

FRIENDS OF NAPHILL COMMON

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING held on Monday 16th September 2019 at The Wheel, Naphill

1. Apologies for absence: Philip Hussey, Kevin Bennett and Marek Pawlik.

Present: Chris Miller (chairman) (CM), John Camp (JC), Ron Collins (RC), Peter Davis (PD), Peggy Ewart (PE), Trevor Hussey (TH), Neil McMinn (NM), Lynn McMinn (LM) and, in the absence of a Secretary (volunteer still required) the minutes were taken by Marian Miller (MM).

2. Action Points from previous Committee Meeting and Matters arising:

- a. Way-mark posts – CM has still had no response from the Chiltern Society. Some posts have fallen over. RC has a post-driver and working party could, in theory, re-erect.
- b. “Beating the bounds” walk on Rogation Sunday, 26th May and CM’s Wycombe Sound Radio interview went well.
- c. TH has heard nothing from the Ph.D. student about Denner Hill stone so this item will be dropped.
- d. £1,000 from the Fete’s Silent Auction has been given to the village hall and the remainder retained.
- e. More than 20 people went on the Lost Farms Walk led by MM.
- f. The Bat Walk was cancelled because of heavy rain and has been rearranged for 5th October.
- g. The Fungus Walk is fixed for 29th September.
- h. PD is monitoring the Japanese Knotweed but none is evident at present.
- i. RC reported that the RAF have been very helpful and gave plenty of support with holly removal.

3. Treasurer’s Report:

There is a healthy surplus with £3,307.02 on the balance sheet. Income as at 5th September totals £2,571 (subs £595 and Silent Auction £1,976). Expenditure is £1,634, including £1,000 given to the Village Hall.

4. Membership Secretary’s report – 122 members have (re)joined.

5. AGM 2020 – The preferred speaker was Tom Way, wildlife photographer, - theme “Wildlife on your doorstep”. Possible substitute was the new Chilterns Conservation Board Director. CM would check Tom Way’s and the hall’s availability for February.

6. Naphfest Silent Auction – £1,976.50 was raised. RC will stand down as silent auction organiser after 2020. Many thanks to him and NM for arranging the auction which has been a great success.

7. Working parties

TH remains concerned that holly and undergrowth are required by deer and nesting birds and about the potential conflict between the SSSI characteristics and “parklike” mowing. However, the working parties are only able to clear a very limited area of holly compared to the huge amount growing on the common. The mowed area is now at its maximum extent. It should be remembered that the common was once much clearer because of grazing. Also, some residents mow grass on the common beyond their houses. The water-level in the

ponds is low and pond-clearance work is limited and phased and done out of season so as not to disturb amphibians. RC's team used a hired stump-grinder so that mowing can be done without hitting stumps and risking damage to the mower. Both PD and RC have prepared statements of the objectives of their respective working parties as requested at the last meeting.

8. Long and short walks – all going well. The next scheduled short walk (9th October) is part of the Chiltern Walking Festival and is likely to bring in some new walkers. The long walks continue to attract good numbers. In November there is an extra walk in aid of Children in Need (fee of £5). The barbecue in August at JC's house was successful with about 30 people attending. JC is happy to repeat it (but with someone else doing the cooking!) Christmas lunch has been arranged for 5th December at Whiteleaf Golf Club. 48 have already booked.

9. Forthcoming Events

- Fungus Walk 29th September (earlier than usual) with three groups led by CM, TH and PD.
- Bat walk rearranged for 5th October, 7pm.

10. Tree felling – the tree survey was started several years ago by TH, with him and PH marking trees which should NOT be felled. There are now about 600 trees shown on the chart. TH to supply information to PD for the website to be updated. TH and PH are concerned about possible damage to the "Iron Age" enclosure in the next phase of felling. John Morris and Neil Jackson (of the Chilterns Conservation Board) were evidently appalled by the state of the common after the felling. (Horses rather than machines would normally be used in SSSIs). They can give advice on protection of the enclosure and the CCB may have more influence with the Dashwood Estate; concerns about the depletion of staff and hence lack of capacity in Natural England. JC pointed out that the National Trust suggest felling trees to avoid possible archaeological damage by tree roots. PD has registered for LIDAR information for the common. TH to pass on John Morris's report to CM.

11. Any other business:

- PE to arrange for CM to be second bank signatory
- PD reported that the website has been change to Fasthost but with no visible difference. Distribution lists are now possible and emails are redirected through "Contact us".
- CM has received donations of an owl box as well as three bat boxes made by the Brownies. These should be installed in appropriate (depending on independent advice) but visible locations.

Next meeting – Monday 27th January 2020, 7.30pm at The Wheel.