

Minutes of the Friends of Halsey Field Virtual AGM 19th March 2021

Welcome
Chris Ridley thanked all for coming to our virtual AGM. Technology was working fine.
Present
Gruff Edwards, Barry Watson, Suzanne Watts, Juliet Chodzko, Anthea Lovatt, Mike Ridley, Chris Ridley, Steve Lings, Dennis Furnell, Kate Tyssen, Diane Wilson, Steve Wilson, Diane Pickover, Sherief Hassan, Jenny Leslie, Janine Chamberlain
Apologies for Absence
None received
Acceptance of last year's minutes
Accepted by all as correct. Will be signed off in due course.
Matters Arising
<p>Barry Watson asked how things stand with Mike Penning's idea of Halsey Field being passed onto an organisation such as the Box Moor Trust. CR reported that Herts County Council have said they can't make a decision until the Dacorum New Local Plan is completed.</p> <p>MR booked a slot at the Scrutiny and Oversight Committee at which the New Local Plan was adopted for consultation and pleaded for HF and other wildlife sites to be protected. Dacorum Borough Council said they would not give planning permission to build on wildlife sites, and when the final plan is agreed, all wildlife sites will be listed in an appendix. However, in the draft New Local Plan this list is omitted.</p> <p>DF stated that he has raised this proposal in Box Moor Trust committee meetings many times, as it is important to protect the site. BMT is interested in the site but cannot afford to buy it and does not want to lease it.</p> <p>There is no current plan to build in the vicinity of HF. Proposed development adjacent to Polehanger Lane was turned down because of the presence of Dell Wood, which is ancient woodland, and a Wildlife site.</p> <p>There has been a lot of opposition to the N L P from local people through the consultation, and all present at the AGM considered that it would be some time before the final plan would be released.</p> <p>Dacorum Environmental Forum has just received acknowledgement from the council of receipt of its objections to the draft Plan. MR received his acknowledgement a week after the deadline.</p>
Chairman's Report
<p>CR went through the main points of the Chairman's report, a copy of which is attached. The highlights of the year had been: winning the Environment section of the CPRE (Countryside Charity) award; Countryside Management Services agreeing to insure our work parties; and finding some rare moths on the site. Please read the report for further details.</p> <p>CR commented that butterflies tended to appear earlier and finish earlier on the field this year, probably due to weather conditions. She explained that the Friends have introduced Kidney Vetch to the site in order to attract the Small Blue butterfly which is a rare species that Butterfly Conservation is hoping will spread in Hertfordshire. So far, a total of 25 different species of butterfly have been seen on Halsey Field.</p>

Discussion ensued over the fact that the paths are muddy at the moment, especially the Northern one, and they are also wider and short cuts have been taken, as people have tried to avoid the mud. However, DF assured us that once they dry out and seeds germinate, the paths will shrink. BW asked if we knew how many people had viewed the Halsey Field section of the Dacorum Environmental Forum website, and how many visited the Facebook page. Numbers might increase with more people looking at the internet at the moment. There have been 8,387 total visits to the top page of the HF DEF website over the last 5 years and quite a few local people view the Halsey Field Facebook Page. It was suggested that we could have a small static website with 6 pages. We could have an events page which can be updated, while the rest stays the same. This could have a gallery of photos of Halsey Field. CR commented that there are already a lot of photos on the Halsey Field Facebook page. She stated that she didn't have time or expertise to organise a website for the Halsey Field, as well as keeping the Facebook page up to date, so it would be necessary for another committee member to take on this responsibility. An alternative would be to have an active link to the Facebook page or Instagram etc. on the DEF website. This matter will be discussed further in a future committee meeting.

BW noted that we need a leader and a first aider to attend each work party and asked what response CR had had when she asked if any Friends held an up to date first aid qualification. Janine, who helps with the Health walks, has a current first aid certificate, as does the wife of Matt Morton. CR intends to update her qualification when this is possible. College Lake offers a basic first aid course, so BW, who volunteers there, will try to get qualified too. Two first aid kits are taken to each work party and so far, there have been no accidents on HF.

Treasurers Report.

see attached copy.

The accounts were approved virtually. For an income of over £5,000, it is necessary to have an independent auditor, so this is not needed for HF. SL was of the opinion that we need to consider keeping a stream of money coming in regularly. Some groups receive contributions from their members, and this facilitates match funding. MR commented that a notional sum for volunteers' time can be counted as income for the purposes of match funding. CR has a record of the attendees for each work party.

MR was asked how much time he spends on the treasurer's post. He said not too long, thankfully!

The HF Bank account has three signatories. The Treasurer (MR) explained that to prevent any misunderstandings, any cheques made out to himself or Chris Ridley are always signed by one of the other three signatories. The three signatories are MR, CR, DF. However, SL suggested that it would be useful to have an extra signatory.

Election of Trustees for 2021-2022 - passed unanimously

		proposer	seconder
Chairman	CR	DF	DW
Treasurer	MR	DF	DW

Secretary	DF	AL	DW
Trustees	BW	MR	DF
	SW	DF	CR
	SH	DF	CR
	DW	MR	SW
	SW	MR	DW
	SL	DF	JC

Plans for the coming year

The aim is to produce two pamphlets; the first one aimed at adults and then a children's version. The adult's version will contain an overview of HF, what it is about, the benefits of the site and the benefits of volunteering. It will contain photos and be simple and self-explanatory.

SH has facilities for the lay-out. A three-fold version is useful, as it is quite robust. This could be to be sent to libraries, council offices, schools etc. MR commented that 500 trifold leaflets could be printed for about £50 - £100.

JC suggested we could produce a worksheet for children to complete.

SL said we should aim to produce something STEM orientated, with a holistic view, something for students to be physically involved in. It could be a case study to be used by a wider audience. It was added that this should be seen as an exciting expedition rather than a lesson. Simple and enjoyable. This will be considered more at a committee meeting in April.

Thanks

SH was thanked for setting up the virtual meeting.

SL was thanked for his invertebrate surveys.

DP thanked CR and MR for the quality of their leadership and for supporting HF over the last few years. They have done an amazing, incredible job.

Any other business

Support was sought to sign a petition against development on Swanscombe Marshes on the River Thames which is an important habitat for rare invertebrates.

Thursday 22nd April 12.30 – 2.30 Hope for the Future have organised a meeting with Mike Penning: 'Woodlands for all'.

Registration available from Tuesday 23rd March CR will send the Friends a link to register for this meeting.

Next AGM Meeting / next committee meeting

Fri 18th March 2022 / a date in April tbc

End of Meeting 9.15 pm