

FRIENDS OF NAPHILL COMMON

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

held at 7.30pm on Thursday 18th January 2024 at The Wheel, Naphill

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Peggy Ewart
Present: Chris Miller (chairman) (CM), Kevin Bennett (KB), John Camp (JC), Peter Davis (PD), Ron Collins (RC), Neil McMinn (NM) and Marian Miller (MM).
- 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2023** were agreed.
- 3. Treasurer's report:** the uninspected accounts for 2023 had been circulated. Half the cost of the information boards had been received from Buckinghamshire Council, otherwise there would have been a loss for the year of about £170. This was because the flail cost more than the amount received in donations. Thanks to all who had donated, especially to Sir Edward Dashwood for his £500 donation. Costs had risen generally but fuel costs were higher because we had two machines (tractor and flail). The increased subscription (from £5 to £10) should enable FONC to stay in the black. The Committee felt the increase could be justified, especially with the recent work on the boards and the superior performance of the flail.
- 4. Membership report:** With about 100 paid-up members there was discussion about the likely effect of the increased subscription and the reduction in membership numbers over the years. Should we have a membership drive? Could non-members who come on the walks be encouraged to join? The Common is well used, especially by dog-walkers and there are new residents (e.g. on the Clappins Lane estate) who may not be aware of FONC.
- 5. Working parties:** PD reported that the work on Shipwash Pond has been successful with water in all parts of the pond. Daisy Pond now just needs an annual tidy-up. Work on Ladyhorse Pond has finished for the winter. Current work is on Willow Pond.
The flail has produced excellent results on the Clumps which will be revisited around Easter-time with log debris cleared ready for the flail.
RC's party is continuing with holly removal, working its way towards Little Oaks.
The flail has been used to widen the Ladies Mile path.

Total working party hours for 2023 – 1,021 (compared to 913 for 2022).

RC had received an email from the Ministry of Defence offering practical help. CM will reply taking up the offer.

Neil Harris (National Trust - NT) had installed the bat and owl boxes at the Clumps – on NT land. The NT's bracken roller may be left at the Clumps in which case FONC will be able to use it.

6. **Walks:** all going well. Whilst walkers don't have to be FONC members they should be encouraged to join.
7. **Mower and flail update:** It was disappointing that the flail's battery had failed and JC will buy a new battery ready for the mowing season starting about March. Otherwise the Committee were very pleased with the performance of the flail. Steve Smith had kindly offered to donate his mower to FONC but we have nowhere to store it. CM to contact Mr Smith again.
8. **Footpath marking:** the Common has been too wet and muddy to make any progress on this project. The possibilities of funding/practical help were discussed e.g. Bucks Council, West Wycombe Estate, the Chiltern Society, Chilterns Conservation Board, timber supplier. PD has a map showing location of all the posts. This might be a job for the MOD volunteers.
9. **AGM** – Friday 2nd February 2024, 7.30 pm at the Village Hall. Set up at 7pm. CM to check with the speaker, David Brown. PD to provide a projector (owned by the Wycombe Photographic Society). The increase in subs to be confirmed.

10. Any other business:

- CM will be giving a talk about the Common at Great Kingshill Village Hall on 3rd February.
- Possible tour of Manor Farm, Bradenham – timing would depend on the farmer, Andrew Stubbings.
- Ask David Brown at the AGM about a possible tour of Bomber Harris's room.
- MM to circulate her photos of historic map found at National Archives.
- Likely repeat of the Bradenham Blast with payment of £50 per volunteer marshal – a welcome boost to funds.

NEXT MEETING – THURSDAY 18th APRIL 2024, 7.30PM AT THE WHEEL