

FRIENDS OF NAPHILL COMMON

NOTE OF ACTIVITIES DURING 2020 PREPARED FOR COMMITTEE MEETING (VIA ZOOM) ON 1ST FEBRUARY 2021

The Committee last met on 27th January 2020. Since then it has not been possible for the Committee to meet because of government regulations and guidance preventing meetings during the COVID Pandemic. This is a brief note of the Committee's activities since the end of January 2020, intended to replace formal minutes.

1. **In place of the scheduled meeting for 27th April 2020** (see attached agenda) members exchanged emails. (The Secretary has retained copies should members wish to see them). The last long walk was to Ashridge in March. All walks and working parties were in abeyance because of the national "lockdown". Mowing behind the Downley Road houses had also been suspended. Neil reported that 90 members had paid their subs. Peter reported on the activities of the Sunday working party prior to lockdown. The main discussion was over the **removal of the wooden posts at the Downley Road entrance to the Common**, next to Blacksmiths. Members were concerned that this left an opening for vehicles to drive or park along that stretch of the Common (or possibly for travellers to set up camp). It transpired that the posts had been removed by the owner of Blacksmiths, who had originally installed them with the consent of West Wycombe Estate. The Chairman subsequently secured the Estate's agreement to install new wooden posts. This has still not been done (as at 31st January 2021).
2. **Working parties:** Some members of the usual Thursday working parties have resumed holly clearance where it has been possible to do work without breaking COVID rules on meetings and social distancing. Periodic relaxation of the COVID rules also meant mowing could be resumed.
3. **Tree-felling:** West Wycombe Estate postponed the next stage of felling until Autumn 2021 because of extra work necessitated by felling ash trees affected by ash die-back (not because of COVID rules).
4. **Squirrel damage:** West Wycombe Estate installed some humane (but lethal) squirrel traps.
5. **Trees near power lines:** In July there was email correspondence with contractors for Scottish and Southern Electricity about clearance of vegetation near power lines.
6. **Notice boards:** Philip Hussey prepared a note on the condition of the boards (email of 13th August 2020) which is of some concern. Both Ron and John suggested possible solutions but nothing has been done because of COVID restrictions. However remedial work will be necessary and is likely to be expensive.
7. **Napfest** was cancelled. As a partial substitute there was a village scarecrow competition. Ron submitted an entry on behalf of FONC.
8. **Walks:** remain in abeyance. However the number of people using the Common for their daily exercise has been particularly high during the COVID lockdowns. Of course this is to be welcomed but, thanks to the very wet weather, all paths and bridleways are extremely muddy.
9. **Fungal foray etc.** The annual foray had to be cancelled but some members of the Bucks Fungus Group did visit the Common. Dr Sean O'Leary sent an impressive **list of mosses and liverworts** which he has identified on the Common. Peter has put this on the FONC website.

10. **Bank account:** Thanks to a financial incentive scheme for NatWest customers to switch banks it was decided to switch the FONC account to Metro Bank in High Wycombe. Unfortunately this has involved our Treasurer in a huge amount of work and required us to change our Constitution slightly regarding authorised signatories. Since the Committee could not meet in person a resolution was passed by exchange of emails authorising the change. As at 31st January 2021 the new account has been opened but the transfer of monies from NatWest does not seem to have been completed. The exact amount of the incentive is not yet known but the Committee will need to decide how to allocate those funds, and in particular, whether part of the money should be paid to the Village Hall.
11. **Annual General Meeting:** Because of the COVID lockdown this will be held by ZOOM on Friday February 12th. As part of the same ZOOM Marian Miller will give a presentation on the restoration of 2/3 High Street, High Wycombe on behalf of the Bucks Historic Buildings Trust.