

Minutes of OBCG AGM Monday 20th May 2013

Present: Clare Shorter, Brian Shorter, Alison Hull, Norma Goodwin, Martin Keys, Helen Short, Wendy Spratley, Anne Bristow, Roger Outlaw, Joy Morgan, Peter Land, Charlotte Bailey (joined today as new member)

Apologies: Rebecca Hare, Anne Ardill

Minutes of last AGM 24th May 2012 were accepted as a true record, proposed by Martin and seconded by Alison. Matters Arising are all covered in agenda.

Chairman's Report

OB Countryside Group was finally created in summer 2005 with the specific aim of planting up this piece of land to expand wildlife habitat in the parish and for local people to enjoy it. Look around you to see our success in the past 8 years. The plastic tree guards have gone. We currently have 29 members of which 6 are on the committee.

A major change in the way the group works in the past year that has been led by Alison who has made contact with the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme at Kings School. Five Year 10 and Y11 pupils have worked through the autumn, winter and spring so far with Alison, Martin and Brian to manage and maintain the wildlife conservation area. Our thanks go to Bethan, Claire, Kirsten, Jeremy and Isaac for raking, pruning, weeding, digging, cutting and burning to manage this habitat. Left alone it would eventually revert to bramble and nettle thicket. This has resulted in work parties mainly on Mondays after school, which we are aware is not a particularly good time for other members to attend. There is also now a new bird nesting box, thanks to Peter and Brian. We have also helped to plant trees elsewhere in the parish.

Other work, not at all apparent, is negotiations with the parish council about insurance. Now the activities of this group are covered under the Parish Council insurance policy and not BTCV. However we must inform the parish clerk by email before any activity takes place and we must follow the risk assessment on the web site. As the school pupils are under the age of 16 they are supervised by adult members during their voluntary activities on the site and reminded about safety issues as necessary. The good news is that this saves nearly £300 a year, although we have been fortunate that the parish council have paid this for us in recent years. So we have saved the PC £300. We also do all this work for free!

For a number of years I have been asked to persuade the PC to remove or replace the unfriendly signs at the entrance and I am sorry to report that no progress has yet been made although I am told by the parish clerk that "legal at Winchester" are considering the issue. I would have liked to have resolved this by now.

Thanks to Peter's very efficient updating of the web site, I can report on the activities in the last year, which included:

- Strimming of grassy areas & paths in the summer
- Parish fete 8th Sept. Main recruitment opportunity. 12 new members, some renewing members paid experimental £1 membership and collection of email addresses to make communication easier.
- Diamond Jubilee seed collecting on 16th Sept day. The display of annual cereal weeds (Blue cornflower, red poppies, white corn marigolds and pink corn cockle) grown by the entrance gate was commented on favourably.
- Starting DoE Sept and writing a maintenance schedule for the winter, (which was followed even during the particularly long, cold winter. Spring 2013 has been about a month later this year.)
- Wearing new hi-viz tabards with "OBCG VOLUNTEER" emblazoned across the back in an attempt to encourage people walking through the OBCA to engage us in conversation.
- Burning piles of cuttings in spring and generally trying to tidy up the land between the path and fence.
- Currently preparing land near other gate for sowing of seeds.

This group continues to support Parish activities. This year there will be an event on 8th June to formally open the new all weather sports area adjacent to this wildlife area, instead of the fete. Our group will be running new activities, in particular our own unique wildlife puzzle drawn by artist Wendy. Hopefully we will expand our membership.

This is an appropriate time in the development of this group to move on from the physical development of the wildlife habitat to focus on inviting more local people to share the wonders of our natural wildlife. Hence the suggested change of constitution to include education activities, (although they have always been implicit in our activities so far). There is to be a change in committee members, which is always a healthy sign.

I would like to offer a huge vote of thanks to Norma who has guided this group for over 8 years. Without her enthusiasm and perseverance this group would not have survived even the writing of the constitution! She has guided us with her useful links with the PC. We are pleased that she is going to continue as a member and we look forward to the new bench Norma is installing in memory of her mother.

Clare Shorter, resigning, Chairperson OBCG.

Treasurer's Report Financial statement 31st March 2013

Balance carried forward; **£1060.98**

Membership Fees	£ 29.00
Donations	£ 25.00
Oliver's Battery Parish Council	£258.01
(Grant for insurance)	

Total Income £320.35

Expenditure: £

Insurance and BTCV membership	233.01	Website
32.40		
Tabards (Tibard Ltd)	101.10	
Wildflower Seeds	10.80	
Equipment : Gauntlets		
Heavy duty gloves (x2)		
Tubosaw		
Lopper	101.44	
Secateurs/ Gloves	26.48	
Skip sheet	9.49	
Village Fete expenses	2.37	
Care of bench (white spirit/ Linseed oil)	25.00	

Total expenditure 542.09

Balance in current account £839.24

Membership fees to be paid in (+£2.00)

Decision made to raise the subscription back to £5. These accounts were accepted as a true record. These were both proposed by Norma Goodwin, seconded by Roger Outlaw and voted unanimously. The inventory of equipment could also go on the web site. We need to be aware that the strimmer may need replacing in a year or two.

Election of Officers and Committee

<i>Post</i>		<i>Proposed</i>	<i>Seconded</i>
Chairman	Alison Hull	Clare	Helen

Secretary	Clare	Alison	Norma
Treasurer	Martin	Brian	Peter
Committee member	Peter	Martin	Joy
Committee member	Wendy	Clare	Helen
Committee member	Brian	Alison	Norma

Change of Constitution to include OBCG's education mission

The current wording is: "The aim of the group shall be to conserve, sustain and enhance the natural landscape and wildlife of Oliver's Battery parish". There was a unanimous vote to accept the additional phrase to follow existing wording in the Aims of the group: "for the benefit, education and enjoyment of local people." So the new aims are:

"The aim of the group shall be to conserve, sustain and enhance the natural landscape and wildlife of Oliver's Battery parish for the benefit, education and enjoyment of local people."

OBCG events for 2013

- 8th June, Parish Event - Opening of outdoor sports facilities. Norma, Alison and Martin are going to run the event. Wendy has created a wildlife quiz for visitors to use. Activities: planting seeds for butterfly food plants in pots of compost; guided tours of area etc. Encourage people to give their email address so they can receive newsletters in future. Donation box .
- Try to organise a moth evening
- Try to organise a bat walk
- Try to organise a bird song evening
- Joy gave contact regarding possible talk to WI - Jane Hudson, 02380 262292
- Looking into developing links with OB primary school and PSC Env Sci students; possibly approach St Peter's too, and other community groups. eg Battery club.
- Labels for trees to be renewed
- Information and pictures on fence for 8th June
- Permanent interpretation boards at entrance of the quality of that at Yew Hill. Information boards around area about management and particular plants. Laminated map too?
- Insect/ hedgehog houses can look nice eg terracotta pots. Wendy will supply photo of an example from Cheriton Nursery.

- Possible group visit to East Meon to see Sustainability Centre there

OBCG Work parties

- Tuesday 21st May. Strimming of paths by Clare and Martin. Bonfire?
- Tidying up of area west of path before 8th June
- Strimming of meadows soon
- Planting of cornfield weeds by far gate as soon as possible.
- Prepare ground for planting in the autumn of two/three apple trees especially grafted for us by Chris Bird (from Horticulture dept at Sparsholt College) onto MM106 rootstock. They are Bramshott Rectory, King George V, and Sunset.

Any Other Business

- Installation of a beautiful wooden teak seat (from sustainable sources) as a gift from Norma, in memory of her mother. It may be ready to formally “open” on 8th June. Norma will pay for the bench and OBCG will pay for the secure installation.
- Interpretation board. Grants are available from HCC etc. Possibly small boards in interesting areas.
- Put minutes of meetings on the web site.