



Friends of Uddens & Cannon Hill Woodlands

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

28 June 2017

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

Others: Cllr George Russell, Will Holland DCC, Isobel Mowland, Gerry Bale

3. **Minutes of AGM 20th April 2016 and Matters Arising**

All updates in Chairman's Report.

4. **Chairman's Report**

Janet was delighted to report that all tasks promised in 2016 have been virtually completed. More time was spent working in Cannon Hill North, mostly clearing around the picnic tables, which it is hopefully agreed has made the area look a little more inviting. The burial mound has had a couple of sessions spent clearing it by removing excessive vegetation which now shows its shape much better. Repairs to the fencing were undertaken.

The Friends are also pleased with the avenue of trees which Mike Abraham of the Forestry Commission has kindly planted either side of the path in Cannon Hill North – we like to think the installation of our perch bench was a key player in the planning as the path is, of course, not an official one but a 'desire line' which has been created by all our feet! The trees are mainly rowan, but there are also some oaks which, although they struggled a bit in the warm and dry May/June, have mostly survived. The Forestry Commission will be replanting these areas later this year so our lovely avenue will grow as the firs do and the path will be protected.

The Construction Team have been very busy this year:

The Trailer Project has been completed. Scott did some wonderful work transforming it into an invaluable tool to take on our Work Parties. Our thanks to our County Councillor, Janet Dover and the generosity of Dorset County Council for funding it. For anyone who has not yet seen it out and about, Janet urged everyone to come along to one of our Work Parties for a cuppa now we are so much more efficient and can cater for larger numbers. The Work Party dates are always displayed on the Notice Boards and our website.

With our thanks to funding via Cllr George Russell, **The Perch Bench project** is complete. Thanks also to Jeff who has built all 20 and which have now been installed. Shortly a competition will be announced on the website encouraging people to locate all 20 benches.

Our Team has also been busy with **bird boxes**, thanks to the generosity of the People's Postcode Lottery funding 50 bird boxes of various sizes and thanks also to Scott for undertaking the mammoth task of making them.

The battle of the Himalayan Balsam continues! As previously reported, this invasive non British plant has been the focus of an eradication programme organised by Leslie Haskins of the Erica Trust in conjunction with East Dorset District Council and their Countryside Officers, and private land owners. Particular focus is on The Allen with Uddens Water and the Moors Catchment all being taken over by this pernicious problem. As poor attendance at the 4th June Work Party was disappointing, another session for 9th July has been arranged and Janet urged those willing to lend a hand to come along but to wrap up well against any hazards lurking within it.

The Dorset Wide Gypsy & Traveller & Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document is still placing the woodlands under threat. Janet stressed it is still very dangerous to assume our site is safe because nothing has been heard about the Development Plan. We are actually still waiting for the Pre-Submission Plan to be published. This is dependent on the Draft Accommodation Assessment report which has not yet been published. Janet has been in contact with Simon Trueick, the Partnership Planning Manager for Christchurch and East Dorset who reports they are still trying to finalise the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. They have the initial figures but are still waiting for the Final Draft report. They will then have to meet all the various Officers across Dorset who are dealing with this to decide on a time table towards the Pre-Submission document. It is unlikely to be until much later in the year at the earliest. Meanwhile we need to remain vigilant.

Andy will put any details on the website as soon as it is received and the Friends will then be urging everyone to write in with their comments as a matter of urgency. Andy will put any details on the website as soon as it is received and the Friends will then be urging everyone to write in with their comments as a matter of urgency. Again, we must remain vigilant to this very real threat.

Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan.

I have been in touch with the MWDF but there is still no news. They are still aiming for publication of the Pre-Submission Draft Waste Plan and Mineral Sites Plan in the autumn.

5. **Treasurer's Report**

In the absence of our Treasurer Jeff Maple, Andy went through the accounts:
£1528 funding from the People's Postcode Lottery
£715 from membership/donations
£333 unrestricted spending, including £220 insurance (a better deal than last year)
£2375 restricted spending for Projects ie trailer, perch benches etc

Closing balance as of 31st March 2017: £3781

All receipts and payments were available to view at the meeting

6. **Projects and Work Parties Report – Andy Hartstone (Work Party Lead)**

Andy took everyone on a photographic journey through the woodland to highlight all the challenges which have been achieved throughout the year, including:

- Balsam pulling in Uddens Water
- 20 Perch Benches installation funded by the EDDC
- Burial Mound maintenance
- Bird Box project funded by the People's Postcode Lottery
- Rhododendron clearance in Cannon Hill South
- Drainage Grip Installation in conjunction with the Dorset Countryside
- Clear Felling and regeneration with the Forestry Commission
- Picnic Bench maintenance
- Trailer Project which will always be ongoing, funded by Cllr Janet Dover
- Footpath repairs
- New 'Way Markers' installed as part of the Great Heaths Project who will put more benches into the woodland in their own right
- Now registered with Techsoup giving access to free and discounted software
- Free registration with Google for Business for improved email and storage
- Community Asset application for CHS supported by the Forestry Commission (*Confirmation that this has been granted was received shortly after the AGM*)
- Change to Charitable Incorporated Conservation

Future Ideas Under Discussion:

- Woodland Gym
- Dog Agility Course
- Relaunch Ferndown Forest and Stour Trail
- Woodland Map and Information leaflet for Tourists
- New Website
- Perch Bench treasure hunt
- Bench and Interpretation Panel on Stapehill old railway line
- Picnic benches in Uddens Plantation, Ferndown side

There were also photo's demonstrating other woodland activity including:

- Dens
- Vic's natural sculptures

7. **Motion – Change to Charitable Incorporated Organisation**

Janet asked Andy to outline this change and he reported:

- The name will remain unchanged
- Will become registered with the Charities Commission
- Require a new Constitution (very few changes to CC recommended)
- All assets will transfer to new charity
- All membership would transfer across
- All Trustees must stand for re-election at first AGM after change

The Constitution Document was available on the night and is also on the website.

The object of the Charity has been slightly updated:

‘To Project and Enhance the Woodlands and Surrounding Area of Uddens and Cannon Hill Plantations for the Benefit of the Environment, Local Community and Users of the Castleman Trailway’.

The Trustees currently are:

- Janet Healy – Chair
- Andy Hartstone – Secretary and Work Party Leader
- Jeff Maple – Treasurer
- Scott Whibly – Chris Gibbs – Nick Gumery – Project Management
- Lin White – Notes Secretary and Poster/Leaflet Design
- Jim and Luanne Burbidge – Storage, Meeting and Support

It was suggested from the floor that perhaps the Trustees would consider having Committee members in addition to full Trustees. This will be discussed at the next Trustees meeting.

Motion 1 – Change to Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Unanimously voted affirmative

8. **Motion 2 – Adopt Draft Charitable Incorporation Constitution**

Unanimously voted affirmative

9. **Any Other Motions**

None

10. **Any Other Business**

Attending representatives from the Forestry Commission, Linda Laker and Tracey Churcher expressed their delight with our ‘brilliant group’ and feel we are positive partners to support the woodland. They felt that due to its obvious ‘cared for’ look it helped to reduce vandalism, which is fortunately minimal. They looked forwards to working with us for the future.

11. **Close**

Janet thanked everyone for attending such a positive meeting which she then officially closed.