

Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers

Minutes of the AGM for Season 2021/22

Held at 11 Larch Avenue – 11th April 2022

Present :	Mike Saynor (Chair) Colin Melhuish (Secretary), John Robinson, Pip Robinson, Liz Reed, Derek Harding, Valerie Givan, Paul Hucklesby, Helen Hucklesby, Candy Taylor, Nikki Smith, Sheila Hunt, Judith Lane, Jessamy Wilson, Annette Praill, Chris Doddington, Steve Thorn, Karl Boddy, Cathy Boddy, Rowan Tizzard, Chris Stapleton
Apologies :	Thanuja Mallikarachchi, Juliet Davies, Robin Ashton, Peter Amor, Arlene DuPreez
Minutes :	Minutes of the 2020/21 AGM were accepted by those present as a true record. MS thanked CM for taking the minutes.
Matters Arising :	<p>There has been no update on the report that The Woodland Trust is donating trees to WBC.</p> <p>MS reported that following the traveller incursion into Joel Park last year WTC have no plans to replace the wooden perimeter barriers but a new metal lockable gate has been installed.</p> <p>CM has been unable to get any information from TVC about future leadership training courses. There is no information on TVC website, emails and phone calls remain unanswered. Anyone wishing to attend a leadership course should contact CM or MS and further attempts to get details from TVC will be made.</p>

Work Party Summary 2021/22 CM	<p>AUTUMN/WINTER ACTIVITIES:</p> <p>For the first time in two years we have managed to complete our working season without a covid-19 interruption.</p> <p>WORK PARTY STATISTICS:</p> <p>There were 12 Saturday work parties equating to 200 ‘person mornings’ and an average turnout of 16.7 members.</p> <p>There were 12 midweek work parties this season equating to 122 ‘person mornings’ and an average turnout of 10.2 members.</p> <p>These figures are slightly up on the last “full” season 2018/19.</p> <p>The number of active members was also very similar with 35 recorded over the season (up from 34 in 2018/19). We welcomed eight new faces this season.</p> <p>We were also assisted by five ladies from the Newbury Building society doing their community volunteering.</p>
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Prospective Duke of Edinburgh volunteers were emailed at the beginning of the season but strangely we had no D of E youngsters joining us this year.

PROGRESS MADE:

In terms of overall progress 15 of the 19 jobs identified for the season were completed.

We undertook four main projects this season, those being:

1. Laying of the Reading Road hedge
2. Coppicing of compartment 2b
3. Restoration of compartment 9 (The Glade)
4. Planting of the Platinum Jubilee birch trees

The first 25-30m section of the Reading Road hedge was laid. Slow progress was made due to the neglected nature of the hedge which was last laid more than 15 years ago.

Compartment 2b was coppiced and brambles cleared. Approximately 80% completed.

Brambles, laurel and scrub were cleared from compartment 9 (The Glade) over several sessions and the area sown with grass seed.

Five silver birch trees were planted in Joel Park to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Trees were funded by a grant from The Newbury Building Society and WTC.

Many maintenance jobs were also carried out:

Brambles and laurel were bashed in compartment 1a and sections of compartments 3 and 6.

Yellow archangel was bashed in compartment 2b.

Both of the laid hedges along Jubilee Avenue were trimmed.

The recently planted hedge alongside the Bermuda Triangle was weeded.

Three replacement red oak trees were planted towards the bottom of Connaught Avenue.

A large bramble patch at the top of Connaught Avenue was cleared and grass seed sown.

Three new Nature Watch signs were installed.

The rustic bench was fitted with a new replacement back using security bolts this time.

	<p>The main path towards the top end at Holt Lane was patched with scalplings.</p> <p>Storm blown branches were cut up and stacked. Damaged hazel trees were coppiced.</p> <p>The repaired owl box was re-installed along with three additional nest boxes.</p> <p>Young oak trees on Holt Lane were pruned.</p> <p>The annual nest box survey was completed (see separate report).</p> <p>OTHER NEWS:</p> <p>Wokingham Town's Mayor paid us a visit to thank us for our volunteering and the positive contribution that it makes to the environment in Wokingham. Some long service awards were made and chocolate bars were distributed to all.</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. There were some items of significant expenditure such as the new nature watch signs and the Platinum Jubilee birch trees leaving an account balance of just under £100 which is to be regarded as about right at the end of our working season.</p> <p>MS thanked DH for his tenacity in pursuing alternative banking arrangements following HSBCs imposition of a monthly banking charge.</p> <p>DH explained that our application to transfer our account to Lloyds has hit a brick wall due to the refusal of Lloyds to accept our application owing to the fact that we already have an account with HSBC.</p> <p>DH will investigate the possibility of opening an account with Metro Bank whose nearest branch is in Reading.</p> <p>DH confirmed that we are still categorised as a WTC service provider but will be checking with WTC as to when we will need to re-apply for this status.</p>								
<p>Election of Officers :</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.</p> <table data-bbox="363 1854 1182 2002"> <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>Steve Thorn put his name forward for leadership training as and when TCV courses become available. Any other members wishing to take part in leader training should contact CM or MS. (Post meeting note: Steve has since been booked onto an online TCV leadership training course.)</p>
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<p>Safeguarding LR</p>	<p>LR reported that she has adapted the TCV (The Conservation Volunteers) safeguarding policy to our needs and gave a talk to members outlining this policy at the first work party of the 2021/22 season and will do the same for the coming 2022/23 season.</p> <p>LR has additionally produced a bullet point safeguarding handout which would be ideal for circulation to volunteers next season as a training aid.</p> <p>Our safeguarding documentation has been added to the website documentation section.</p>
<p>Website, Flickr and Other Publicity: CM</p>	<p>CM outlined the uses of our social media platforms, those being Flickr, the HCCV website and our Facebook page.</p> <p>Flickr is used as our repository for photos taken throughout the season and are freely downloadable for publicity use. Uploads of photos are presently only possible by the login password holders, those being CM and LR. It was decided that those members wishing to upload photos should be provided with the login (please contact LR or CM for details).</p> <p>Our Facebook community has been fairly active this year and currently stands at 35 members, those being a mixture of current and past HCCV members and interested members of the local community.</p> <p>The HCCV website is maintained as our “shop window”, updated to list our work party dates, with the blog page updated to mirror the Facebook posts made by CM. It is not known how much traffic the HCCV blog gets, but it is suspected to be quite minimal as no comments have ever been left.</p> <p>Robin Ashton has volunteered to once again update the contents of the display board located adjacent to the children’s playground. CM will liaise with Robin and provide some fresh images of our activities for printing and inclusion in the display.</p> <p>Holt Copse took part in Wokingham’s entry in the RHS Britain in Bloom scheme last year by means of a video submission filmed during the spring. This year Holt Copse and Joel Park will once again be taking part in Wokingham’s submission.</p> <p>HCCV will take a stall at the Wokingham Volunteer Fair if the event is running this autumn.</p>

<p>Bird Boxes: MS</p>	<p>The report on the use of nest boxes for 2021 was distributed prior to the meeting and MS reported that it seemed to have been a good year for nesting nuthatches.</p> <p>MS informed us that this was the 16th year that the nest box survey had taken place, and reported that the original “woodcrete” boxes were lasting well. Although more expensive than wooden boxes they pay for themselves with longevity and are always well used.</p> <p>Several boxes, including an owl box, were repaired and re-hung following some vandalism last spring.</p>
<p>AOB :</p>	<p>A summer work party will be organised to perform maintenance (clean/varnish) the display board and information board. CM will liaise with JR to arrange a suitable date when the woodwork has dried out sufficiently.</p> <p>The newly planted Jubilee birch trees will need watering throughout the summer. MS, CM and CS will co-ordinate an ad-hoc watering schedule.</p> <p>CM thanked MS for organising the summer BBQ in his garden last July and all present agreed that it was thoroughly enjoyable event.</p>

Colin Melhuish 2nd July 2022