

FRIENDS OF NAPHILL COMMON

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING held at 7.30pm on Thursday 19th January 2023 at The Wheel, Naphill

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Kevin Bennett
Present: Chris Miller (chairman) (CM), John Camp (JC), Peter Davis (PD) Peggy Ewart (PE), Ron Collins (RC), Neil McMinn (NM) Trevor Hussey (TH) and Marian Miller (MM).
- 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd September 2022** were agreed except that this meeting was postponed from the 12th to the 19th January.
- 3. Treasurer's and Membership Secretary's report:** NM reported that the draft accounts for 2022 were with John Harris for inspection. They show that 108 members subscribed. When Buckinghamshire Council's contribution for renovation of the notice boards (£678) is received there will be a loss for the year of £142. FONC has been relying on income from the silent auction (about £700 for 2022, net of the amount paid to the Village Hall). However, NM and RC will not be organising a silent auction this year. They feel there is a need for "new blood" amongst the auction's donors as well as the organisers. Since this has been the largest fund-raiser at the Fete, the Fete Organising Committee should be informed. Meanwhile ideas for an alternative fund-raising event would be welcome.

A vote of thanks is due to Neil McMinn and Ron Collins for all their hard work in organising the silent auction over several years.

NM said that approximately £110-120 has been received in subs so far this year and more is likely to be received at the AGM. However, he pointed out that a rise in subscriptions would be necessary to avoid future losses.

- 4. Notice Boards:** Tim Bird has completed the renovation of all five boards. His bill has been paid and the contribution from Buckinghamshire Council requested. The posts now need to be treated with linseed oil. RC's working party can do this when the weather has improved and the posts are dry.
- 5. Working parties:** PD reported that work on the Clumps was finished in the summer but a brush cutter is needed on the tough brambles. RC's working party to help with this. Work on the ponds was started in October, earlier than usual because the water level was low. However the thick layer of mud without the water to weigh it down actually made the work harder on Willow Pond. On Daisy Pond irises and the edges have been cleared. Floating grass and branches were removed from Ladyhorse Pond. PD asked the Committee for its views on Shipwash Pond, a large pond with very little water left in it and which would require more work, possibly a year-long project. The Committee would prefer to see work done to improve Shipwash Pond if feasible. TH pointed out that there were two platforms, presumably used in the past in connection with the sheep-washing.

PD said Downley Common Preservation Society (who may want to clear Mannings Pond) would be welcome to attend a working party to see how FONC deals with pond clearance.

RC's party has continued its work in the same area. Holly stumps are re-sprouting and need to be dealt with.

TH was concerned about the possible risk of disease from spreading wood chippings on the muddy paths. However this is very popular with residents and confined to the very edge of the Common along Ladies Mile.

Total working party hours for 2022 were 913 compared with 918 hours for 2021.

6. **Walks:** The long walks in November and December were cancelled because of bad weather. Otherwise all going well.
7. **AGM: Friday 27th January at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.** The speaker is Keith Spencer from Wycombe Museum on Chairmaking in the Chilterns. The meeting has been advertised via posters and Facebook. CM to check with the speaker about equipment. PD has a projector if needed and will liaise with CM about the Chairman's presentation. All members of the Committee are willing to stand again but new members would be very welcome. An increase in subscriptions to £10 starting in 2024 will be proposed at the AGM.
8. **Tree felling:** Mulching has been completed. The felled areas are more open, less muddy and grass is already regenerating. No felling is planned for 2023. The junipers planted by FONC are doing well but need clearance at the base.
9. **Any other business:**
 - PD reported that 398 species of fungi have been recorded on the Common, 19 of them newly recorded in 2022.
 - The path and bridleway signposts need attention but this will be a large task. PD has a map of their locations and a pile of arrowed-discs. CM to contact West Wycombe Estate, Bucks Council, the CCB and the Chiltern Society about possible finance and other help.
 - The bat-boxes and owl box not yet installed. To be discussed at the next meeting.
 - MM to supply some historical information for the website. Themes for a history walk seem to have been exhausted.

NEXT MEETING – THURSDAY 18th MAY 2023, 7.30PM AT THE WHEEL