

FRIENDS OF NAPHILL COMMON ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR 2010 21st January 2011

1. Attendees

The AGM had been widely advertised to the Village and beyond and about 45 people attended including committee members: Peggy Ewart, Philip Hussey, Peter Davis, Trevor Hussey, Stephanie Morgan, Kevin Bennett, Steve Rodrick, David Greenwood, Ron Collins and Daisy Leek.

2. Apologies

Marek Pawlik

3. Chairman's Report

Chairman Trevor Hussey reported that we had had another great year and summarised the main events and achievements as follows:

- Notice boards. Early in the year 5 notice boards were erected on the sites of the old ones. These cost nearly £1000 each but are made from oak, are larger, more sturdy and will last well if cared for. FoNC raised nearly £5000 with many local bodies contributing, who were thanked for their support.
- Work parties. FoNC can't get the landowner's tenant's permission to do significant work on the common but we have held some work parties to clear paths. We don't want to turn the common into a park but would like to widen paths so they can dry out. We are looking for volunteers.
- Junipers. Naphill Common was once a juniper forest but now the Chilterns have lost 80-90% of its Junipers. Our junipers are rare as they grow on acid soil. This time last year our junipers had been crushed by snow and a fallen bough. They were patched up and are doing as well as can be expected. Local botanist Andy McVeigh, took cuttings from our plants and they are being cultivated in a nursery in Scotland. However, we will need to clear an area the size of a tennis court for their return in a couple of years as they are not tolerant of shade.
- Walks for Health. These are a continuing success taking in areas further a field now such as Bledlow and Radnage. We would like a second volunteer to lead shorter walks closer to the village. We will repeat the beating the bounds walk and the mid-summer picnic.
- Our membership continues to grow making us the largest organisation in the village (we believe). At the start of 2009 we had 11, 2010 we had 112 and this year we have 197. Margie McGregor, nee McCue, who lived in Naphill for many years has

kindly given us a donation of £500 for which we are most grateful. In exchange we have granted her life membership.

- At the fete we had a stand and an exhibition of animal skulls that drew a lot of interest from children.
- FoNC visited Moorend Common in the summer to see the work undertaken there. That common had become extensively wooded and they have progressively cleared areas between trees to let grasses and wild flowers return to increase the biodiversity. There were many wonderful Southern Marsh Orchids growing. In Naphill Common we used to have Spider Orchids, Lesser Butterfly Orchids, Bee Orchids and Fly Orchids. Could our orchids return if conditions were right?
- We did an insect survey, lead by John Tyler, and will hold a Mini Beast Safari in the summer where children will be encouraged to collect insects for identification.
- We held a tree recognition walk escorted by Peter Legg.
- The Fungus Foray attracted over 30 people including children, despite the rain. The potential new species found on the same event the year before is still at Kew Gardens awaiting expert examination.
- The Clumps. The clumps are 5 rings of trees growing from earth embankments on the National Trust owned part of the common near to Bradenham and the umbrella tree. At Pam Smith's recent exhibition we saw and scanned several pictures showing how they looked in the early 1900s, distinct rings of trees separated by grassland. They were famous local features and several postcards were made showing them. Neil Harris of the NT has agreed to support the work of removing the holly, scrub and saplings that have spread between the rings in the years since grazing stopped. The hope is to return at least a couple to their original state. FoNC have started to clear the scrub and the heaps of cuttings will be chipped and used in NT's wood fuel burners.

A question from the audience was received; the old notice boards had deteriorated quickly. It was noted that moisture had started to penetrate one board and another had been pushed over. It was agreed that the new boards need to be cared for so they last well.

4. Photographic Competition

Peter Davis, organiser of FoNC's inaugural Photographic Competition, thanked our independent judge, Alan Jaycock of Wycombe Photographic Society and the sponsors of our prizes, the Co-Op in Walters Ash and the Chiltern Conservation Board. He then announced the winners as follows:

- Under 16s winner: Harriet Slade
 - Highly commended: Katrina Slade
- Emily Creaser

- Commended: Matthew Creaser
- Main competition winner: John Taylor
- Highly commended: Rona Bennett
- Commended: Chris Miller
Janet Taylor
Clare Simmons

The photographs were displayed in the hall before the AGM and will now be placed on the website, www.naphillcommon.org.uk.

5. Parking on the Common

Most of the households fronting onto Naphill Common have received a letter from Wycombe District Council stating that FoNC had complained about parking on the edge of the common. The Chairman wished to make it clear that no such complaint came from FoNC and we will write to WDC making this clear. Strictly, as it's a SSSI, people shouldn't park on or mow parts of the common. But we are aware minor infringements have been occurring for decades and FoNC has no desire to become the common's "policeman" reporting every infringement, we do not see that as our role. We will provide education and guidance where we feel it is necessary as we did in the Naphill and Walters Ash Gazette in the summer when someone was reportedly digging up foxgloves.

6. Membership Secretary's report

Membership Secretary Stephanie Morgan reported that we are about to register our 200th member standing at 197 currently. The leaflet drop we did in the summer attracted 88 new members. So far 51 have renewed for 2011. The Chairman thanked Stephanie for her tremendous work throughout the year.

7. Treasurer's report

Treasurer Peggy Ewart reported that the accounts to 31st December 2010 showed an income of £1197.00, an expenditure of £1040.04 and hence a balance of £640.52. A sheet explaining the detail was presented. The donation from Margie and the subscriptions taken at the AGM have not been included (as they are 2011 income). The Treasurer thanked John Harris for independently checking the accounts, a copy is appended. Peggy would like to stand down as Treasurer now and appealed for volunteers. The Chairman thanked her for all the work done this year.

8. Election of New Committee

The 2010 committee, with the exception of the Treasurer, had said they would be willing to stand for re-election. The Chairman asked the meeting whether anyone else wished to be considered for the committee, particularly the Treasurer's role, but there were no additional volunteers. That being the case, the Treasurer agreed to continue in the role. The

meeting decided unanimously to vote in the 11 existing committee members. The committee for 2011 thus comprises; Peggy Ewart, Philip Hussey, Peter Davis, Trevor Hussey, Stephanie Morgan, Kevin Bennett, Steve Rodrick, David Greenwood, Ron Collins, Marek Pawlik and Daisy Leek. The committee will elect its officers' positions at the first committee meeting on 22 February. The Chairman expressed his view that next year the Chairman should be replaced, after three years.

9. Suggestions for the Future Programme.

An open discussion was held to determine ideas for future events and there was support for repeating:

- Beating the bounds walk
- Fungus foray
- Midsummer picnic

A new feature we hope to bring is:

- Bat detection evening

A suggestion from the audience was

- A social event in the summer

The AGM then closed with a detailed and fascinating presentation by guest speaker John Morris of the Chilterns Woodland Project entitled "What makes Chiltern woods Special – the history, archaeology and management of Chiltern woods and commons".

At the end of the presentation the Chairman thanked Mr Morris for the wonderful talk and remarked that it would be fantastic if FoNC could start a history group to map and investigate some of the features we have, such as the Romano-British farmstead, smelting sites and saw pits.

Distribution:

Committee members

FoNC website

Minutes prepared by: Kevin Bennett, Secretary

28/1/11