



Bracknell Conservation Volunteers

Annual General Meeting 2018 Proceedings

Minutes of Annual General Meeting of Bracknell Conservation Volunteers (BCV), held 8 May 2018 at Garth Meadows

Welcome

Richard Elsbury (Chairman) welcomed everybody to the Annual General Meeting.

Present:

Stuart Bell	Richard Elsbury	Michael J. Norton
Maggie Britt	Steve Forster	Lynette Nunn
Roger Britt	Malcolm Hawkes	Neville Pike
Nicky Clothier	Barbara Jerome	Trevor Scott,
Graham Coe	Graham Lovejoy	
Paul Cooper	Lissie Mitchell	Alison Levy (BFC ranger)
Denis Crampton	Jon Munday	attended the meeting

Apologies were received from Michael Byrne, Rose Byrne and Suzanne Dar

Previous meeting

The AGM 2017 was held on 23 May 2017 at Savernake Park. The minutes were accepted by general consent. There were no matters arising.

Officers of BCV

- **Richard Elsbury** was voted in again as **Chairman**, nominated Roger Britt, seconded Trevor Scott
- **Trevor Scott** was voted in again as **Task Coordinator**, nominated Roger Britt, seconded Neville Pike
- **Michael J. Norton esq.** was voted in again as **Tools Coordinator**, nominated Roger Britt, seconded Richard Elsbury
- **Roger Britt** was voted in again as **Secretary**, nominated Graham Coe, seconded Lynette Nunn
- Barbara Jerome was voted in as acting **Treasurer**, to be assisted by **Malcolm Hawkes** and Jon Munday; a general vote of thanks was given for Barbara's work in this role.
- **Maggie Britt** was voted in again as **Teakit Coordinator**, nominated by Richard Elsbury and seconded by Michael J. Norton esq., who expressed heartfelt thanks for the excellent way in which Maggie has carried out this role. **Lynette Nunn** kindly agreed to act as deputy Teakit Coordinator as needed, for which we are very grateful
- Richard Elsbury commented on the situation as regards **Task Leaders**; traditionally there have been 4 leaders, but at present we are down to 2 leaders plus Richard Elsbury who is both Chairman and a task leader. Graham Coe explained the nature of the task leader's job;

he/she is responsible for coordinating the task with the BFC ranger, this may include a visit to the site beforehand; collecting the group car from the garage in Uffington Drive, loading with appropriate tools and coordinating activities on site. It would be a good idea to have more task leaders available: we hope that anyone interested will come forward.

- Helen Gatehouse has done a magnificent job in setting up and **managing our website**; there was general agreement that the website is very easy to use and well-organised. Michael John Norton esq. proposed, and the other members of the group seconded, a heartfelt vote of thanks to Helen. Helen is now resident in the Isle of Wight, and although she is willing to continue with general maintenance of the website, she would appreciate help, especially if new items are to be added to the website. **Stuart Bell** kindly offered to investigate Dreamweaver, the package used to create our website, in the hope that he can give some help with the website. Jon Munday also expressed interest in helping. This is an ongoing process, participants (Jon Munday, Stuart Bell, Richard Elsbury, Roger Britt and of course Helen) should keep one another informed on progress.
- Roger Britt has been *de facto* group **photographer**, since he was given the group camera, but is unhappy doing this. **Nicky Clothier** kindly offered to take photographs of group tasks, although she may prefer to use her own telephone camera. Roger Britt passed on the camera to Nicky, and has subsequently found a USB lead which belongs with the camera. Consent for photographs is covered by the new GDPR regulations (see below). This issue will have to be discussed at some time. A vote of thanks to Nicky was proposed by Roger Britt, seconded by Maggie Britt.

Financial Report

A copy of the income and expenditure report for the year to 31 March 2018 is appended to this document; please see this for detailed figures.

There was £200 extra income this year for the bridge construction in Lily Hill Park.

Compared to 2016-2017, there was a lot less expenditure on tools, about the same amount on the car and less on general items.

Trevor Scott asked if garage expenditure came under car expenses, and this was confirmed.

The car has passed the MOT so good for another year.

The bill to Bracknell Forest Council is generally for 48 weeks, the reconciliation to take account of the 50 weeks we work is done subsequently.

Payment for work at Nightingale triangle has been received; Gill Cheetham coordinates these payments with BCV.

Stuart Bell asked if we should be asking for increased payments from the Council in view of the larger group of volunteers currently attending tasks.

Alison Levy (Bracknell Forest Council ranger) commented that Vincent Paliczka, Director, Environment, Children and Communities for Bracknell Forest Council, was extremely impressed with the amount of work done by volunteers; this would be good feedback for BCV.

There was some discussion about asking for an increase in funding from BFC for the Christmas party, since BCV now has more volunteers. This will have to be discussed with BFC.

Alison Levy commented that some BFC rangers are happy with larger groups of volunteers, while others find it difficult to provide suitable tasks. It is easier to find tasks in winter than in summer.

Alison asked if it would be possible to give advance notice of numbers of volunteers attending.

Michael Norton commented that we often leave large piles of cleared material behind, which could form the basis for a task.

Tools update (Michael J. Norton, Jon Munday, Richard Elsbury)

Copies of the tools inventory compiled by Michael J. Norton, Jon Munday and Richard Elsbury were circulated to the group (see Appendices).

A lot of bowsaws have gone missing, including a bag of new bowsaws, Michael J. Norton thoroughly searched a recent site at Bill Hill and could find no trace of them. Jon Munday had contacted BFC ranger Marie-Anne Phillips, but she could not trace any of the missing tools. Richard Elsbury stated we mark tools with silver tape, learily with limited success, let's hope they are found.

Michael J. Norton advised that more care should be taken, especially if dragging cut material uphill over difficult terrain, as had been the case notably at Bill Hill.

Richard Elsbury thanked Michael J. Norton for buying a string line, which had come in useful that morning.

Steve Forster asked if we should invest in new tool bags. Alison Levy commented that BFC ranger Richard Westwood had made a set of boxes to hold tools. It was easier to see what was in a box, and they are not much heavier than a bag full of tools, and can be used as seating or to make tea/coffee.

Michael J. Norton commented that a set of boxes would be easy to make.

Michael J. Norton commented that he and Roger Britt had found secateurs to be a useful tool while clearing tree guards at Tarman's Copse recently. MJN suggested that it might be a good idea to invest in some secateurs with leather pouches to carry them and possibly to buy sheaths to hold non-foldable saws. Both secateurs and saws would be kept on a belt around the waist. Non-foldable saws are far safer, there is no risk of injury on folding, and the risk of losing bolts does not apply.

MJN suggested that we should buy 2 x kits comprising leather pouches/secateurs and sheaths/non-folding saws and see how people got on with them.

Maggie Britt and Lynette Nunn asked about using clear plastic boxes to house tools?

Newsletter

Roger Britt asked whether volunteers still wanted to have the Newsletter. There was general agreement that we wanted to continue with the Newsletter, but it could be produced less frequently. RB will try publishing fortnightly to begin with, and see how that goes, possibly moving to monthly later.

Review of tasks performed in past year

The tasks we carry out are pretty varied, although some volunteers have asked for different tasks to be available.

Maggie Britt and Richard Elsbury thanked Trevor Scott for his hard work in coordinating tasks, and this was echoed by everyone present.

Denis Crampton commented that whatever we do it all reverts to bramble eventually.

Alison Levy commented that it can be difficult to find tasks for groups, especially in view of the increased number of volunteers.

Tree guards have been the main issue; some of these have been accessible only by crawling through prickly undergrowth. Denis Crampton commented that in some cases, certainly at Tarman's Copse recently, the easily accessible tree guards have been removed and the difficult ones have been left for us by other groups.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

We think that we will have to carry out some actions to comply with GDPR. Local volunteer groups such as Warfield Environment Group are certainly carrying out compliance work.

Jon Munday kindly offered to act as Data Controller. Roger Britt has been working on this issue, and will liaise with JM and hand over in due course. This complicated subject is best covered in an e-mail to all members (a round robin), which RB/JM will send out in due course.

Paul Cooper mentioned that his wife works as an advisor on GDPR, so we may be able to ask her for guidance.

Graham Coe kindly provided an example of an e-mail sent out on GDPR by the Yateley Common Thursday Volunteer group, which we may be able to adapt suitably for our purposes (taking care not to breach copyright, of course).

Trefoil Guild

There is a meeting of the Trefoil Guild on 20 June 2018. The Guild comprises women who were formerly involved in the Guides movement.

Richard Elsbury will give a presentation.

The group meets at the Methodist Church in Priestwood, on Wednesday evenings.

This will be mentioned in the BCV Newsletter.

Size of group, tasks, leaders

The group has substantially increased in size recently, which is very good for us all, but it does mean that more and perhaps different tasks are needed.

We should all try to help the BFC rangers and ourselves; it may be possible for task leaders to give rangers an idea of forthcoming group sizes. BCV volunteers are unhappy when tasks must be split between different sites, or we must move sites during the day, as happened recently at Peacock Meadows.

One idea is for volunteers to text leaders if they **cannot** come.

Any other business

Alison Levy reported on her idea of organising groups of volunteers to make things, along the lines of the Men in Sheds group in London. This might include tasks such as willow weaving, making bird boxes, etc.

Alison will provide information for the Newsletter.

Alison also talked about her idea of organising volunteers to carry out wildlife surveys. Roger and Maggie Britt volunteered for botanical surveying, and have already done some of this work with other rangers. Again, Alison will provide information for the Newsletter.

We need to ensure that we have enough members with First Aid certification. Roger and Maggie Britt are due to go on 1st aid course on Saturday 12 May. [Unfortunately, since the time of the AGM this course has been cancelled].