



FRIENDS OF ASHENGROUND AND BOLNORE WOODS

14TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING,

SUNDAY, 5 MARCH 2017

ASHENGROUND COMMUNITY CENTRE, 2.30PM

AGM MINUTES

1. Apologies

The Chair, Lorraine Maynard (LM) advised the AGM that unfortunately the invited speaker had offered last minute apologies due to a family emergency.

2. Minutes of the last AGM, held on Sunday 7 February 2016

The AGM agreed the minutes without comment.

3. Chair's report

LM noted that Courtney Hoek and Agy O'Brien had resigned from the Committee due to family commitments. Agy had agreed to continue to compile the newsletter but would not edit it. LM asked for any volunteer willing to do this three times a year. Joanna Wigg had agreed to join the Committee which meets every other month at Woodside. LM asked for other volunteers. The Secretary role remained vacant.

The noticeboards had been subject to wear and tear and vandalism. Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) had agreed to put in two, possibly three, new lectern-style noticeboards at Pond Meadow and Railway Bridge, and possibly at Brooklands. FoABW would need to replace the others.

The bridleway lights, requested initially by the Police, had been subject to ongoing vandalism and some did not work. Crest had signed them over to West Sussex County Council who would continue repairs until funding ran out.

Last summer's party season saw gatherings in Four Acre Meadow. The Police and MSDC were aware and FoABW cleaned up the litter.

LM thanked the following:

- Bolnore Village Residents Association (BVRA) for use of Woodside for Committee meetings
- Joanna Wigg and Kim Berry for photography

- The conservation group for looking after the woods
- Members for continued support

LM noted last year's events, thanking all those involved and those who marshalled the Mid Sussex Marathon event:

- Sussex Owl Rescue's event in Weavers Meadow
- Steph Murphy's bat walk
- Stuart Meier's history walk
- Linda Howard's photography afternoon

Planned events for 2017 included:

- A photography afternoon with Linda Howard in April or June
- Steph Murphy had agreed to lead another bat walk
- Owls About Town demonstration and display in September

It was also hoped that Krisztina Fekete, who had carried out a moss survey, would lead a walk around.

LM also thanked all those who contributed sighting for the survey reports published on the FoABW website.

4. Treasurer's report

Peter McKerchar (PMcK) referred to the accounts published on the website and thanked John Gill for auditing them. He also thanked the newsletter deliverers for helping keep costs down.

The bank balance was almost £7,500 once a fraudulent standing order had been resolved. This was in part due to generous bequests, Crest's time-limited annual contribution of £1,000 to boost membership and restrained expenditure – an electric saw had been purchased for the conservation group.

Stuart Meier asked for further information on the fraudulent standing order.

The AGM agreed the accounts.

5. Membership

PMcK noted that total membership had remained almost unchanged at 168 with similarly small numbers of departing and new members.

6. Conservation report

Patrick Burke (PB) provided a summary of conservation group's activities over the past year, thanked Stuart Meier for leading, and noted the contribution of David Harris who retired to the Lake District last year. Activities had included litter picking, newt fence removal, path clearance, cleaning drainage gulleys, tree planting at Woodside with BVRA, mowing and coppicing.

PB noted sightings over the last year, including birds on the UK Amber and Red lists and the five species of bats observed on last year's bat walk.

7. Proposal for mower for conservation work

PMcK explained that MSDC had taken back the mower which it had kindly loaned to FoABW over the past two years. The Committee and MSDC had identified three options for the future:

- Option 1 - FoABW borrows MSDC's machine for specific weekends: this posed various logistical problems and had been ruled out
- Option 2 - MSDC's long-term contractor works in partnership with FoABW
- Option 3 - FoABW buys its own mower: this posed considerable cost implications as well as insurance and health and safety.

The Committee proposed Option 2 with Option 3 as a fall back.

Members asked about leasing and for clarification on labour with Option 2.

The AGM agreed the Committee proposal.

8. Mid Sussex Marathon Weekend

Michael Bradley provided an update on marshalling for the Haywards Heath 10 mile run on 30 April 2017, as part of the Mid Sussex Marathon weekend. The run would involve two laps through the woods and FoABW would be directing runners and warning others using the woods.

AOB

Gill Rogers asked about the FoABW website. LM responded that there had been some technical issues and she was in discussion with FoABW's web developer, who provided support on a voluntary basis.

Richard Bates commented that the gravel path to Wealden Way was problematic for cyclists. LM responded that according to earlier plans (since mislaid) it was supposed to be paved but MSDC had approved the gravel laid by Crest. The matter had been raised with Crest.

Stuart Meier noted an issue with publishing the latest fixed point photography due to software no longer supported by Google. LM agreed to discuss it with FoABW's web developer.

Election of Committee

Two members had resigned from the Committee: Courtney Hoek and Agy O'Brien

The following members were willing to stand on the Committee:

Incumbents: Lorraine Maynard (Chair); Peter McKerchar (Treasurer and Membership), Patrick Burke, Adrienne Waite, David Waite, Chris Jones, and new member: Joanna Wigg

The AGM agreed the Committee.

The meeting closed with refreshments.