

GUNTON WOODLAND COMMUNITY PROJECT

Chairman: David Briggs Secretary: Barry Shimmield

MINUTES of the 17th Annual General Meeting held at Gunton C.P.School, Gainsborough Drive on Wednesday March 19th 2014, starting at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT. David Briggs (Chairman), Barry Shimmield (Secretary), Carol Murray (Treasurer), Rosemary Briggs (Merchandise), John Dickerson (Web site manager), Janet Field and Chris Chapman.
Members of the Council Mrs M Rudd and Mr D Coulam
Mr Ray Adcock for Suffolk Wildlife Trust.
Mr Harry Hill (Gunton St Peters PCC).
A total of 56 members attended.

- **Apologies for Absence**

Cllr. Keith Patience

Apologies from a number of members as notified.

- **Minutes of the 16th AGM**

After welcoming everyone to the meeting, the Chairman gave a short summary of the minutes from the previous meeting. A full copy could be collected from the front desk, should anyone wish to do so.

Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Mel Canham, seconded by Brian Channing and were approved and signed.

- **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman started by thanking everyone for all the support he had had from members, workers and the committee in his first year in office. It had been a difficult year, with the bad weather causing several work parties to be cancelled. We lost another of the black poplars, which means we now only have one left, but we will try to replace with seedlings.

The main path was narrowed and then scraped using a digger supplied by Mr. Munnings, he also kindly donated some road planings which were used to create a hard, dry surface on one side of the path. We were advised by Waveney Norse, that the circular seat under the chestnut should be removed, as the main branch of the tree was unsafe.

The door to the pill box at the back of Gainsborough Drive has been blocked, using materials supplied by WN, to stop people dumping litter.

In April we had our first day trip of the year, to Holkham Hall, with a coffee stop at Wroxham Barns. The weather was good and everyone enjoyed a very successful day out. Also in April we had the spring litter pick which was not quite so well attended, but we still managed to collect 30 or so bags of rubbish.

Several trees and branches were brought down in the storms, which had to be cleared and made safe. Our coffee seat disappeared one week and was found damaged in the bomb hole in the church field. It has now been re-instated.

The railway track was cleared so that now walkers do not have to walk along the pitch and putt course. This year we will be installing a flight of steps near the old railway bridge, to allow better access to the path. Pleasure Wood Hills will be providing the materials.

New boardwalks in Foxburrow wood and fencing along the A12 were funded by a lottery grant, which is now complete.

In June a group enjoyed a lovely trip to Switzerland. The late snow meant the agenda had to be slightly adjusted, but everyone still had a really good time.

We had a visit from the forestry commission in July, who gave us a good report and said that the wood was in a very healthy state.

As usual in August we had an enjoyable day raking the hay at Leisure Way, with SWT.

In September we had the second outing of the year, to the Rural Life museum in Stowmarket, with a coffee stop on the way, at Wyevale nurseries.

We spent quite a lot of time in September watering the new trees, using pipes that had been inserted to take the water straight to the roots. This system seems to have worked quite well, although we did lose almost all the wild cherries in the cold winds.

A safety fence was erected around the culvert at the bottom of Gainsborough Drive.

Also in September, we helped the church with the Teddy Bear's Fun Day, for which they gave us a donation of £50.

In October we had some very high winds while all the trees were still in leaf and consequently, there was quite a lot of damage. Paul McDowell-Veitch from WN carried out the annual tree inspection, which identified fewer trees needed felling than in previous years. We created a new path in the primary school to allow the children to go on unattended nature walks within the school grounds. We also helped the children plant some tree whips outside the new perimeter fence. Each child in the school planted one whip - about 360 in all.

December saw the annual visit to the Snape Christmas show which was as good as ever, we will be going again this year!

In January we replaced the notice board at the main entrance. Rosewin Read made a donation towards this in memory of her late husband Jim and she came along after one of the work parties to perform the unveiling. The bird box survey showed that of the 72 boxes cleared out, only 28 had been used last year. We had to replace 2 boxes and 11 had to be repaired.

In conclusion, the wood is looking in a good state and is lovely at the moment, with snowdrops, a few aconites and lots of daffodils waiting to flower.

- **Treasurer's Report.**

The Chairman thanked Carol for her work as Treasurer and Graham Lawson for auditing the accounts.

Gunton Wood	Deficit for the year	£1439.19
	Balance at Y/E Jan 2014	£4568.28

Foxburrow Wood	Deficit for the year	£70.08
	Balance at Y/E Jan 2014	£468.39

The chairman highlighted some of the main points of the accounts, including the loss of the airshow contribution (usually about £600) and replacement of the notice board at a cost of £894 of which Mrs Rosewin Read contributed £311. The proposal to adopt the accounts was proposed by Daphne Williams, seconded by John Moore and was carried unanimously. The chairman then requested that the two separate accounts currently held for Gunton Wood and Foxburrow Wood could be merged into one. This was proposed by Jenny Domaingue, seconded by Doreen Dally and carried.

- **Guest Speaker.**

Unfortunately, the guest speaker, who was to give talk on bee keeping in the garden, did not arrive, so the meeting continued.

- **Election of Committee.**

There was only one nomination for each position and all existing members of the Committee were willing to stand again for re-election so a vote was taken en bloc. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman : David Briggs, proposed by Colin Fitt, seconded by Arthur Wallen.

Secretary : Barry Shimmiel, proposed by Paul Bettis, seconded by Ellie Chapman.

Treasurer : Carol Murray, proposed by June Sedgley, seconded by Moira Amor.

Member : Rosemary Briggs, proposed by Beverley Fitt, seconded by Daphne Williams.

Member : Janet Field, proposed by Eileen Pembroke, seconded by Betty Easey.

Member : Chris Chapman proposed by Ivor Drew, seconded by Richard Friend.

Web Site : John Dickerson proposed by Chris Rayner, seconded by Edwina Jacobs

The chairman then announced a new position of Minutes Secretary. Mo Dickerson was willing to stand and was proposed by Jackie Channing, seconded by Linda Armstrong. This was accepted.

- **Work Plan.**

- **Gunton Wood.**

- The Chairman thanked all the work party members for their help during the year.

- During the coming year we might apply for some "major trees" from the Woodland Trust.

- We have agreed with Pleasure Wood Hills that we will install a flight of steps at the end of the disused railway track, near the bridge. This will need some extra workers on 2 or 3 Saturday mornings, so if any Thursday workers could come along that would be very helpful.

- We will try to use a digger truck again for more plantings on the main path, to continue with the work that has already been quite successful. The summer work will continue with splitting snowdrops, removing Spanish bluebells etc. The nursery fence needs repairing. Some of the ditches need clearing, but PWH no longer has a digger, so we will ask Mr. Munnings if his could be used.

- Waveney Norse have supplied 2 silver birches, to be planted on the green space near Gainsborough Drive, to replace trees damaged in the storms.

- **Foxburrow Wood.**

- The ditch near to Crome Walk is collapsing and although the council have been made aware of this, no work has been done. Brian Channing agreed that he would continue to chase this up. We have installed waymarks for a new circular walk around Foxburrow wood and along Gunton Church Lane to Gunton wood. The council have said they cannot afford to produce leaflets for the new walk, so we will try to put some information onto our web site.

- As a general point, the chairman said we have a problem with income now that the airshow has finished so we may struggle this year to pay the tools insurance. We will try to have some fund raising events during the year.

- **Nature Reserve.**

- Ray Adcock gave an update on the work in the nature reserve, which he said is developing well. A small group of volunteers meet each week and are making good progress. The paths have been quite wet during the winter, but are now improving. The bird survey showed a very good range of birds. The winter winds had not caused too much damage, although one lovely beech by the middle pond has come down. Scrub has been cleared by the main entrance and has been cordoned off, to encourage new species to inhabit the area. The ponds are in very good condition thanks to a great deal of help from GWCP, for which SWT are very grateful. Some reed has been left in the ponds, to encourage moorhens to nest. Keeping the reserve clear of rubbish is a big problem, so the boundary fence has been cleared of brambles to try to help the situation.

- **Gunton Warren.**

- Ray then read a statement from Matt Gooch, on the progress of Gunton Warren.

- The main objective is to improve the access to the heathland and shingle areas, as part of the Pathfinder Project. Some new entrances have been installed. There is on-going control of the Japanese knotweed, a lot of bracken has been cleared and heather re-instated. Some rhododendrons are being cleared, as these are non-native and very invasive.

- Forthcoming work will include more scraping of bracken, a 350 metre boardwalk onto the shingle, steps to the beach, removal of bamboo and a wildlife survey.

- Matt sent his thanks to all the volunteers for the work they had done so far, and said that he now needs a volunteer warden for the area.

- **Church Field Status Report.**

- Barry Shimmield showed plans of the proposed 1st phase, saying that phases 2 and 3 would be introduced in about 10 year's time.

- Work on phase 1 should starting in Sept./Oct. this year, after the barley crop has been harvested.

- Wildflower glades will be created, where burials and ashes will be interred. Part of the site cannot

be used for burials because of the ground water levels. Also, sewerage pipelines run alongside the site so only shrubs can be planted in that area. The proposal is to plant more than 6000 trees and shrubs.

A new charitable trust is to be formed - GWBT, and the application is in progress. A board of trustees has been formed, but they still need a lot more help from people with varying expertise. A grant has been received from the forestry commission.

Burials will be open to all faiths. The site will be fully accessible to the public, including dog walkers.

The first burials are expected to be in 2016. The trust is hoping to "break even" after 10 years.

It is hoped that tree planting will take place between November 2014 and end of January 2015.

About 60 volunteers will be needed to plant the 6000 trees and shrubs during this time.

Barry answered questions from the floor - the farmer will have access around the perimeter of the site - weeds around the trees will be sprayed for the first few years, until they are well established - the railway embankment is not part of the site - ashes can be scattered in pre-determined areas - the business plan has allowed for long term maintenance and care, including full time paid employees.

- **Social Events.**

Several events have been proposed .

Another bingo evening with fish and chips in May.

A trip to the English whisky distillery and the Dad's Army museum in June.

A day at the Duxford Air Show in September

The annual visit to the Snape Christmas show in mid-December.

The Teddy Bear's Fun day is still under discussion. The chairman suggested that proceeds from the woodland rides could go to GWCP and proceeds from refreshments could go to the Church. We would need many more helpers in the wood than last year, a show of hands resulted in 17 people willing to help, which may not be enough. The committee will discuss it at their next meeting.

The spring litter pick is on Saturday April 12th at 9am.

- **AOB**

Janet Field asked for a show of hands for people willing to help with preparations the day before the Teddy Bears Fun day. Several people volunteered.

Dick Armstrong voiced his concerns about the amount of tree felling and removal of wood. He felt that since we had acquired the chainsaw, it was being overused. Also, wood that was removed had quite a high monetary value. The chairman replied that normally, only trees identified by the WN inspection were felled, however this year several were damaged in the storms and needed to be removed for safety reasons. The chairman also stated that the issue of wood removal will be discussed by the committee at their next meeting.

- **Finale**

Barry Shimmield then showed a short video entitled " Snowdrops in Gunton Wood", containing film of various species of snowdrops with their Latin names, plus a few aconites. The video had lovely backing music composed and played by committee member Chris Chapman.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Minutes Approved by _____ (Chairman) _____ (Date)