

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting,
held at St Peter's Church Meeting Room on Wednesday 18 May 2017**

Present

Richard Ryder, Jennifer Rundle, Annelise Evans, Kate Savage, Mike Goddard

Apologies

Avril and Terry Stevens, Doug Rundle, Angela and Bob Houghton

Previous minutes

The minutes of the AGM of 11 May 2016 were agreed without dissent.

Matters arising

As below.

Chair's Report

Richard Ryder thanked the other committee members for their motivation and support given to him in a complex year, the volunteers for their impressive contribution and Gary Portsmouth, the Parish Councillor who liaises with the GCEG, for his support of our objectives and appreciation of our work.

RIVERSIDE REST

Last spring, the signal-box base was damaged beyond repair during essential tree work financed by the Parish Council. Even though previous grants had been awarded partly because of the railway heritage of the site and a photograph of original base appeared on the display board, restoration of the base was not a financial priority for the PC. The committee decided therefore to raise the funds ourselves. Andover Buildbase generously donated engineering bricks; an anonymous resident kindly loaned £260 and TVBC matched the loan with a grant of £260. The restored base was completed in October. Planting of indigenous trees is now complete.

We repaid the original loan with a donation of £100 from an ex-resident and £160 raised by a fundraising raffle at the village fete in August. The raffle was made possible by donated prizes and a lot of work by the committee, especially Jenny Rundle; the stall at the fete was also used to promote the work of the GCEG; congratulations to Annelise Evans for producing all the display material for the stall.

RIVERSIDE WALK

Hand rails

Last May we received a £1000 grant from IGas to replace some sections of the decaying wooden posts and rails with more durable, but more expensive, recycled plastic posts and rails. The committee decided to replace all the wooden posts and rails in one exercise to avoid the extra expense and work that would be involved in delaying replacement of remaining sections to another year. Additional finance was raised through a donation from the PC, a loan from a resident, and an anonymous £300 donation following mention of the shortfall in the August parish magazine. The loan was repaid out of our annual PC grant.

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We are very grateful to Mike Goddard for his hard work in replacing all the wooden posts and rails to an excellent standard in his own time throughout the winter. The projected life for the posts and rails is more than 20 years.

Entrance gate

The gate had been difficult to open for our wheelchair and pushchair visitors so has been re-hung; a self-returning hinge was fitted to allow the gate to be opened easily in both directions. The cost was met by a grant from the St Peter's Coffee Morning Community Fund, for which we are very grateful. Again, thanks to Mike Goddard for completing this work.

School

The Reception and Year 1 classes from the village school have continued to visit the site and the head teacher has informed us that they welcome and value the Walk as an educational resource.

Display boards

Replacement species artworks donated by Year 5 pupils are expected before the end of the current term.

Storm damage

As previously reported, an ash tree blew down in October 2015 in a storm but righted itself and needed monitoring. It now seems quite healthy and has grown considerably since then.

RIVERSIDE HAVEN

After considerable clearance of scrub and brambles from this new site, limited replanting on the top of the bank and alongside the existing hedge has been completed. We are waiting for the boundary fence between this site and Fishing Cottage grounds to be completed before work recommences.

CONSERVATION FIELD

Over 20 years, RR and Geoff Scard, as village tree wardens, have been planting trees here. In recent years, it has been a struggle to keep the invading scrub and bramble at bay from these trees. The Group's January task day was spent successfully clearing that vegetation.

DEEP FORD

Although not in our remit and with the PC's agreement, we applied for an exemption certificate from the Environment Agency to restore the badly eroded section of bank adjacent to the Riverside Rest using traditional sweet-chestnut posts and willow faggots. Interestingly, it was the first application of its kind that the EA officer had received; permission was granted. With the kind help of Mike Goddard and Doug Rundle, both National Trust volunteers at Mottisfont, we were able to buy materials from the NT at a very favourable rate. 'Before' and 'after' photographs donated by David Matthews were sent to the EA, which confirmed that the work has been completed satisfactorily. Funding for the materials came from a local resident who was impressed by the worth of the project.

GENERAL COMMENTS

RR again thanked everyone who had contributed in many different ways over the last year. When the Riverside Walk opened ten years ago, we had no idea that we would have been able to maintain the sites thanks to the competent volunteers who come to our monthly task days.

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Over the year we have planted over 50 whips. Thanks also were due to Jenny Rundle for organising the task-day refreshments, especially the cakes!

Financial report

The Balance Sheet for the year was presented by the Treasurer, Jennifer Rundle. There is currently £30.87 in the bank account.

Total income of £3649.28 over the year comprised:

£1250 in donations and loans
£1300 in grants
£194.85 in takings from the 2016 village fete
£250 annual GCPC grant.

The loans received were repaid quickly.

Most of the money was spent on the repairs to the boardwalk at the Riverside Walk, as well as restoration of the signal-box base and the eroded bank near Riverside Rest, as detailed in the Chair's report. Details of expenditure are as follows:

BCV membership fee	£38
Refreshments	£65.45
Riverside Walk	£2129.96
Riverside Rest	£520
Deep Ford	£40
Village fete stall fee	£15
Loans repaid	<u>£810</u>
TOTAL	£3618.41

We are still awaiting receipt of the 2017 grant of £250 from the PC; there has been a change of parish councillors. JR to chase.

It is pleasing to note that residents have been quick to offer spontaneous loans and donations on various occasions; this is a welcome sign of support for the Group's activities.

The accounts have been seen and passed by an independent auditor. They were approved by the meeting.

Update on activities

Kate Savage gave her personal thanks to Mike Goddard for all his hard work over the year, as well as expressing her appreciation of the volunteers who turn up regularly for each task day. Residents do notice and appreciate the results of their work.

Open discussion about current and future projects

THOMPSON LAND

It is not yet known if the land has been purchased by the PC so we are still waiting to find out if the Group will be asked to be involved in maintaining the land.

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VILLAGE FETE

Running a stall involves a lot of work, so the Group won't run a stall this year unless a specific need arises.

RIVERSIDE WALK

2017 is the tenth anniversary of the opening of the Riverside Walk. JR to do a poster inviting residents to turn up to the Walk on the May task day. JR to remain at the Walk on the day to deal with visitors while volunteers work at the Riverside Rest. JR will provide extra refreshments at the Walk for the elevenses break so visitors can join in.

One of the leaf-shaped seats is broken; MG to use any of leftover recycled posts to mend the seat, as well as using them up to edge the education areas. One post will also be needed to provide a post as a visual, rather than functional, part of the entrance gate.

RR remarked that no more trees need to be planted on existing areas at the moment.

Nominations for committee

All current committee members were re-elected, in the absence of any other nominees (RR proposed, MG seconded).