



Friends of Uddens & Cannon Hill Woodlands

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

20th April 2016

Stapehill Village Hall 7.45 p.m.

1. **Chairman's Opening Remarks**

Janet Healy introduced herself and thanked everyone for attending. Under the Health & Safety guidelines Fire Exits were pointed out, along with cloakrooms. Janet then briefly outlined the format for the evening.

2. **Apologies**

Committee: Jeff Maple, Chris Gibbs

Others via email: Mike Hirsh – Planning Consultant, Rodger Andrew, Nick Gumery, Beatrice Dopita, Richard Dopita (River Allen Bat Roost Project)

3. **Minutes of AGM 10th April 2015**

All updates in Chairman's Report

4. **Matters Arising**

Various points covered by chairman's Report. For other comments see AOB at end of these Notes

5. **Chairman's Report Including Update on Work Parties**

In keeping with the Friend's endeavours to encourage Uddens and Colehill to become a Community Woodland, Janet reported another enjoyable and focussed year had seen the completion of one major project and the start of two more. The Work Parties are well attended although more people are always welcome to come along. The dates are always displayed on the Notice Boards as well as the Friends website. Everyone is welcome to come along and just drink tea or coffee and have a chat – there is no commitment to working.

Janet thanked Andy for organising the Work Parties and interfacing with the Forestry commission. She praised the brilliant construction team who seem to be able to produce almost anything to such a high standard. Lin White was given special thanks for discovering a talent for PDF and other software so she could format the five different maps on our Notice Boards. Thanks were also given to Andrew Norris and Mike Abraham of the Forestry Commission for their continued help and support.

She also proudly announced the completion and installation of all five Notice Boards thanks to a Grant from Cllr George Russell via the EDDC. It is hoped that the public find them useful and informative. It was not an easy project but was completed within budget thanks to the skills within the Committee. Some regular maintenance will be undertaken to ensure longevity of the picnic tables/benches. We know that they are being used in CHS and hope that those in CHN will enjoy the same usage. Some clearance was recently done around the two picnic tables nearest to Colehill entrance to make them more visible.

Jeff, with the help of Rod, installed the first of four Perch Benches close by also. Other members of the construction team installed the rest. The Perches (about 20) are to be installed throughout Cannon Hill and Uddens. They have been funded by EDDC through Cllr George Russell. The idea being that people who cannot walk too far will now be able to rest and perhaps explore a little more of the woodlands. A photoshoot will be arranged with Cllr Russell along with the construction team before 13th May for inclusion in the local magazines.

Another major project currently being undertaken is courtesy of our County Councillor Janet Dover and the generosity of Dorset County Council. We have the funding which has partly been used to purchase a trailer and our construction experts will customise it so it has the maximum usefulness to the community through the Friends. Not only will it carry our tools in an ordered manner, it will also act as a tea and coffee station for both workers and interested passers-by. Another vital function will be as a hopefully unused first aid station. People should be able to recognise it and come and join us, if only for a chat.

When completion is near we will announce a competition to 'Name the Trailer'. This will be well advertised and is open to children between the ages of 3-16. It will only be the one class because someone of three can give us a good name as well as a sixteen year old. There will be a little present of chocolate for all entrants and a larger chocolate prize for the winner. Cllr Janet Dover will help to choose the winner and will present the prize once we have the winning name printed and attached to the trailer.

At this point Janet handed over to Scott who is project managing the conversion as well as providing most of the skills. He reported having located the four wheel trailer with 13" wheels and a substantial chassis which has been tested by the team, for rough terrain. He stressed that safety aspects were paramount. An internal fit out will adapt as progress is made. Removable sign writing will keep insurance costs down and can be easily adapted as they will be interchangeable thus ensuring information is updated regularly and easily and the trailer is not easily recognised and targeted when not in use. There will be a recharging heating system via a 12v power source to allow easy drying of gloves and equipment when necessary. An internal skin will help to prevent dampness and mould. The inclusion of phone charging points will ensure essential emergency contact ability always available. It will also ensure Rangers and Fire Services can always be informed when bonfires are safely extinguished. Solar panels will be installed for carbon footprint. Number plate clips will allow number plates to be easily interchangeable. An external hatch for refreshments will be opened up. A preliminary date for completion is hoped for the end of May when Janet will contact local papers to ensure photo opportunities will be available.

Cllr Janet Dover expressed how thrilled she was with the whole project which was to a standard she had not hoped to imagine. When it is well publicised it will be a great asset to the whole community.

Work Parties

Janet thanked the 'regulars' who attend the Work Parties and special mention to Gareth who has attended every one since their onset. Most of the rhododendron has been cleared in CHS and later in the year it is hoped Andy and Andrew Norris will identify other areas requiring attention to make a woodland suitable for all to enjoy. Special mention was made of all the wonderful wood sculptures being created by Vic Seymour whose skills have helped to make special magic of the Glade. The Glade has proven to be a very well used space as it provides seating, picnic benches and a reasonably open area for children to enjoy.

The busiest Work Party was held in June last year when again attempts to prevent

the growth of Himalayan Balsam along Uddens Water took place. The local scouts joined in and there seemed to be young people everywhere as well as Scout Masters and helpers. It was probably the logistics of accommodating everyone that day when the need for a trailer was born!

A question was asked from the floor if there was the possibility of mid week Work Parties as not everyone was available weekends. Andy and Scott suggested bench cleaning, treating and maintenance was a perfect mid week task and will liaise with dates to go on the Notice Boards and website in due course.

The Dorset Wide Gypsy & Traveller & Travelling Show People Site Allocations Development Plan Document

At the last AGM Janet had said the Friends had sent in a response to the November 2014 Government Consultation on Planning for Traveller Sites. A new policy was issued in August 2015. Janet has read both the old and the new and thinks the new one is just a little more fair to the settled community and not quite so biased in favour of the Travellers but stressed that only time will tell.

At this point Cllr George Russell outlined details from a meeting which took place on 18th April and where he had proposed a question relating to the effects the delays were having on the uncertainty felt by residents particularly in the Stapehill area of Ferndown and asked if there were any consultation documents to be made available or any decisions made in view of the uncertainty of EDDC survival in the foreseeable future. He received the following response from Cllr S Butler:

'At the first meeting of the Dorset Strategy Planning Forum on 18th November 2015 in Poole, members were presented with options for progressing the DG&TTS Sites DPD. Members agreed that the DPD should be progressed and that this should be undertaken primarily using in-house resources rather than through consultants as had been the case for the first two consultation stages. Since then an officer working group has been formed, which has agreed three main ways forward:

- *Agreement to progress the document straight to Pre-submission consultation (a draft plan) without any further site options consultation.*
- *A short brief for updating the GTAA to take account of changes in Government policy for Planning for G&T accommodation needs. This work will be undertaken by Opinion Research Services who undertook the most recent GTAA. This is expected to take approximately two months and cost around £8-10,000 (£1-2000 per authority) and which can be funded from the existing DPD budget.*
- *A timetable for the remaining stages of preparation of the DPD*

The timetable is as follows:

- *Pre-submission consultation October/November 2016*
- *Submit plan to Secretary of State in February 2017*
- *Examination of the plan March-August 2017*
- *Adopt the plan by November 2017*

Once a draft list of proposed sites has been put together, a member briefing on this DPD will be convened, probably around July 2016'

Cllr Russell expressed concerns now Eric Pickles MP is no longer in situ it is vital to keep an eye on things. Everyone is concerned that the amalgamation of the Councils with Bournemouth, Poole, and Christchurch will potentially create a 'dumping ground' in East Dorset. George and Janet both stressed the need to continue to campaign against this very real threat should the Unitary Authority come to being. There is a need to build 7-8000 new homes in Bournemouth/Poole and the erosion of our Green space could be very vulnerable.

Janet urged everyone to remind friends and neighbours that no decision has yet been made on our CHS transit site and assured the meeting that we will bombard you with information if we have a worst case scenario and post a standard letter on our website as it will be vital for everyone to write an individual letter. It would be hard work for everyone to get a decision reversed at that stage.

Bat Boxes and Dormice Tubes

Beatrice and Richard Dopita (from the River Allen Bat Roost Project) are rather worried that all the clearing in CHS may prevent the bats from returning this spring after their winter hibernation. It will be rather a shame but it should be only a temporary problem as the FC is planning to plant hawthorns in some areas. Janet is rather hoping that over the next year or two a little natural vegetation may return now the rhododendron has gone and the forest floor may regenerate some heathland plants. Unfortunately this means a bat walk will not be taking place this spring but we will let you know when the bats have returned and we can go and see them.

The dormice tube installations may also be postponed until we get some new growth. The lack of rhododendron means the small animals have no cover and will be rather exposed.

Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Site Plan

Janet reported at last year's AGM that the Cannon Hill and Uddens sites had been dropped. As a precaution she does regularly check the DCC Planning applications but it is currently clear.

Mailing Lists and Membership

For those of you who would like to be on our mailing list, we will be pleased to add new addresses. If you are not already a member of the Friends, it requires only a very small donation. If you do not have access to email, we will endeavour to deliver any important notices by hand.

6. Treasurer's Report

With apologies from our Treasurer Jeff Maple, Janet confirmed funds of £4451.37 after settlement of bills for recent/current projects. Some accounts are still in the pipeline re the Trailer project, pathway restoration and Perch Bench project.

7. Election of Trustees

Every three years Members of the Committee must be re-elected. This gives other Friends a chance to apply and be elected to the Committee in their place. This year Janet Healy, Kevin Healy, Jeff Maple and Rod Whitham are re-standing with a vacancy for two more Trustees not filled.

Janet Healy – Proposed by Scott Whibley Seconded by Jeff Maple
Kevin Healy – Proposed by Scott Whibley Seconded by Jeff Maple
Jeff Maple – Proposed by Janet Healy Seconded by Andy Hartstone
Rod Whitham – Proposed by Janet Healy Seconded by Luanne Burbidge

In compliance with Protocol their re-election statements had been on the website for several weeks and a copy of each was available on the night.

All four were unanimously re-elected. Again, in compliance with Protocol, at our next Committee meeting voting will take place to elect posts within the group.

8. Andy Hartstone – Slide Show

Andy is a valued member of the Committee who shoulders much of the responsibilities for ensuring the smooth running and legalities of the Friends. Along with his wife Sarah they regularly photograph the woodlands, highlighting their hidden treasures alongside the more obvious workings and events. His fascinating slide show depicted:

Bird boxes awaiting installation in a trolley purchased by funds donated by

Waitrose. Cheque presentation by Cllr George Russell and new Notice Boards in situ. Clearance of Mound at Cannon Hill. Clearance of Himalayan Balsam by Uddens Water. The Summer BBQ. Cheque presentation by Cllr Janet Dover for Trailer project. Trial run of trailer. Vic's woodland models. Litter picks. Bonfires. Sausages! CHN Mini glade. FC bench. Our perch benches. Various flora and fauna. Insects. Moths. Birds. Forestry Works. Views opened up 'before' and 'after'. Horton Tower now visible. FC high security gates. Dragons teeth. Tree planting.

Andy gave insights as to the FC workings and our various volunteer conservation task days and woodland wildlife projects. It is felt inevitable some form of industrial development will take place Blunt's Farm side of Uddens Drive and Andy outlined the Friends' hopes to negotiate a good 'buffer zone' between it and the woodlands with hopefully a large natural pond in situ.

9. **Thanks**

Janet thanked Andy for his interesting slide show and commentary and again stressed the importance of CHS/CHN and Uddens for recreational purposes especially with all the housing planned in the area. She highlighted a paper by Dr Paul Kelly of Natural England in which he states the continuing necessity of encouraging open and green spaces.

Cllr George Russell confirmed we cannot just say we 'do not want' G&T sites but we can make it unacceptable for the area by encouraging people and wildlife. He said he is unable to join our Friends as it would compromise his position by needing to declare an interest, but he is happy to continue to support us in the form of Grants etc as is Cllr Janet Dover. There is a real need to stress the power of advertising issues and getting people to do something about it by writing letters as/when appropriate.

10. **Close of Meeting**

Janet thanked everyone for attending, reminded everyone to give us an email address to remain in touch with future developments and to support us by becoming a member of the Friends.