not forthcoming from the facebook post made earlier in the year. CM will try again to gather ideas from the group.</p>

Work Party Summary 2020/21 CM	<p>AUTUMN/WINTER ACTIVITIES:</p> <p>A short stop/start season in which we were only able to work during October and December due to national covid-19 restrictions. We managed to hold our Christmas work party but restrictions imposed shortly after curtailed our ability to work for the rest of the winter.</p> <p>Even so, 11 of the 17 jobs identified for the season were completed.</p> <p>We worked in small teams of a maximum of six volunteers in order to comply with government restrictions imposed at the time.</p> <p>WORK PARTY STATISTICS:</p> <p>Work party statistics were largely irrelevant this year due to the very short season, but average attendances were pretty much in line with last year's figures.</p> <p>The number of active members was also very similar with 36 recorded over the season (down from 38 last year), including four youngsters doing their D of E</p>
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volunteering.

There were 4 Saturday work parties equating to 67 'person mornings' and an average turnout of 17.9 members (average slightly down on last year)

There were 4 midweek work parties this season equating to 41 'person mornings' and an average turnout of 10.2 members (average slightly up on last year).

PROGRESS MADE:

The rustic bench was installed in its new location in Joel Park.

Yellow archangel bashing was begun in compartment 3.

A new drainage ditch was constructed at the lower end of Connaught Avenue over two sessions.

Maintenance was carried out in compartments 3, 6 and 1a (last year's coppice) removing bramble and holly re-growth. Dead hedges were also repaired around compartment 1a to deter footfall and trampling of bluebells in the spring.

The log piles in compartment 7b (behind the play area) were tidied up after being dismantled and scattered over the summer. Some more laurel and holly was cut back.

Hazel coppicing was started in compartment 7a with some holly and laurel removed. Fallen timber and brushwood left by tree surgeons over the summer was stacked and incorporated into a dead hedge.

One session was spent clearing the regrowth of willow scrub and brambles on Connaught Avenue in Joel Park. Clearance of a large patch of brambles around an old stump at the top of the Avenue was begun.

Three red oaks were planted in Connaught Avenue and four English oaks in The Copse.

The young oak trees on Holt Lane were pruned.

Both hedges alongside Jubilee Avenue were trimmed down to head height and repaired where tree surgeons had felled a large birch tree causing damage.

The recently planted hedge alongside the "Bermuda Triangle" was partially weeded.

The annual nest box survey was once again carried out over several sessions outside of regular work parties (see separate report).

	<p>OTHER NEWS:</p> <p>Joel Park was visited by travellers at the beginning of June. They stayed only one night and were swiftly moved on by WTC. On subsequent inspection of the area it was found that three newly planted red oak trees had been uprooted and several bird boxes destroyed. The broken wooden perimeter rail has been temporarily blocked with large stone blocks. WTC are intending to replace the wooden perimeter rail with an anti-tamper metal rail system.</p>								
<p>Treasurer's Report. DH</p>	<p>The Treasurer's summary of the annual accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting and these were accepted by those present.</p> <p>DH read through the accounts highlighting major income and expense items.</p> <p>DH stated that the larger than usual balance remaining was not a problem as WTC are understanding of our situation regarding restrictions on working this year and have already awarded us the same level of grant as last year.</p>								
<p>Election of Officers : MS</p>	<p>There were no new nominations for election but all existing officers were prepared to continue in their posts through next year.</p> <p>Officers were re-elected en bloc. Proposed by LR, seconded by VG.</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="352 1008 1197 1164"> <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> <p>The call was put out for additional work party leaders. RR put her name forward and CM/MS will arrange for leader training with TVC when courses are back up and running. Additionally other members will be given the opportunity to put their names forward for leader training via an email to the whole group. CM/MS</p>	Coordinators	Mike Saynor and Colin Melhuish	Treasurer	Derek Harding	Tools Management	Colin Melhuish / John Robinson	Refreshments	Pip Robinson
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<p>Safeguarding LR</p>	<p>LR gave an overview of the need for adult and child safeguarding awareness within the group. Safeguarding policy documents used by TCV were circulated before the meeting and it was agreed that these would also be suitable for HCCV use.</p> <p>LR has additionally produced a bullet point safeguarding handout which would be ideal for circulation to volunteers as a training aid.</p> <p>LR, CM and MS to formulate the process to be adopted to ensure that all volunteers are aware of HCCV safeguarding policy before D of E youngsters begin their volunteering with us in the autumn. (It was decided that we could safely cope with a maximum of four D of E volunteers)</p> <p>Safeguarding documentation should be added to the website documentation section once approved. CM</p>
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<p>Website, Flickr and Other Publicity: CM</p>	<p>CM reported that there had not been a lot activity on our social media platforms, those being Flickr, the HCCV website and our Facebook page. AGM minutes and progress reports had been uploaded to our website.</p> <p>MS gave an update on our involvement with Wokingham's entry in the RHS Britain in Bloom scheme. This year Holt Copse and Joel Park were entered into the "It's Your Neighbourhood" competition. This was a written submission backed up with photos and video. No physical inspection would be taking place this year.</p>
<p>Bird Boxes: MS</p>	<p>The report on the use of nest boxes for 2020 was distributed prior to the meeting and confirmed that usage was much in line with previous years with possibly slightly higher percentage occupancy.</p>
<p>AOB :</p>	<p>VG reported that The Woodland Trust is to donate £300K to WBC. MS will attempt to find out more about this donation and how it is intended to be used.</p> <p>MS reported that the main path through The Copse has been eroded in places due to the recent heavy rain. Also the verge alongside the laid hedge on Jubilee Avenue is very overgrown almost blocking the pavement in places. WTC have been contacted about these issues.</p> <p>VG queried the status of the proposed greenway path to be constructed by WBC through the strip of woodland between Jubilee Avenue and Martins Drive. CM reported that work was due to commence in September but objections from local residents have been lodged with WBC. HCCV does not have an official position on this matter but if individual members have comments to make they should be addressed directly to WBC.</p> <p>MS reported that he has had approximately twenty positive responses regarding the proposed summer barbeque social event. The date chosen to suit most people is 17th July. MS will follow up with an email to all concerned with additional details.</p> <p>Summer work parties may be organised to repair the main path erosion, install new wildlife information boards, repair the rustic bench and gather bluebell seed. These activities will be communicated by email as necessary.</p>