

MINUTES OF FRIENDS OF HADDON WOOD AGM

Tuesday 30th April 2019 at The Alhampton Inn

Present: FHCW, Margy Cockburn, Charles Evans

MINUTES

Action

- 1 **Apologies for absence:** Chrys and Mike Henning, Wendy Silver, Andrew Nicholls
- 2 **Minutes of the last meeting** signed by HH as a true record
- 3 **Chairs report**

Matters arising: -

- **Wheelchair access** – It has been confirmed that the WT will not create paths for this and though it has been suggested that the Friends may take some action, tube removal and maintenance demands have meant that no action has been taken since the last AGM. This could be something to action in the future.
- **Dog poo bins** – raised with the WT after last year's AGM, there are now bins in each of the two car parks in West Lane, which are emptied weekly by a Council contractor.
- **Camper van parking** – was reported at the last meeting, but it disappeared shortly thereafter.
- **Car park flooding** – Highways have repaired the culvert under the car park nearer the village and major flooding into the road seems to have stopped. There are couple of puddles that still appear in the car park itself, which will be looked at by the WT to consider any action needed.
- **Regular working parties to de-tube trees** – have been set up. See 'Trees' below.

The trees – are doing well in the vast majority of cases and tree tube removal is in full swing. The suggested regular session has happened most months and is usually well-attended. The team who repaired all the old flagged footpaths have turned their attention to de-tubing on Friday mornings, when weather and availability permit and are doing incredibly well. The Rotary Club of Brue Valley, who visited last year, has arranged a session for the end of May in F4, which will help to finish in there. This leaves F5 and how far we get this year depends on weather and turnout for the events.

The WT has agreed to cover the cost of taking the tubes to Southwood from where they are taken to Bristol to be incinerated for Energy from Waste.

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The pond – was visited by so many frogs and toads, intent on mating and spawning this year that there were a couple of days when it was almost impossible to walk the surrounding path without treading on them. A coot has been and a pair of Canada Geese visited for a couple of weeks, though they have moved on.

The bulrushes surrounding the pond have become rather too successful as had arrowhead water weed, so it seems likely that we will need to take action either this year or next to curtail them.

The orchard is coming into flower. There are remarkably few failures, though there are one or two (particularly apples) that may need replacing, so a review will be needed.

Wildflower areas have been left to fend for themselves as our soil is still too rich. If fertility decreases the situation will be looked at again (WT advice), though in the meantime the yellow rattle planted in previous years is still coming back.

Hedgerow maintenance is being carried out by the WT in accordance with discussion had with them earlier this year.

Some trees alongside paths have been marked for either removal or pruning, when we have time, to enable Mark to mow more easily.

Fund raising. Open Gardens took place in Ditchheat last year with collaboration from the Alhampton team in exchange for a cut of their profits, though it will be back in the village this year on 19th May from 1 – 5pm, so please support us if you're here.

Otherwise, Rose has worked extremely hard producing Haddon Wood merchandise, which she has sold very successfully at various events and sales; we may also, at the suggestion and with the help of Rob Travis, have walking sticks from our own wood in the not too distant future; and Jo Curtis has ideas for other products she wants to create as well.

We will also be selling used, but still whole, tree tubes, stakes and ties at Open Gardens this year, together with the usual plants and teas.

Thanks as ever to our committee who turn out whenever maintenance is needed and all of whom have attended every committee meeting for the last six years. There are some particular mentions: -

Jo, who maintains our risk assessment paperwork, looks after

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and updates our medical supplies, looks after everything to do with money, found a way for us to insure people to brushcut, cuts grass and generally keeps our paperwork in order.

Mark, who maintains paths and cuts grass elsewhere when appropriate, looks after hedgerows, PR and anything else requiring muscle/construction skills.

Rose, our professional photographer, who designs posters, including those (and brochures/tickets) for Open Gardens, produces goods for sale and publicity generally.

Nell, who takes minutes at some undisciplined meetings and general horticultural input.

Gert, who sells plants and tools at Open Gardens to boost our coffers, has done a lot of work in the orchard and is a fount of horticultural knowledge.

Nick, for horticultural knowledge, keeps us on track with what's needed in the orchard and planting.

Lastly, all the **Friends** who turn out to help with much needed maintenance.

4 Treasurers report 2018/2019

With thanks to all who have contributed over the past year in time, money and/or cakes, tending to trees or just simply using and enjoying the wood, not forgetting those who helped with Ditchheat's Open Gardens, for which we received a generous donation of £1155.

Over the next year we will be investing some of this money in tools and vehicle servicing for our work in the woodland which continues to evolve.

With hope for some new fundraising events over the next year, I can report that our account's opening balance was £9010.05, which reached a total (after necessary expenditure of £1048.34) at the end of the period of £10,058.39.

5 Election of committee

Sadly Nick Truman has resigned because of lack of time and the opportunity was taken to thank him for his input over the last six years including, though not limited to, planning and organising planting of the orchard and subsequent maintenance, plus brushcutting and helping on numerous other tasks, not least that of running the car park at Open Gardens events.

Nominations had been received prior to the meeting for Jo Curtis, Mark Curtis, Hilary Harrison, Rose Hubbard, Nell McMorland Hunter, Gert Schley and Wendy Silver. All had been correctly proposed and seconded and were elected at the meeting unopposed.

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Car park vandalism – HH reported that the anti-theft signs had been removed by vandals, but replaced in a more substantial fashion. The 'No Lorries' sign, damaged while Highways were re-building the culvert under one car park, had subsequently been ripped out completely and thrown into the wood. It was agreed not to replace it for a while, to allow the vandalism hopefully to die down and to allow us more time to consider our options. Litter in gateways is an ongoing problem, items found including fast food outlet packaging, beer bottles and drug paraphernalia. HH will contact our PCSO for their advice, on the latter particularly.

Roundhouse – Margy showed pictures of both a wooden roundhouse and a bee house and suggested that tentative steps be made to establish the orchard field as slightly outside the remit of the WT and therefore a possible site for such a structure. RH made the point that she wouldn't want to overlook any buildings in the wood, but it was thought if such a thing could be sited in a non-contentious position it was definitely worth considering. It was agreed that Margy would get costings and HH would approach the WT, emphasising the usefulness of such a structure for any future educational projects, especially our intention to achieve Forest School status.

Charles suggested approaching the planners in advance of any action to establish whether planning consent would be needed.

Plants - the question was raised about further planting round the perimeter of the pond and it was reported that it had been policy to let nature take its course. Margy said she would be happy to donate ox eye daisies if wanted for anywhere else, an offer that was gratefully accepted.