

OLIVER'S BATTERY COUNTRYSIDE GROUP

Report of 1st annual meeting held in St Mark's Hall on Monday 22nd May 2006

Apologies from Anne Ardill, Anne Forrest, Rebecca Hare, Janette Lloyd, Celine Fowler and Alan Fowler.

There were 15 people present including the Chairman of the Parish Council, Geoff Sharman. Not all attending were paid members but a request to pay was made as the subscription is only £5 per annum and helps to pay for annual expenses.

Chairman's Report

Clare Shorter said that although this was the first annual meeting since the group was officially set up with a Constitution in July 2005, the committee had deemed it sensible to hold the first Annual General Meeting in May 2007 when election of officers would take place and subscriptions be due again. Currently the committee consists of

Clare Shorter.....Chairman
Norma Goodwin..... Secretary
Martin Keys.....Treasurer

Committee members

Anne Ardill, Hampshire Wildlife Trust
Alison Hull, with experience of tree wardening
Gordon Gunn, who has organised the installation of a field gate
Peter Land, who is working to create a website, keeps the data base of volunteer hours worked and is making a photographic record.

(Note that Liz Ford, who had worked on the original plan and negotiated with contractors had moved some months ago)

Clare briefly took us through the development of the group from the Hampshire Wildlife Trust Hedgerow Survey of a few years ago, discussions to fill in gaps in the hedgerows of the parish along the bridleway boundary and now to the management of the conservation area.

Treasure's report

Martin distributed copies of the accounts - spare ones are available for those absent on request from me (Norma). In brief this is how they look:-

Income

OBPC start-up grant £500
OBPC further grant £353 which paid the 10% to receive the grant from Hanson
Hanson Trust initial grant £1765
Hanson further grant 1589
Membership fees £100 (20 members)
TOTAL INCOME £4307

Expenditure

Draft plan for conservation area.....	£120
Herbicide spraying.....	£ 18.59
Information leaflets.....	£ 59.87
10% to obtain Hanson grant.....	£353
BTCV Insurance.....	£180.63
Clearance of conservation area.....	£1233.75
Paint to mark planting areas.....	£9.15
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£1974.99

Invoices awaited for trees, supports and protection covers, 2 First Aid kits and field gate to be paid for from balance in bank account of £2332,01. There will be further expenditure for seeds and plug plants for the grass areas.

Geoff Sharman requested that the account should show the cost of outstanding liabilities.

The aim of the meeting

was for members to share ideas of how the project should proceed up to the year 2010. This was done in pairs/small groups by writing hoped for achievements on pieces of paper in order of preference. Clare has the chart on which these are written if anyone wishes to see it. Basically it covers the urgent need to keep the planted area free from weeds and ensure the trees are kept watered. Then the management of the existing grass area by pulling nettles and getting it mowed once the field gate is installed. Mowing will be done without charge by a volunteer whose expenses will be paid. In September the other planned area for grassland will be sown with a mix of grass and wild flowers seeds suitable for chalk downland. There is an urgent need to have a bonfire to burn the remains of previous bonfires which is currently a heap covered with nettles. The branches of the trimmed back hawthorn tree to make a clearway for the gate also need burning. Another project will be to make a few piles of large flints as habitats for invertebrates. Concern was expressed about the amount of rabbit activity and so we must find ways to limit any damage. It was thought that a notice board, possibly in the car park would be useful to inform the public of work parties and other activities.

Geoff Sharman requested that education be added to the Constitution Note, the local Brownies planted a hawthorn hedge in April and this was recorded in the Hampshire Chronicle of 27th April. Snowy Owl was present at today's meeting.

The general consensus of members was preference for organised work parties rather than going to do work when they had the time. Dates for a few evenings were chosen which are at the end of this report. No date for weekends was chosen but this will be rectified once the evening work parties get off the ground.

Some people liked the idea of walks in the area and it was decided that for now we could join in the already organised walks by Butterfly Conservation at Yew Hill - also at the end of this report.

The meeting which commenced at 7.30pm finished at 9.15pm.

Subsequent news

Banyards have sprayed the conservation area (24th May) and the nettles and brambles are beginning to flag. One area of nettles seems to have been overlooked on the east side of the grassy area. **Will the work party of June 5th please see what needs doing as Banyards will come to re-spray any areas still needing it 2 weeks from date of spraying. Ring Darren on 07799 061879**

WALKS at Yew Hill with Butterfly Conservation

Meet at end of Old Kennels Lane

Tuesday 13th June 7.15pm

Leader Colin Matthews. A relaxing walk around the Yew Hill Nature Reserve. Superb views and taking a close look at the spectacular flowers and butterfly habitat.

Friday 28th July 10.30am

Leader Lynn Fomison. Butterflies for all. Celebrate National Butterfly Week by a walk, the best time to see Chalkhill Blue butterflies & summer flowers.

Oliver's Battery Countryside Group Work Parties (all from 6.30pm)

Monday 5th June

Monday 19th June

Monday 3rd July

Monday 17th July

Future Events

Sunday 3rd September at 2pm

Official opening of conservation area by representative from The Hanson Trust. Did you see the article about this in the Hampshire Chronicle of 18th May? This will most likely be followed by a walk to Yew Hill with a simple picnic.

Saturday 9th September from 12.30pm on the Battery

Oliver's Battery 50th Anniversary Fete.

OBCG will have a display alongside the RSPB, Butterfly Conservation & Hampshire Wildlife Trust

Norma Goodwin
