

HORSELL COMMON PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Company Number 06460936

Charity Number 1123473

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD AT WWF HEADQUARTERS, BREWERY ROAD, WOKING

MONDAY 4TH JUNE 2018 AT 7.30PM

Present: The Current Board of Trustees
Paul Rimmer Estates Manager
Rachel Woodman Senior Ranger
Members of the Society, including the Board

Minutes: Judith Loeffler

Apologies: Geoffrey Cuttle, David Robbins, Caroline Hughes

1. Welcome and Agenda

Robin Hoyle welcomed everyone to the AGM and briefly outlined the agenda.

2. Minutes of 2017 AGM

Accepted as a true record unanimously. Proposed by Ron Neale and seconded by Paul Downes

3. Chairman's Report and Finance and Legal Report

Robin Hoyle summarised the key events of 2017 for HCPS including

- The refocus on heathland management
- The increased number of volunteer work days on the HCPS estate
- The expansion of Heather Farm
- The licensing of commercial dogwalkers
- The continued conversations about car parking facilities
- The pressures from proposed developments in the immediate vicinity of the Common eg East of Martyrs Lane and Fair Oaks

4. Estates Management Report

Andrew Halstead reported on a 'pleasingly different' year for the Society with activity focussed on conserving the heathland with highlights of

- Having a full year with an additional member of staff, Rachel Woodman
- Increased number of working parties
- The introduction of a licensing scheme for professional dog walkers

- A new Countryside Stewardship Agreement with Natural England with funding for 10 years
- Clearing gorse from the western side of Grasslands and scraping the ground so heather can germinate
- The return of the Belted Galloway cattle
- Removing trees and scrub on the south side of the Sandpit to create more bare ground for ground nesting solitary bees and wasps

Andrew thanked Paul Rimmer and Rachel Woodman and his fellow EM team members.

5. Public Relations Report

Chris Taylor reported that in 2017 HCPS has provided talks, attended events and produced content to increase public understanding. This included interviews with BBC Surrey and talks at local interest group meetings.

An inaugural Commemoration service was held at the Muslim Burial Ground in July with a new information board having been erected in time for the service. New information boards have been widely rolled out in car parks at Heather Farm, Sandy Track, Six Cross Roads, Monument Road and Pyrford Common.

A new edition of The Common has been shared with the members.

Chris thanked his fellow Trustees for their contribution to HCPS' PR efforts.

6. Treasurer's Report

Paul Downes referred to the annual report that has been circulated with the AGM invitation and is available on the website. Despite investment in an additional full time role and the refurbishment of Heathland House (the portacabins), a cash neutral plan has been achieved for 2017 with the intention to deliver the same in 2018.

Paul highlighted the unanticipated financial risk of litigation cases to the Society. Paul thanked his fellow Trustees and Newby Crouch Auditors.

It was resolved unanimously to approve the accounts - Proposed by Jill Underwood and seconded by David Ludlow

7. Retiring and Replacement Directors / Trustees

The following Directors / Trustees are retiring by rotation and are proposed for re-election: David Ludlow, Judith Loeffler, Chris Taylor.

Caroline Hughes is standing as Director / Trustee.

It was resolved unanimously that these directors / trustees can be (re-)elected en bloc.

It was then resolved unanimously that David Ludlow, Judith Loeffler, Chris Taylor and Caroline Hughes be elected as Directors / Trustees.

Proposed by Greg Devine and seconded by Ann Harrington.

8. Estate Manager Update

Paul Rimmer gave an insight into the successes and challenges of managing the Common:

- The Portakabin has been upgraded and refurbished at a total cost of £55,000. It is now used as meeting room, for conferences, for educational purposes and as base for the Thames Basin Heath Wardens; all of which is creating a future income stream for HCPS
- The path network around Heather Farm and through the meadows has been upgraded
- Flytipping continues to remain a challenge
- Controlled parking signs have been introduced in HCPS' non members car parks
- Introduction of licensing for commercial dog walkers
- The pylons near the Muslim Burial ground will soon be gone – after four years of negotiation with UK Power Networks they have agreed to run power lines underground
- Britannia Wharf had their planning applications approved and it seems likely a residential care home will be built. As part of this development the car park and the tumulus will be taken over by HCPS, in return the developers will receive additional space for car parking from HCPS; overall the agreement leads to a net gain of common land.

Paul thanked Rachel Woodman for her significant contribution and the Board for their support.

9. Questions from the floor

Q (Bob Goodge) How does HCPS give consideration to people with a condition called cynophobia ie a fear of dogs

A – Heather Farm is designed for dogs, to divert dog walkers from sensitive heathland.

Q (Liz Judson) How to stop dogs from jumping up at people

A – HCPS encourages all dog walkers to behave responsibly and to keep their pets under control

Q (Unknown) What can be done about the mess at Wheatsheaf woods?

A – With the area being so close to the town centre, it does attract rough sleepers. HCPS puts notices on tents, cleans camps and is in conversation with Woking Borough Council on how they could help to improve the situation

Q (Tony Noel) The costs the council now levies for disposal of rubbish encourages flytipping

A – It seems unscrupulous people are the key issue and HCPS is aiming to identify perpetrators by examining the rubbish for identifiable information

Q (Steve Burgess) Prices in the café at Heather Farm have increased significantly eg Doggie frozen yoghurt from £1.50 to £3.50

A – Whilst HCPS is the landlord, we are not the café operators

Q (Penny Mare) Thank you for creating wheelchairs suitable paths in Bourne Meadows and the Bedser Trail

Q (Linzie Davies) What is the litigation case Paul Downes referred to in his report

A – It's about a tripping incident brought via a solicitor on a no win – no fee basis

Q (Greg Devine) Some suggestions rather than question: 1. Set up CCTV and notices that flytipping will be prosecuted, 2. To avoid litigious claims put up 'own risk' notices

Q (Claire Dickson) Parking at Heather Farm is an issue and pedestrian access is very difficult

A – HCPS is investigating whether to enlarge parking pending tenants contribution to this work. The local councillors are aware of the pedestrian access issue and better access from the Sandy Track car park is being discussed

10. Simon Cowell – Wildlife Aid Foundation

Simon delivered an engaging presentation on the purpose, challenges and successes of his Wildlife Aid foundation.

The meeting terminated at 20.30 hours