



# Friends of Uddens & Cannon Hill Woodlands

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the FRIENDS OF UDDENS AND CANNON HILL**

**10 April 2015 @ COLEHILL MEMORIAL HALL**

## MINUTES

**1. Chairman's Opening Remarks**

Janet Healy introduced herself as the elected Chairman 'until someone more suitable volunteers'! She welcomed everyone, including Councillors George Russell and Paul Timberlake and thanked them all for attending. The usual requirements for Health & Safety regarding Fire Exits and Cloakrooms were covered.

**2. Apologies**

Jeff Maple, Treasurer

**3. Minutes of AGM held 2 April 2014**

Accepted

**4. Matters Arising**

Any points raised covered when reports from Chair, Treasurer and Andy, who organises and runs the Work Parties, speak.

**5. Chairman's Report**

Janet was delighted the group had settled down into a more focussed format. She reported it had been a most enjoyable and busy year. The Work Parties have successfully completed one project in 2014 with the installation of eight picnic tables and benches, thanks in part to the Forestry Commission who donated two benches and the Dorset County Council who gave us funding for the other six.

We are part way through another project to install five notice boards at the various entrances to Cannon Hill North, South and at Uddens. The funding came from East Dorset District Council via Councillor George Russell and we are most thankful for this amazing input.

Thanks also to the Forestry Commission for all their help, both with the supply of the mapping in conjunction with Janet, and their input to the structure of the actual project which enabled us to do much of the work ourselves and so produced more boards for our money.

She paid tribute to the construction team, Scott for his design and building of the structures, Lin for the artwork and the Minutes record Janet's own input of the accuracy of the mapping.

Janet believed the latest buzz word for these is 'interpretation boards/panels' but likes to feel ours are informative and so do not require interpretation!

Last summer saw the holding of a most successful community picnic within the Forestry Glade area, and hopes to repeat the event in July/August this year. She stressed that everyone is welcome to use the facilities at any time as the tables belong to the Community of people using Cannon Hill woodlands.

Janet then went on to report the latest situation regarding the Dorset Wide Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

In November 2014 on behalf of the Friends, Janet responded to the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' Consultation. The gist of her response was 'fairness' in the planning system. She cannot accept a bias in favour of Gypsy & Travellers over the settled community. Eg. Question 9 asked 'Do you agree that an un-authorized occupation causes harm to the planning system and community relations? If not, why not?' Janet responded YES, with the comment 'It is seen as grossly unfair when a community, or individual, ignores the rules that the rest of us have to abide by.'

The final question asked if there were any additional points that we wished to make. Her response:

*'The settled community expects 'fairness' and it is not 'fair' if the needs of one group are met to the detriment of another. A permanent or transit G&T site should not dramatically impact on the lifestyle of the settled community, threatening to overwhelm it and force it to change habits built up over decades. This destroys the bedrock on which a community is built.'*

She reported that the whole Consultation seemed to have 'fairness' as its theme. She has tried to find out if the Government has published its response to the Consultation, but without success.

As far as she is aware, Poole and Bournemouth boroughs have no plans to provide G&T sites. It would seem they are expecting the more rural parts of Dorset to oblige, including us in East Dorset district.

The published timetable for EDDC Local Development Scheme is that the Pre Submission Public Consultation will take place during September, October and November 2015. This document will be presented to the Secretary of State in May 2016. If our Cannon Hill South site appears in this Pre Submission Document then we are in serious trouble. It will be very hard to get DCC, the Districts and Boroughs to change their minds.

Janet stressed to remember that the original Consultation on site options in 2011 which included our site, still stands. The previous consultation was on alternative sites and the two documents will be amalgamated for this autumn Pre Submission Public Consultation. When Michael was Chairing our Group, he presented a petition of 6000+ signatures to the Dorset Council. To have any impact this time we will need everyone to write an individual letter of objection. We could put a standard letter on our website to help, but any individual comments would carry much more weight. Although it is hoped this will not happen, we must be prepared.

Copies of this document will be put onto our website and should also be available in libraries and at Furzehill. The local Stour and Avon magazine are also very good on publicising forthcoming planning issues.

Janet keeps an eye on any planning applications submitted by the DCC but so far there has been nothing which affects us. Any application submitted by DCC should be determined by EDDC and their lists are checked weekly.

## **Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Mineral Sites Plan Consultation 2013-2014**

AS02 Cannon Hill

AS17 Uddens Plantation

AS18 Wimborne

These site proposals have been withdrawn by the promoter and are not being CURRENTLY considered.

We will continue to monitor planning application on the DCC website and will read any future consultations on minerals and update everyone if necessary. It is important to remain vigilant.

*Question from the floor: Would it be possible that the Council's have helped us regarding the Community aspect of the forestry only to find that the Mineral site people go ahead regardless?*

Janet responded that she is not convinced they liaise to that extent. Wigbeth put themselves forwards for Travellers, but we do not know if locals to that area put forwards any objections. Wigbeth details will be put on our website by request at the meeting. Janet has since heard this site has been rejected on environmental grounds.

Cllr George Russell informed the meeting that since DCC set up an encampment near Weymouth there have been very few Travellers causing problems in our area as they go straight through rather than be directed onto the Weymouth site. It could therefore be argued that we do not really have a problem now.

### **6. Treasurer's Report**

In the absence of the Treasurer Jeff Maple, Andy Hartstone read his report which documents the balance of £2,955.63. He explained that monies in from the EDDC grant, Waitrose and new memberships had been utilised on the projects already detailed and which therefore kept the overall balance fairly stable. We have also been able to buy tools etc for future Work Parties and which will remain our property for many years use.

We are very grateful for the continuing sponsorship by AC Scaffolding which covers group insurance and website costs.

### **7. Update on Work Parties**

In item 5, Janet had already mentioned the installation of the picnic tables last year, eight in total, three of which can be accessed straight off the Castleman Trailway. A programme of maintenance to preserve the wood will be undertaken shortly. We are grateful for the Grant from DCC and all the help and backing from the Forestry Commission.

Of the five notice boards, three have been installed. Thanks go to EDDC for their grant, in particular our Councillor George Russell who offered us the money. Without the help and support of the FC, we would probably only have been able to afford a single board, but they helped Janet by providing the mapping using their GIS and showing us the different structures we could use with their approval. Many thanks to Scott who built them and also to Lin who discovered a talent for manipulating the computer and providing us with some brilliant artwork.

Whilst installing tables and information boards we have also been busy clearing yet more rhododendron, with lots still waiting for next autumn. We created the 'Glade' and now the 'Beech Walk'. We would not have been able to do this without Andy Hartstone, the Trustee and Work Party Co-ordinator. Andy works with the FC and submits a Risk Assessment and outline plan of action to them before each session. He has won their trust over the last year or so and we are permitted to work without a FC officer present.

## PROJECTS:

Last year we created the Glade but of course the rhododendron has returned. We are waiting for the FC to spray it for us. It will look a bit messy as it dies but it is hoped to sort this in 2016. We need to do a little more clearing of brashings adjacent to the Glade as it looks very messy. Unfortunately it is now too late in the year to have a bonfire as it is too dry and the birds are nesting, but we can create a bonfire heap for the autumn providing nothing is nesting in the rubbish.

The Beech Walk runs parallel to Uddens Drive above the second entrance. It was so overgrown with rhododendron that it was impossible to walk the entire length of it. There is still a lot of tidying and burning to do but it is now too late in the year and again, will have to wait until autumn. At least the sunlight can now penetrate and may encourage some interesting undergrowth to re-establish itself. There is some heather growing and hopefully this will be encouraged by the light.

In January we helped the FC plant some indigenous deciduous trees in Cannon Hill North, the far side of Uddens Drive.

Some of our members have trimmed the path that runs parallel to the fields in Cannon Hill North.

So far five bird boxes have been installed, with 20 more to go. 16 bat boxes in conjunction with the River Allen Bat Roost have also been installed. One of the Trustees is restoring some dormice tubes which will then be installed in Cannon Hill South.

Another project is to clear around the burial mound at Cannon Hill North.

Future plans to install 'perch benches' along the Trailway adjacent to Uddens Water; repairs to the path in Cannon Hill South that runs parallel to the fields and our annual pulling of Himalayan Balsam in June along Uddens Water are all in the pipeline.

Each Work Party averages around 21 per session in attendance. The new notice boards will hold advance notification.

Cannon Hill North and Cannon Hill South are of such great value to the local population and this value will increase as they build all the new houses around Wimborne and Ferndown in the next few years, putting pressure on all our recreational facilities. There may be prettier areas than our plantation, but it can be made more aesthetically pleasing in the long term. What it does offer is plenty of gravel tracks that are mainly weather proof so families can get out and about throughout the seasons.

Janet pleaded with everyone to help us to protect this area and make it a long term community space.

Andrew Norris from the Forestry Commission sent a message of many thanks from the FC for all our input. Andy reported that Andrew Norris now trusts us to run our Work Parties ourselves under the auspices of an 'annual permission' which gives us blanket coverage to effectively cover the required Health & Safety, Risk Assessment required. Andrew also expressed his pleasure with our new information boards and reported it now makes the FC ones look 'shabby'!!

8. **Election of Trustees**

Jimmy Burbidge, Luanne Burbidge and Lin White each stood for re-election. Their applications had been Proposed and Seconded in accordance with Election requirements and their personal submissions had been on the website and were available to read at the meeting.

All three Trustees were unanimously re-elected.

9. **Guest Speakers – Beatrice and Richard Dopita from the River Allen Bat Roost Project**

Introduced by Janet, Beatrice gave a most interesting and informative talk entitled Secret Worlds – the Wildlife of Cannon Hill and Uddens Woodlands. The audience seemed enthralled and it was amazing to realise that so many species of animals exist on our door step, in future we must just stop and look more often as we walk.

The impromptu bat walk that took place one evening last week was most productive as Beatrice found evidence of 5 species in Cannon Hill South, we were all relieved to know that they really are thriving. Later Beatrice will hold a bat walk for all of those interested. Meanwhile our Work Parties will continue to make the type of habitat that bats thrive in.

10. **Chairman's Closing Remarks**

Janet concluded the meeting by thanking all those who had attended and all those whose input in various categories had helped to make the Group what it is today. She urged everyone to continue to stick together and to help to make the Community Project a success for all to enjoy the woodlands.