

Friends of Uddens and Cannon Hill Woodlands

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

20 June 2018

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**

Diane Medodaine, Michael Tomlinson MP, Paul Timberlake

3. **Minutes of AGM 28th June 2017 and Matters Arising**

All updates in Chairman's Report.

4. **Chairman's Report**

Janet briefly reported on progress over the last year, leaving detailed report of Work Parties etc to Andy later in the meeting. She was delighted with the achievements of both the Trustees and the Volunteers who have burnt an amazing amount of debris along the new path running parallel to Uddens Drive in Cannon Hill South (CHS). Another year's footfall has flattened and widened the path so it is a very pleasant walk and by opening up the area, has put an end to the unsavoury use which was becoming prevalent, at that end of Uddens Drive. The improvement of the path that runs alongside the road and links up all the paths was achieved by a recent Work Party and now enhances the area.

Regular Volunteers this year have been delighted to receive the support of various local groups including West Moors Army Cadets, others undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh scheme and not least, local Scout troops. Janet stressed the importance of welcoming such support from both individuals and also young groups but stressed the need for them to be accompanied by an adult.

Janet felt all volunteers would be pleased to know there is still sufficient debris for several more bonfire sessions, with sausages, this coming winter!

Since the close of the bonfire season work has focussed on Cannon Hill North (CHN). She is especially pleased with the uncovering of the new burial mound which she congratulated Andy for researching and locating.

THE PERCH BENCH PROJECT

Although this project funded by Cllr George Russell's budget, seems to have been ongoing for quite a while, much work has been undertaken to achieve this, utilising the skills of some of the Trustees and thus keeping costs to a minimum. This ensures full value for money as it is being mainly used to purchase materials and not labour. Andy, along with Scott and his family, have set up a competition for both children and adults, which has now been launched.

Details have recently been sent to the Stour and Avon magazine for inclusion of a photograph with Cllr Russell and some local school children, marking the completion of the Perch Bench project along with its official launch. Details and an entry form can be found on the website. In September the names of those completing the challenge will be issued and a winner picked out of a hat to decide who will receive a Voucher of their choice.

BENCH IN MEMORY OF KEVIN

Janet publically thanked the Trustees for purchasing and installing a bench under a spreading chestnut tree on the edge of the Glade. She felt Kevin would have been very proud to have been thought of and remembered in this way. Those present at the meeting gave a round of applause in respect of a much missed friend.

HIMALAYAN BALSAM

Reporting that 'battle commences once more', Janet was delighted to note that lots of different and diverse flowers were now growing where it had been eradicated along the pathways. Whilst it still grows rampantly near the police station end, it is hoped to launch further attacks on 29th July and 3rd August. Recognising it is a potentially hazardous task, Janet warned any volunteers to cover up against thorns and insects.

THE DORSET WIDE GYPSY AND TRAVELLER AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE SITE ALLOCATIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

Although currently on hold, which Janet suspects is due to the County re-organisation, she urged everyone to remain vigilant. A revised Local Plan is due out later this year, possibly as soon as July, which may offer a hint.

Meanwhile in October 2017 there was a final report by Opinion Research Services on the Dorset site requirements, permanent and transit. East Dorset District has a shortfall of only five permanent sites and estimated growth in demand has been down-graded to 1.25%. As for Transit sites, which was the proposal for our site, any found parking illegally will be encouraged to go to Piddlehinton.

Janet stressed that this is only the Research Company and not the DCC, but the research company shows a very small need and Janet cannot see why DCC would want 25 pitches in CHS.

BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET & POOLE WASTE PLAN EXAMINATION

An Examination to be held shortly in Dorchester is to judge whether the Plan is sound or not. Having dropped CHS as a waste plant site we cannot take it further and can only hope the Inspector does not resurrect it. The right to participate in a hearing extends only to those that wish to change plans, not to repeat a case already set out in written representations.

Janet is, however rather concerned about the Woolsbridge Industrial Estate site, Three Legged Cross. The Inspector is raising this at the Examination and has put forward some questions to be answered. There were many objections to this site by environmental groups on the grounds that it could harm local sensitive sites. Some were not happy that CHS was dropped. Janet can do nothing but await the Inspector's Report as she feels it will basically come down to flora and fauna or the needs of so many people for open green spaces.

ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

This has now been registered.

5. **Treasurer's Report**

Jeff reported an opening budget of £3781. £81 had been received in donations and Membership fees. £629 unrestricted. £162 restricted with a closing balance of £3071.

6. **PROJECTS AND WORK PARTY REPORT by ANDY HARTSTONE (WORK PARTY LEADER)**

Andy reported there had been a total of 11 official Work Party dates in the past twelve months, totalling 750 voluntary hours. There were several more midweek projects covered by Trustees which were unsuitable for a larger input. e.g. the installation of Kevin's Bench.

He then gave a photographic guide through the past year which included:

- The Glade Runner Trailer being utilised for various Youth Groups within their Duke of Edinburgh scheme along with local schools and Scouts. New tyres and brakes serviced are thanks to Mike Stokes and Auto Repairs who did the work for free and grateful thanks also go to Chris for his organisation.
- Perch benches being used by woodland users with reports by many of their value to the less abled. Giving further details of the Perch Bench fun competition running through the summer Andy will also invite the Dorset Search dogs to join in as part of their training.
- Burial Mound maintenance photographs graphically showed the improvements being made, along with the new smaller site which has been discovered and opened up.
- Of the 50+ bird boxes installed the project saw 90% of closed front boxes used, but none of the open fronted ones. It is hoped to vary the type of boxes installed for the future, including owl boxes. All in all, a very successful project.
- Three years ago the Forestry Commission uprooted the remaining rhododendron along Uddens Drive and dumped it along the newly cleared adjacent pathway. Throughout the subsequent winter months, teams of volunteers have gradually been burning it and again, 'before' and 'after' photographs showed just how much progress has been made. It certainly provided plenty of heat for sausages to be cooked and enjoyed on a regular basis as a photograph of a group of Poole Scouts shown tucking in after their efforts endorsed!
- The Oak and Rowan tree avenue in CHN is beginning to thrive now and future Work Parties will address the straggly growth beginning to overwhelm it in places.

- Andy has warned that a lot of trees are now sporting vivid pink markers which denotes they are to be thinned in due course. Although this will appear to be devastating areas, it will in fact ultimately lead to stronger and sturdier growth of those trees left to thrive. 'R' signs along the way denote Rackway work paths for machinery. It is felt to be a positive sign that the FC are still cropping and managing the area by planning for its long term future as part of a 10-year plan set up in 2009. Andy stressed the importance of the Friends' to maintain an input along with local councils and agencies.
- Photographs of CHN picnic benches and sites were also shown to have been opened up, refreshed and maintained following reports of inappropriate behaviour from school children using the more enclosed site.
- Path repairs have continued throughout the woodland thanks to Paul Millar from Stone Zone on Ferndown Industrial Estate. Where he has previously given some jumbo sacks, he has now donated 3xtonnes of scalplings which has enabled the path by the bridge to be refurbished and built up to hopefully eliminate the mud and puddles throughout the winter months and improve access. Again, this donation is thanks to Chris for organising. Nick has spent long and tiring hours with clippers cutting back the side growth along this area as the FC need to give permission for us to use the electric trimmer owned by the Friends. Again 'before' and 'after' photographs were remarkable.
- Photographs of two carved benches from the Great Heath Project were shown being installed one evening by a small group of the Trustees. They were constructed on site as they were extremely heavy. Andy was pleased to note they were being used by the public the following day.
- Future projects include potential involvement in re defining the 10-mile Ferndown Forest and Stour Trail which started in November 1993.
- The Friends have designed an information leaflet for general distribution in local stores and Tourist Information outlets and which includes a detailed map of the area and its footpaths. These are currently being printed, again thanks to Chris and his many 'contacts'.
- There are now more than 650 Facebook followers for the Friends which is very encouraging. Recently Andy conducted a survey to find out what amenities (if any) people would like to see in the area. By far the biggest vote went to the construction of a wildlife pond, with dog agility and orienteering courses coming second and third. The Trustees will discuss this at future meetings.
- The steps in CHN were clearly shown to be in need of major renovation to both repair them and also to make them safely user friendly. The FC were thinking of supplying materials for the Friends to undertake this scheme but it is recognised that it would be a major task with hand tools and they are now considering employing contractors.

- Vegetation around signposts within the forestry were shown. Andy is considering forming groups within certain areas to regularly maintain them for the future.
- Although it made life difficult at the time, Andy's photographs of the woodland under snow made beautiful sights. As we are currently experiencing very dry weather, the sight of swollen and flooded areas in Uddens Water were quite a shock to see!

Closing his speech Andy outlined the definition of CHS, CHN, Uddens Water and Uddens Plantation. He explained that although technically Blunts Farm is part of the remit, it is not being covered by the Friends as it is soon to be utilised for Industrial development.

7. Election of Trustees

Following recent changes to the status of the Friends, the Trustees were all due for re-election. Details and invitations for new Trustees had been on the website but no new applicants had applied. Each of the current Trustees had submitted their details along with a short resume of the qualities they offer the group. It was decided on the night to re-elect the group as a block, rather than as individuals, and the audience present unanimously agreed by a show of hands and the motion was carried. Janet thanked Chris and Rod who have both stood down from being full Trustees due to time constraints, but who will still attend meetings as/when they can.

8. Any Other Business

A question from the floor regarding sufficient finances was answered by Jeff who explained that there has been little emphasis on fund raising this past year as we have been lucky enough to have secured various funding by both Councillors, the Forestry Commission and Lottery Funding which has provided more than enough projects for our small team to cope with. Now that these are completed there will be a need to look at the way forwards, although, as explained previously during the meeting, there are several projects already in the pipeline. Andy has applied to be part of the Co-Op 'share of profits' scheme but results of this will not be known until the end of the year.

Cllr George Russell

Cllr Russell praised the Friends for their brilliant job over the years raising the profile of the valued leisure space and said that residents of Ferndown should be proud of what has been achieved. He has offered to fund another picnic bench in Uddens as part of his Ward's 'Community Finances' award and before his post ends with the re-organisation of local governments next year. He explained that future Authorities will not be in a position to offer community monies as once Dorset County takes over, money will be very restricted with Social Services taking the main share .

He stressed that the Gypsy sites locations were not off the books and there was a great need to remain vigilant. Blunts Farm is scheduled for industrial development shortly. The Local Plan shows 550 houses in Parley and Longham with Oakhurst Stables opposite Haskins also scheduled for major developments. None of these have included any recommendations for road improvements and there is no funding for infra structure, which will result in major road congestion along Stapehill Road, Blueberry Farms, Dudsbury Golf Club and Parley.

The timetable set out currently is:

- Options Consultations – July/August 2018
- Pre submission – February/March 2019
- By then EDDC goes (along with George) with the newly formed Dorset Council covering the whole area, which George considers will potentially stream more controversial developments towards our area.
- Secretary of State will have details early 2019
- Examination of sites/comments September 2019
- Final decision 2019/20

He said that everything in the last Local Plan has taken place with outstanding issues due for completion in 2030. He is compiling an issue of his 'In Touch' leaflet which will explain the above in further details.

Janet pointed out that along with the existing housing in Parley, George is highlighting the 550 houses in the new Plan along with a further 3500 on smaller sites. 2500 of which will utilise further Green Belt land. Any objections at the Cabinet meeting will only cover minor changes and not the main issues so it is important to remain vigilant.

9. **Close of Meeting**

Janet thanked everyone for their support over the past year and also for attending a very positive meeting.

Meeting closed 8.45 pm