

**THE FRIENDS OF CHORLEYWOOD COMMON
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 27 FEBRUARY 2015
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Another year; another AGM; another report.

First, a follow-up from last year's AGM. Those of you who were here a year ago will remember that the meeting considered two resolutions, one in favour of the Parish Council's proposal for a Nature Trail on the Common, and one opposing a "Play Area" with climbing and other play equipment at a single location on the Common: both resolutions were carried, and the meeting mandated the Committee to put them to a poll of the members generally. We did that, and received 150 responses, some on paper and some on line; the results were –

Nature Trail: 133 in support of the motion, 12 against, 5 abstentions

Play Area: 94 in support of the motion and against the Play Area, 48 against the motion and in favour of the Play Area, 8 abstentions.

As we shall hear later in the evening, both those proposals are ongoing.

For the first time in several years, we managed to send out two Newsletters, which we hope were interesting and help to keep you up-to-date. Thank you to Jackie Worrall for coordinating their preparation; and would anyone who has anything to contribute to the next one, please send it to her or to any other member of the Committee.

Our programme of events was very much in the usual pattern – except that, not so usually, all the outdoor events had good weather.

- Andrew King gave us a talk on Moths, here in the Library, on 24 March; owing to a technical hitch we were unable to project his pictures onto a large screen and had to gather around a small one, but even so it was fascinating.
- Anna Marett led a Dawn Chorus Walk on 3 May, which was better supported than the previous year, but by no means booked out; the weather was good and the birds were in fine voice.
- Andrew Goddard's Pond Dipping on 16 May at Christchurch Pond was a very select event; the main conclusion drawn, I think, was that the Pond was continuing to recover from being dredged in 2013.

- Victoria Stainsby widened the subject matter of her guided walk, on 21 June, to include edible as well as medicinal plants; the event was quite well supported and, once again, Victoria drew attention to some less obvious uses of plants we all think we know about.
- Village Day on 12 July was again a successful event, and thank you to the Parish Council for once again giving us the spot next to the horse track on the shady side of the fire ride, well away from the public address system. Particular thanks go to Les Dacre for lending his gazebo and Mike Warburg and Michael Hyde for introducing the newts to the children and the children to the newts, to everyone else involved in setting up, manning and taking down the stand, and to the new members who joined. And I have to admit that I made the “How well do you know the Common?” part of the Kids’ Quiz much too difficult: I will learn from the mistake!
- Martin Hicks led a “Wildflowers and Butterflies” walk on 27 July, as usual starting from Christchurch car park, going down to Larks Meadow and back to the Common Road side of the Common, which showed us the very wide variety of flowers in a comparatively small area.
- Then on 27 November we held a Panel Discussion here in the Library: Jackie Worrall and Gareth Hunt explained the objectives of the Community Plan questionnaire while there was still time to complete it; more of that, as well, later this evening.

I want to acknowledge the time and trouble given by our speakers and events leaders, and to record our thanks to all of them. If anyone is interested in getting involved in arranging the programme: you will be very welcome!

The Butterfly Surveys and the Fixed Point Photography have continued: good work by Michael Hyde and Simon Varnals respectively. Simon is also working on a new and up-to-date publicity leaflet for the Friends.

The Committee and its members have also been involved in making representations about proposals for doing things which would affect the Common.

- Grazing with “virtual fences” has now been tried for two periods and the glitches have been largely sorted out, so there will be more grazing in Spring and Autumn this year.
- The new parking control system, tickets issued free but only after 11 a.m., is now operating at the Memorial Hall and Shepherds Bridge parking areas.

- We have made representations to Three Rivers on planning applications affecting the Common; thank you to Alison Rubens for identifying relevant applications.
- The Parish Council has agreed to consider further the possibility of a new Play Area. The informal discussions between representatives of the Residents' Association, the Friends and Chorleywood Mums clarified the issues but did not produce any specific recommendation, and the subject has been considered by a Working Party of representatives of the Parish and District Councils and community groups. There will be a fuller update later this evening; at this stage I want to record our thanks to Michael Hyde and Alison Rubens for the time and effort they have devoted on our behalf to both these working parties.
- I expect everyone is aware that the responses to the Community Plan questionnaire have been received and are under analysis. The "Summary of Key Findings" has become available this week and runs to 58 pages. Our thanks go to Bob Sutherland and Gareth Hunt for the work they have put into this project on behalf of the Friends, and to Jackie Worrall who has also been involved on behalf of the Parish Council.
- The Cricket Club have shown the Committee their proposals for a new Pavilion, and in principle we support them. Again, more later.
- We have also made representations on two highways issues affecting the Common: we have written to the Parish Council to support the proposal for pedestrian phases in the traffic lights at the junction of the A404 and Common Road; and to Hertfordshire Highways to say that in our view the appropriate treatment for the "pinch" in Dog Kennel Lane at the top of the allotments is not the 40 mph speed limit which they are suggesting, but measures specifically at the point of the hazard, to require traffic coming down to give way to traffic coming up.

Finally, I want to conclude this report by repeating two things which I said last time. First, the Committee wants to know what you, the members of the Friends of Chorleywood Common, think about what the Friends are doing and what else they might do. Secondly, I am most grateful, and I think all the members should be grateful, to everyone on the Committee for what they do. There is a vacancy for anyone who wants to help.

Any questions?