

FRIENDS OF NAPHILL COMMON

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held at 7.30pm on Friday, 15th February 2019 at Naphill Village Hall

Welcome and Chairman's Report

The Chairman welcomed the audience (of around 70 people) and gave an illustrated (courtesy of Peter Davis) round-up of FoNC's activities during the previous year.

Working parties: The two working parties, led by Ron Collins and Peter Davis respectively, spent the equivalent of 667 man hours, mainly in scrub and pond clearance. The non-mechanised group meets on first and third Sunday mornings whilst Ron's "mechanised" group meets on other days. John Camp does sterling work maintaining the motor-mower. The stretch from Downley Road to Chapel Road has been quite transformed by regular mowing. Special thanks to Val and Tim who come all the way from Aylesbury to join in the Sunday group. More volunteers would be very welcome.

Walks for pleasure: Ron Collins leads the long walks (9.25am 3rd Monday of each month) usually setting off by car and including a pub-lunch. Chris Miller leads short circular walks from the village hall (10.30am 1st Wednesdays) ending with an optional cuppa in the Bon-Ami. The walks are open to all, not just FoNC members. In 2018 there was a special Children in Need walk as well as a short walk as part of the Chiltern Walking Festival.

Tree-felling: The ground is still in the process of greening up after the last round of felling earlier in 2018. Phase 3 is expected probably during Autumn 2019. We are grateful to the West Wycombe Estate for involving FoNC in the management plan and in particular they allow FoNC to mark the special trees which should not be felled. Peter Davis had prepared a time-lapse of the Estate's contractors removing the fallen great beech from Dew Pond. Fortunately the famous Lion's Mane fungus re-appeared in the remnants of the trunk and the cleared pond now has a chance to thrive again. The pond-edges have also been cleared of scrub.

Village fete 2018: Many thanks to Ron Collins and Neil McMinn for organising the silent auction which raised £2,300 (compared to £600 in 2017). £1,250 of this was given to the Village Hall so that FoNC can maintain a healthy reserve (especially bearing in mind that machinery will have to be repaired and eventually replaced). Neil will be arranging the silent auction for 2019 and members were asked for their support.

Other activities: The Lost Pubs of Naphill walk led by Marian Miller on the fine evening of 26th June was well-attended. The annual Bat Walk with Julie Hopton of the Bucks Bats Group was held on 17th August 2018. Unfortunately, the dismal weather meant there were fewer bats around, so we hope for better luck this year. The annual Fungal Foray organised by Bucks Fungus Group goes from strength to strength. The event on 21st October attracted over 100 people who were split into three groups each led by a leading expert. This will be repeated in 2019 but we will aim for a different route but, of course, including the star of the show, the Lion's Mane.

Social media: members were encouraged to consult the FoNC website <http://www.naphillcommon.org.uk/>

FoNC is currently not active on Twitter.

Membership report

Membership grew from 115 in 2017 to 136 in 2018.

Treasurer's Report

Peggy Ewart thanked John Harris for examining the accounts. Without the silent auction proceeds expenditure would have slightly exceeded income so the auction money is essential to maintain our reserves. There is a healthy bank balance of £2,237.52.

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Selection of Committee

The Chairman thanked all the Committee members. Sheila Draper is standing down as Secretary but the rest of the Committee were re-elected unopposed. (Proposer Mike Mason, seconder Eleanor Ferguson). The Chairman outlined the duties of the Secretary, which only involves taking minutes at committee meetings, and asked for volunteers.

Suggestions for future activities

1. A walk on Rogation Sunday as part of the celebrations of the 125th anniversary of Hughenden Parish Council.
2. Improving the signposts on the Common, probably with the aid of the Chiltern Society.
3. Care of the juniper saplings all of which have now been planted and are thriving.
4. The idea of installing bird and/or bat boxes on the Common has been suggested, subject to the consent of West Wycombe Estate and expert advice.

There was no other business and the AGM ended at 7.51pm.

There followed "The Road to Station X" an absorbing and entertaining presentation by Michael Kushner, a volunteer guide at Bletchley Park.