

GUNTON WOODLAND COMMUNITY PROJECT

Chairman: David Briggs Secretary: Barry Shimmield

MINUTES of the **20th Annual General Meeting** held at Gunton Primary Academy, Gainsborough Drive on **Wednesday 19th April 2017**, starting at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT. David Briggs (Chairman), Barry Shimmield (Secretary), Carol Murray (Treasurer), Rosemary Briggs (Merchandise), John Dickerson (Web site manager), Mo Dickerson (Minutes Secretary), Janet Field.
Councillor Keith Patience
Guest Speakers Mr. Chris Brooks & Mr. Michael Strand
A total of 44 members attended.

- **Apologies for Absence**

Chris & Ellie Chapman
Mayor Stephen Ardley, Cllr. Mary Rudd
Peter Farrington, Rev. Reiss
Apologies from a number of other members as notified.

- **Minutes of the 19th AGM**

After welcoming everyone to the meeting, the Chairman gave a short summary of the minutes from the previous meeting. Full copies were available on the web-site or printed copies at the front desk. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Peter Smith, seconded by Daphne Williams and they were approved and signed.

- **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman started by thanking the committee for their work, particularly Rosemary for organising the trips, and all the volunteers & members for their support over the last 21 years. We have now achieved 43,600 hours of work!

The main path which was resurfaced last year has been very successful and the only maintenance we have had to do is sweep the leaves off.

We did not have time to do a full bird box clean this year, but John & Julie did the ones in Moore's Lane and found 7 nests from last year. Paul Bettis made some new boxes to replace those that were too badly damaged to be repaired.

The annual tree inspection showed some work to be done, but most of the trees that came down in storm Doris were not the ones identified in the inspection!

We have had some vandalism again, some newly planted trees were pulled up and there was some damage to the pond.

We have done quite a lot of work in Foxburrow Wood, including improving the paths with 6 tons of type 1 stones, clearing the ditch & the two smaller ponds, and installing a hand rail on the steps at the Gainsborough Drive entrance.

The away trip to Windsor Castle and Kew Gardens was very successful. We had a lovely cruise on the river Orwell and another very successful bingo evening.

We were pleased to receive a new award – "Certificate of Distinction" from RHS in Bloom.

A full copy of the Chairman's report is attached as Appendix 1.

The chairman then summarised a report from Ray Adcock, the warden of the Gunton Meadow Reserve. This year has been about fencing and general maintenance. There have been some problems with rabbits and deer and they are worried they may lose some orchids. A kestrel has been nesting and a heron has been on the pond all winter.

A full copy of the warden's report is attached as Appendix 2.

• **Treasurer's Report.**

The Secretary summarised the annual accounts, copies of which were given to each attendee. He thanked Carol for her work as Treasurer and Graham Lawson for auditing the accounts.

Surplus for the year £948.70
Balance at Y/E £9118.08

The secretary highlighted some of the main points of the accounts.

We received £1000 from Pleasurewood Hills, who have kindly agreed to continue supporting us this year.

The sale of calendars made £304 profit, the bingo evening made £186 and there was some surplus from the away trip, thanks to David donating his free place.

The secretary then gave brief details of some of the expenses, including the running cost and maintenance of the chainsaw, which is a real necessity now that the work force is not quite so young & fit. We also have insurance to pay, although we do get a discount because we are members of TCV.

The secretary concluded that GWCP are, financially, a very stable and secure group.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Mel Canham, seconded by Rosemary Briggs and was carried unanimously.

• **Guest Speaker.**

The chairman then introduced the guest speaker, Mr. Chris Brooks, who started by saying how sad he was to have to take over from Mr. John Holmes who had recently, suddenly passed away. Mr. Brooks had worked alongside John for many years and it had come as a great shock to him.

The slide show gave a real insight into the changes that have happened in Lowestoft since the turn of the century. We saw bathing huts on the edge of the sea, trams trundling down the old High St. and rowing boats on the boating lake (which is still in operation today). Many slides showed the large amount of bomb damage that Lowestoft had suffered in the Second World War. The old library was completely destroyed as well as the old shopping arcade.

The talk brought back happy memories for those who have lived here for many years and gave an interesting insight into Old Lowestoft, for those who have not been here for so long.

The chairman thanked Mr. Brooks for his very interesting talk and gave him a donation of £30 for The Jack Rose Society.

• **Election of Committee.**

All existing members of the Committee were willing to stand again for re-election One extra nominee had been entered and the chairman confirmed that the committee could be enlarged by one, so Peter Smith was accepted as a new member, proposed by Andrea Crawley, seconded by Paul Crawley. The vote to elect the new committee en-bloc was proposed by David Barwick, seconded by Ken Larter. The vote was unanimously accepted.

Chairman	: David Briggs, proposed by Colin Fitt, seconded by Mel Canham.
Secretary	: Barry Shimmield, proposed by Geoff Dyson, seconded by Jean Muir.
Treasurer	: Carol Murray, proposed by Talma Windmill, seconded by Moira Amor.
Merchandise	: Rosemary Briggs, proposed by Beverley Fitt, seconded by Daphne Williams.
Minutes Secretary	: Mo Dickerson, proposed by Linda Armstrong, seconded by Colin Tyler.
Member	: Janet Field, proposed by Betty Easey, seconded by Christine Read.
Member	: Chris Chapman, proposed by Ivor Drew, seconded by Roy Gardner.
Member	: Peter Smith, proposed by Andrea Crawley, seconded by Paul Crawley.
Web Site	: John Dickerson proposed by Chris Rayner, seconded by Edwina Jacobs.
Honorary Auditor	: Graham Lawson proposed by Jackie Channing, seconded by Yvon Domaingue.

Work Plans.

Gunton Wood and Foxburrow Wood.

The chairman stated that we would continue in much the same way, with care and maintenance of both Gunton and Foxburrow Woods.

We would like to continue the resurfacing of the main path down to PwH. The cost is estimated to be around £6500 and we will try to get some funding, possibly from a Lottery grant, the Suffolk community fund and perhaps, the Tesco plastic bag fund.

We have a lot of young trees in the nursery, which will be planted out in the autumn. All the tree work that was identified in the annual tree inspection has been completed by us and WN.

We have recently done a lot of work in Foxburrow wood, mainly repairing and improving the paths and boardwalks.

The chairman stressed that we are all volunteers and no-one should feel pressured to do any jobs they don't really want to do and also everyone can suggest any work that they think needs doing.

Barry Shimmield then gave a brief update on progress in the Burial Park. There have already been 50 interment of ashes and 10/11 burials, which is a much higher number than was originally forecast. Some of the trees are growing really well, but some are suffering badly from the severe lack of rain we have had for many months.

• **Social Events.**

The hotel has been booked for the 2018 trip to the Lake District at the beginning of May.

The annual trip to Snape has already been booked.

A fish & chip/bingo evening has been arranged for Thursday 7th Sept.

There will be another "Big Red Bus" outing on Saturday 5th August. There will be plenty of room for everyone.

Details of the annual dinner will be announced later

• **Suffolk Wildlife trust Speaker.**

The chairman then introduced Michael Strand from SWT who gave a very enthusiastic talk about the proposed expansion of Carlton Marshes.

This is the most ambitious campaign SWT have undertaken. They are hoping to purchase 1000 acres of land. The area will be hugely accessible to the public and it is hoped that in a few years it will be designated as a national nature reserve.

A £1million appeal has been launched and £500,000 has already been achieved, which means that the first stage has already been completed. New scrapes have been created and there are >100 species of birds making use of them. More scrapes will be created, large reed beds will be planted and fresh water dykes will be installed.

There will be publicity events during May when it is hoped that many people will come along and sign up to become members of SWT – "the success of the venture relies on the membership".

• **AOB**

John Dickerson informed everyone that a short video entitled "A calm day in Gunton Wood" can be seen on the GWCP web site. The video was created by Wally Crowther, with backing music composed and performed by Chris Chapman.

Jenny Domaingue proposed a vote of thanks to Wally for all the lovely photos that he takes of the woods.

Barry Shimmield gave news of a new housing project that has been proposed for Leisure Way near to the nature reserve. Details can be found on the Waveney District Council web-site.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9:35pm

Chairman's report 2017 AGM

This is our 20th AGM and therefore we have been a community Group working for 21 years. I must say it is a tribute to all our members and most of all those that have been on the work parties for without you all it would not have been possible to continue as long as we have. You cannot walk around the woods without someone stopping you and congratulating and thanking you for all the hard work.
THANK YOU ALL

Once again my thanks to my committee who have all worked extremely hard throughout the year making my job much easier. Thanks also to Mo for her excellent minutes. To Carol for her excellent book keeping. To Rosemary for all her work handling most of the organisation of the trips and for making the refreshments except when we were away on holidays. Thank you all for the cakes for all the coffee breaks. We have now completed over 43,600 hours. The number of News Letters that now go out via email is 160 of our total of 210, saving us valuable funds.

The main path which was surfaced with the help of The Councillors Locality Budgets has proved an excellent success and only had to be swept of fallen leaves.

We missed the annual bird box cleaning due to the bad weather over a succession of several weeks. But they were inspected and those that needed repairs or replacing were attended to. Thank you to Paul who made new boxes.

The annual tree inspection carried out in conjunction with the Arboriculture Manger from Waveney Norse in both woods was completed in October 2015 and resulted in a reduction of tree felling required. The work allocated to GWCP was completed recently and the work that we could not carry out was completed by Waveney Norse early in April 2017. Ash die back is seriously prevalent now and is being monitored. The storm Doris reeked it's havoc and we lost about 18 trees of various sizes and had work parties to clear up the debris. Strangely enough almost all the trees identified in the inspection survived. Again there has been a little vandalism in the wood with damage to trees planted near the Church and some damage around the pond.

We installed a new pipe line in the ditch supplying water to the pond. There is still a sump to be fitted which will be done during the summer.

In Foxburrow Wood there have been several work parties and the paths have been dressed with stone to make the paths more suitable for walkers during the winter months. The ditches in both woods have been cleared on several occasions. I think the ladies really enjoy working there and have been doing a great job. A path was created across the green at the end of Gainsborough Drive into the wood and a hand rail fitted to one side. It was extremely muddy there and very slippery.

Our weekend trip away was to Windsor and 47 members and friends had an action packed few days, involving a visit the Windsor Castle, a visit to Kew Gardens, a tour and tasting at Denbies Winery and a boat trip on the river Thames. This year we have a full coach to the Cotswolds.

In July we travelled to Ipswich Docks and took a river cruise aboard the Orwell Lady to Shotley and had lunch at the Shipwreck pub before taking the short walk to the HMS Ganges Museum. There was a storm as we left to museum and we made a quick dash to the boat and sailed across the

stormy water back to the shelter of the river.

We again held a Fish and Chip Bingo night at St Benedict's Church Hall. The bingo caller was the cheeky Cockney who helped make it a most enjoyable evening. Thank you to all that provided raffle prizes.

In December we again visited Snape for the Christmas Show but numbers were slightly down on previous years, it was thought that we should give it a miss next year but those that came with us said that they would probably like to go again. It is a lovely start to Christmas.

In March once more we were invited to attend the presentation of the RHS-Anglia in Bloom Its' Your Neighbourhood awards. We were awarded a newly created Certificate of Distinction for our work as a community Group.

So well done to all of you volunteers.

In all it has been a most successful year and thanks to all that have volunteered for without you GWCP would not have been around for the past 21 years.

Thank you once again.

Gunton Meadow Report 2017

Following the removal of the brambles by the fence along Leisure Way, we continued to clear the area of long standing rubbish. The area and the fence are now greening up well and it was work well worth doing. The problem now is keeping the litter under control as visitors walking to PWH seem to think that it is OK to drop litter as and when they have finished their purchases made from Tesco. Add to that the litter from the Filling Station, the advantage of this area being open that it is easier to collect this litter.

We now have a mower for our regular use and Gordon Spall has been put in charge of seeing the paths and verges are kept under control. It does keep visitors to the paths and adds to the general appearance of the reserve. We spent some time during the winter months cutting back the brambles to widen the paths and it did help to reduce some of the very muddy areas which appear during the winter. It does give Gordon more areas to cut, of course but as long as he has plenty of fuel, we do not see him until tea break.

Some of the fencing has required replacing and this was completed during the autumn.

The last two or three years the reserve has developed very well. We now get a wonderful display of primroses which are spreading every year and they do look spectacular along the back of the middle pond. Orchids were the best I have seen on the meadow and they are also making a good display in the reserve. There were even a few bee orchids on the meadow again but they unfortunately do not last for very long as the rabbits or muntjac take out the tops.

We had a very wide range of birds in the reserve during the summer, with a Kestrel nesting in the rotten trunk by the middle pond. It caused great interest especially after the young were fledged and they stayed around the area for several days being fed by the adults.

The water in the two ponds are very low, especially the top pond. We removed quite a lot of the burr-reed during the autumn/winter period but with no substantial winter rainfall the water is the lowest I have seen for many years. It is the first time that there has not been any frog's spawn in that pond although there was a substantial amount in the middle pond. Something I cannot remember seeing previously. There has been a heron on these ponds all winter. When I frighten it off one pond it flies to the other pond but I have not seen it since I have returned from holiday.

Everything is in place for a good summer and we hope the enjoyment and respect of our reserve by visitors which we work hard to maintain.

Regards,
Ray.