

Minutes of annual general meeting of Greenham and Crookham Conservation Volunteers

15 Jun 2008

Members present: Paul Bowsher, Sally Bowsher, Derek Cutt, Derek Emes, Andy Gove, Nick Hughes, Ian Norman, Dean Pawlyn, Val Leaver, John Parker, Laurence Parker, Matt Parker, Pam Pickett, Neil Rickman.

Also present: Adrian Wallington, Countryside Ranger.

Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the AGM on 22 March 2007 were agreed and the Chairman signed a file copy.

Actions from the previous minutes

Andy to buy pruning saws through WBC's purchasing procedure, then to re-imburse WBC from GCCV funds. **Completed**. However, one saw has been stolen from the workshop. **ACTION: Ade to obtain a replacement at WBC's cost.**

Andy Coulson-Phillips to try again to get electronic access to the bank account, and to pay in monies in his care. **Superseded** by Andy's departure, see Treasurer's Report below..

Minutes of EGM

The minutes of the EGM on 17 feb 2008, concerning the election of John Parker as our new Treasurer, were agreed.

Actions from the EGM

John Parker to collect all necessary documentation, and contact the bank to have the signatory list amended. **See Treasurer's Report below.**

Election of officers for year 2008-09

Derek Emes offered his resignation as Chairman, to make way for anyone else who may want to serve. There being no alternative nomination, Derek was proposed, seconded and unanimously re-elected. Derek Cutt and John Parker were also re-elected by a unanimous show of hands.

Officers for the coming year are therefore...

Chairman: Derek Emes
Secretary: Derek Cutt
Treasurer: John Parker

Derek Emes also offered his resignation as our appointee on the Greenham and Crookham Commons Commission. For the benefit of new members he also explained what the Commission is and does, and why we appoint one Commissioner. Again, there being no alternative nomination, Derek was proposed, seconded and unanimously re-elected. Derek Emes therefore remains our appointed Commissioner.

Discussion of the Commission touched on its three Committees (Grazing, Planning applications, Management Plan) and members expressed some interest in being able to see the new management plan as it develops. **ACTION: Derek Cutt to provide a link from our website to the Plan site.** (This is a temporary website hosting the development version of the new management plan. It is still a work in progress, intended to allow the Commissioners to review the plan as it develops.)

Chairman's report on activities since the previous AGM

For a list of specific tasks and number of volunteers attending, please visit our website at www.gccv.org.uk and navigate via "History" and then "Task record".

Derek Emes reported another successful year, with an average of 9.8 volunteers per task. The lowest turnout was 3 and the highest was 14. During the year, we had also been joined on tasks by Basingstoke CV, BeC and a contingent from the Air Training Corps.

Tasks since the previous AGM included...

- Bridge repair at Goldfinch Bottom
- 2 x ragwort pulling
- 2 x footpath clearance
- 3 x scrub bashing
- Tree felling
- 1 x gorse clearance
- Bird box construction
- Dormouse box construction
- Sleeper steps at head of Goldfinch Bottom

Other events included...

- Andy's departure as Ranger, to be replaced by Ade
- Summer barbecue
- Christmas barbecue
- Ten year celebration dinner and farewell party for Andy in January 2008

We had also received a grant for work jackets from the Greenham Common Trust, and a substantial and unexpected donation from AWE. Our thanks go to both organisations.

The Greenham Common Trust had held an event for recipients of their grants, to gain feedback from recipients on how the extra funding benefits them. Derek Emes attended on our behalf.

Sally and Laurence both received first aid training during the year.

Equipment purchases during the year included Silky Fox saws, work jackets and a sack barrow.

Sally pointed out that we have had a number of new recruits recently, and that the website seems to be one factor in allowing prospective volunteers to find out about us. Dean asked whether we are listed with the Newbury Volunteer bureau and Derek Cutt confirmed that we are.

Report from the Greenham & Crookham Commons Commission

Derek Emes reported the main items discussed and achieved by the Commission in the past year:

Low flying model aircraft discussed.

Tony Ferguson resigned as Chairman of the Commission. Chris Austin was elected in his place.

GAMA application objection on width of transporters requiring common land. Problems of lighting and noise, possible travelers invasion. Council approved application subject to Transport and Highways Dept. solving access. This goes ahead.

British White bull introduced. 10 white heifers to be introduced.

BBOWT's Living Landscape programme explained and discussed. *"To protect, expand and enhance this unique and diverse landscape of West Berkshire; creating an environment richer in Wildlife for everyone"*. BBOWT would like to work alongside the Council in assisting in the management of the Common.

Exmoor ponies on the common – breeding up the herd. One complaint from the public but considered minor. Problems relating to previous pair no longer relevant.

Prologis objections. Pyle Hill/Pinchington Lane roundabout agreed (will also incorporate a pedestrian crossing making it safer to get across from Pyle Hill to the common). Skid pan motorcycle track in NGP between Ballshill and Handpost Gullies application objection

There was some discussion of the Prologis planning application and the Chairman pointed out that despite planning permission having recently been refused by WBC, Prologis have declared their intention to appeal. The appeal is to be heard in November 2008. Any member of the public has a right to lodge a comment as part of the appeal process and it was noted that this can easily be done via the planning appeals website. **ACTION: Derek Cutt to circulate the relevant web address to members.**

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

Treasurer's report and Financial Matters

John circulated a balance sheet as of 30 May 2008. He reported continuing problems with getting full access to the account, and the general bureaucracy of the Co-operative Bank. All the paperwork to relating to the change of signatories was sent to the bank three months ago, but it still has not been actioned. Our contact with the bank is generally through Simon Barnett, who John will remind to chase up the bank.

John has, however, been able to pay funds into the account. The £50 (payments given by WI branches to which Andy Coulson-Phillips gave talks about the common) which Andy was holding has been paid in. So has £40 from the Reading and District Natural History Society. All funds are therefore now in the bank account.

Payment of expenses incurred by members (equipment etc. purchases) is awaiting full banking access. These are our only current liabilities.

Amendment to the GCCV constitution

The Secretary drew attention the wording at the end of section 2 (Group aims) which read "*In so far as the above objectives are wholly charitable under English law*". It was pointed out that we never have been, and do not expect ever to be, a registered charity. These words therefore appear superfluous and it was unanimously decided to delete them from the group's constitution. **ACTION: Derek Cutt to amend the Constitution on the website.**

There was a brief discussion of charitable status, during which Committee members explained that significant administrative work is necessary to become a registered charity. Since we have no taxable income, no benefit is seen in doing this.

Other business

Following the earlier discussion of the constitution, it was pointed out that it requires the Committee to meet at least twice per year in addition to the AGM. The Chairman explained that since the group meets every month, and the elected officers are usually among those attending, it is considered that this duty is fulfilled. Members were reminded that they can raise anything, at any time, with the Chairman or the other officers.

Neil asked what benefits we gain from being affiliated with the BTCV. Derek Cutt explained that we have an insurance policy through BTCV, specifically targetted at conservation volunteer groups, and that this is considered a worthwhile benefit. BTCV also produce useful handbooks on conservation techniques, and run training courses which at least two of our members have attended. BTCV were also the organisers of a task we did away from the common last year, on Pigeon's Farm Estate.

Derek Cutt reported on membership numbers. He had recently sent an email opt-in request to 24 recipients. One person has asked to be taken off the list, 17 have asked to remain on, and 6 have not yet replied. One member was added to the list so recently that she is considered to to have also opted in. Our current regular membership is therefore 19 people.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 18:15.