

Minutes of annual general meeting of Greenham and Crookham Conservation Volunteers

17 July 2011

Members present: Derek Cutt, Ewan Davies, Derek Emes, Jim O'Donoghue
Pam Pickett, Judith Qualtrough, Neil Rickman.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Dean Pawlyn, Dave Kenning, Carol Austin and John Parker.

Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous AGM on 20 June 2010 were approved and the Chairman signed a file copy as a true record of the meeting.

Actions from the previous AGM minutes

DC to correct a typo in the AGM 2009 minutes. **Completed.**

JP to complete the transfer of funds from the old Co-op bank account to the new Barclays account. **Completed.** Also see below under Treasurer's Report.

DK to take over the cupboard keys from Laurence, liaise with Ade re storage and conduct an inventory. **Completed.**

DE to enquire with the Commission whether substitutes are allowed to attend Commission meetings when he cannot. **Completed.** Derek can nominate a substitute to attend on his behalf, if a week's notice is given. The substitute will be non-voting.

DC to contact Simon Barnett re first aid training. **Completed.** Simon agreed that WBC would fund first aid training for two volunteers. Dave and Judith subsequently attended the three day "First aid at work" course and are certified first-aiders for three years.

DC to convert AGM minutes etc. on the website from .doc to .pdf format. **Completed.**

Election of officers for year 2011-12

Derek Emes resigned as Chairman to clear the way for any alternative nominations. Before the vote on the post of Chairman was taken, Derek made the following statement:

In May next year I will reach my 80th birthday. I feel proud to be part of this Group in having helped to build it to its present well-attended and enthusiastic membership. I wish to see this success increasing. I consider therefore that younger blood should be in the fore to lead the team to this end. Accordingly I am giving notice that should you wish to give me your support for one more year, I intend to permanently resign the Chair at the next AGM. I make this statement to allow you ample time to find a suitable candidate or candidates. I would add that the post is not very demanding and consists mainly in maintaining links with various external agencies and groupings and co-ordinating with the Secretary and Treasurer.

There being no other nominations, Derek was proposed, seconded and unanimously re-elected.

Derek Cutt, John Parker and Dave Kenning were also re-elected unanimously. Officers for the coming year therefore remain...

Chairman: Derek Emes
Secretary: Derek Cutt
Treasurer: John Parker
Tools Officer: Dave Kenning

Derek Emes had also offered to continue to serve as our appointee on the Greenham and Crookham Commons Commission. Again, there being no alternative nomination, Derek was proposed, seconded and unanimously re-elected. Derek Emes therefore remains our appointed Commissioner.

Action: Derek Cutt to inform Paul Hendry of WBC that DE remains our nominated Commissioner.

Chairman's report on activities since the previous AGM

We spent a good deal of the past year destroying rather than constructing, but it was constructive destruction!

In June, July and August we spent our time pulling Himalayan Balsam. In August we also cut back brambles in the Control Tower car park.

September was cutting back gorse and birch on Sandleford heath.

In October we went scrub bashing in the area near the ponds just west of the fire plane.

November and December found us cutting down Italian alder not far from the Eastern cattle grid in Bury's Bank Road.

The December task was memorable as it was carried out in snow and also we had our Christmas bash (party BBQ to the superior educated gentry). This was interrupted by an accident in Bury's Bank Road when some members were able to call emergency services and continue to monitor traffic movements.

In January we were scrub clearing in the gully near to Cootes at Heads Hill.

February task was spent on the North side of Bury's Bank Road, Crookham end, near the wide draw off for vehicles, this time clearing gorse. A great deal of rubbish was also collected and cleared.

March saw us constructing! We installed way markers for the 1 mile path that starts at the Pyle Hill car Park. (This used to be called "Blue Gate", we ought to christen it that to mark past history).

In April we carried out further construction in that we cleared the path and upgraded it from the new gate B.B. rd. onto the common not far from Pigeon's Lane.

Continuing the streak of construction in May we cleared the path and made a sleeper bridge up to a spot Northwest of the wetlands Crookham Common. Here we installed a bench provided as a memorial to the Greenham and Crookham Association. This Association did a great job in the past in protecting the heritage of the commons but was wound up as the Commission now carries out this work. Surplus funds after the purchase of the bench are due to be passed onto us

Finally in June we had a very interesting and enjoyable visit to Westonbirt Arboretum. Laurence Parker arranged for a very knowledgeable and interesting guide to take charge of us in the morning. He took us around the area where thousands of world-wide species are conserved. After a BBQ lunch we walked the area of native woodland.

Report from the Greenham & Crookham Commons Commission

Stacked containers 3 high in N.G.Park. Causing unsightly. Noise pollution. N.G. Park are unable to instruct Wincanton to reduce this problem, but Wincanton undertook to reduce stacking to two high and move back from the fenceline. They have not done so however.

Ponies now well established. One mare has an extraordinary pedigree record. Several foals have been born, colts are removed from the common before maturity. Mares are taken to stallions for mating.

Stray cows found on the common. Escapees from Headley.

A new volunteer group of Thornford Park patients was established.

Crassula helmsii (stonecrop) invasive in ponds. No truly effective means managing this is known, but trial areas are to be established to try hand clearing.

Highway verges to be cut back 10 m at 30cm high. This has been a controversial topic.

Access regulations decided. Permitted vehicles are to keep to regular paths and tracks. This can be relaxed where it is clearly a necessary need.

BBOWT Living landscape. – Proposed heathland restoration project in the area between Crookham car park and Old Thornford Road caused a great deal of consternation by residents in the vicinity. It was misunderstood of its extent and purpose. Two public site meetings were held and this concern was mainly reduced. This work is now completed and it is hoped that species such as nightjars, woodlarks, nightingales etc. will move into this area.

Fencing liabilities clarified but can be relaxed under limited special unusual circumstances. General common law is that land owners are responsible for keeping livestock safely contained. However this principle is reversed in the respect of grazing stock on Common land. Residents adjacent to the common are to be made aware of this.

Temporary Rangers appointed again for spring/summer period.

Gama site saga. This is a long time ongoing conflict between Flying A services. Yet another special application after previous one was rejected . The history was explained at this AGM and is too lengthy to record in detail here.

If members want anything raised at any future Commission meeting, please let Derek Emes know.

Treasurer's report and financial matters

John Parker was not present, but had provided a financial report and accounts. Derek Cutt presented these on John's behalf. In summary, we have had no income since the last AGM, but have spent some money mainly on tools, tool bags etc. and security for our storage area in the workshop. Nevertheless, our funds remain sufficient for several years' worth of expenditure at current rates.

The new Barclays bank account is proving to be much more convenient to use than the previous account with the Co-operative Bank. All funds have been transferred to Barclays and the Co-op account now has nothing in it. John had recommended that the meeting vote on a proposal to close this account (via Simon Barnett, since he is still the Co-op's contact person for the account). This was proposed by Pam, seconded by Neil and carried unanimously.

ACTION: John to contact Simon and ask him to close the account.

Derek Emes pointed out that the GCCV had been promised any residual funds in the recently wound-up Crookham and Greenham Commons Association, once that organisation has paid for the bench we recently installed as a memento of its activities, and possibly a commemorative brass plate.

ACTION: Derek Emes to continue liaising with Chris Austin (Chairman of the CGCA) re the transfer of funds.

Other business

None raised.