

BRINGSTY COMMON MANORIAL COURT

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 14th October 2017 in Whitbourne Village Hall

Present:

Allan Corder, Tom Fisher, Paul Friend, Carol Friend, Peter Hall, Claire Hall, Sue Long, Tim Phillips, Cllr. Nigel Shaw, Jenny Creek

Also present were a number of commoners and residents of the common.

1. Apologies for absence

Mike Harrison, Anne Evans, George Thompson

2. Minutes of the 2016 Annual General Meeting

There were no requests for these to be read out. They were accepted as a true record.

3. Matters arising from item 2

None

4. Chairman's Report

Welcome to the AGM.

Our stewardship grant from Natural England (NE) expired in Autumn 2017. Naturally we were keen to obtain more funding to continue management of the common. Consequently we involved NE about one year ago in preparation for a new grant application. We put together what we thought was a businesslike and detailed application but this was rejected, greatly to our disappointment. We have objected strongly to this decision and are now in discussions with NE as to how to proceed in the future....watch this space.

We have also applied for a grant for a woodland management plan. If successful, this will finance a detailed plan of management for the woodland on the common. This will allow an application for a grant to manage the woodland as suggested in the plan. We then have to decide if we are able to do this with the money we might obtain. If this process strikes you as tortuous, you are not the only one(s).

On to something positive. Brackenburn have removed a huge amount of bracken from the common. This is an excellent way of preventing unwanted scrub growth and limits the year on year accumulation of bracken litter as well as probably weakening the bracken growth to some extent.

I hope you have an enjoyable evening tonight.

Allan Corder.

5. Matters arising from item 4

None

6. Treasurers Report

At the end of the 2016-2017 financial year we had £24202.97 in our current account, £10781.29 in our Secure Trust 180 day Notice Account and £0.17 in our Flex Saver Account. The bulk of the income was made up of the Rural Payments Agency's two payments in December last year and June this year of £3909.10 each making a total of £7818.20, over £200 less than last year.

We received funding from Whitbourne and Brockhampton parish councils to pay for the football pitch mowing for which we are extremely grateful as this is not covered by our existing grants. We have asked both parish councils if they could, once again, see their way to contributing towards the maintenance of this amenity in the next financial year.

Interest on the savings account was £195.19

The spreadsheet shows an income over expenditure of £1916.87.

The Drover's Pond fund has £2409.82 available which we will be using for maintenance and mowing around it. Our current funding does not cover this need.

£34984.26 remains in our savings and current accounts.

7. Matters arising from Item 6

A query was raised as to whether the healthy value of the funds in our accounts had any effect on our applications for grants and why we have so much in the way of savings. The chairman replied that information about our assets was not requested for either the stewardship or the woodland management application. We receive the money in order to carry out specified work, but are not required to return any surplus. This surplus has been achieved over a period of years thanks largely to the efforts of unpaid volunteers. He agreed that it is a substantial amount but as there is a possibility that we may not get a further grant, it will be very useful to have.

8. Auditor's report

The auditor's report has not yet been finalised because there were a few queries which were not resolved before this meeting owing to both the auditor and our treasurer being away. There is no question of any irregularities in the accounts; the queries relate to matters of procedure.

Cllr. Shaw asked if it will be necessary to call an extraordinary AGM to pass the auditor's report.

The chairman replied that that will be a matter for the committee to decide at the next ordinary meeting, scheduled for 08/11/17. He asked the floor if anybody would wish to attend such a meeting. There were no replies.

9. Resolutions

None

10. Election of the committee for 2017/18

Nomination forms have been received from:

Allan Corder, Tom Fisher, Paul Friend, Carol Friend, Peter Hall, Claire Hall, Sue Long, Tim Phillips and Martin Roche. Mike Harrison has also confirmed that he wishes to be re-elected. There were no further nominations from the floor and no objections to the nominees so the above have been elected for the current year.

11. Appointment of Auditor

Until we have accepted the auditor's report we are not ready to make this appointment, especially in the absence of the treasurer. This will be an item for the agenda of the November meeting. There were no objections to this.

12. AOB

None

13. Talk by Martin Harvey – 'From outside to online'

Martin Harvey is an entomologist and biological recorder. He works part-time at the UK Biological Records Centre, on projects such as iRecord and the recently launched Pollinator Monitoring Scheme. He has been instrumental in helping with and setting up the Bringsty Common Biological Recording Group. Martin also carries out entomological surveys, provides biodiversity data management support, and teaches wildlife identification and recording for organisations including the Field Studies Council and Wildlife Trusts. He lectures on MSc courses for Manchester Metropolitan University and Birkbeck, University of London. As a volunteer, he is county moth recorder for Berkshire and runs the national recording scheme for Soldierflies and allies.

Martin gave a very informative talk about the use of technology in the recording of wildlife data. There are concerns that the technology may be discouraging people from going outside. He was keen to emphasise that wildlife recording will always rely on people getting outside and observing things and photographing and reporting them. The technology simply makes it easier to do. He talked about how the many different organisations can use all the available data to create a big picture of trends in wildlife, e.g. which species are becoming scarce, which appear to be thriving. He encouraged us all to record our observations of anything, not just unusual species. We should remember the 4 Ws: **W**hat you saw, **W**here you saw it, **W**hen you saw it and **W**ho you are.

14. Close of meeting

The meeting came to a close with refreshments.

15. Date of next meeting

The next ordinary meeting will be held on Wednesday 8th November 2017 at 7.30 p.m. in the small room of Whitbourne Village Hall.