



**Friends
Of
Leckhampton Hill &
Charlton Kings Common**

Annual Report
Year Ended 30 Sept 2016

1. Chairman's Report
2. Volunteer Time
3. Membership Report
4. Work Parties
5. Financial Report

1. Chairman's Letter

I am delighted to present this report to you. What follows seeks to inform you of the major aspects of FOLK's activities, and the results of these over the past year. However, this can only be a partial report of the total work that has been done, as much is also done by the staff of the Borough Council, the owner of the Hill and Common and much management depends on Anne North's cattle that graze the site. Anne is to be congratulated also for winning first prize in the Best Small Herd category of the Midlands Dexter Group.

FOLK has continued to benefit from an excellent working relationship with the Borough Council both with the relevant members of staff, Wayne Sedgwick the warden and his manager Adam Reynolds and with the borough councillors who are appointed members of the FOLK Executive. We continue to be grateful for their support and input.

In the year to 30th Sept 2016 FOLK continued to work towards its three main aims in relation to Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common; namely conservation, widespread recreational use and increased awareness. This was achieved through the following main activities:

The routine work of the Executive Committee and sub groups.

- The Committee held 7 meetings during the year. All meetings were all well attended and all featured routine business such as reports by officers and by Wayne Sedgwick, the borough council staff member responsible for the management of the site. Particular attention was paid to the events and projects in the sections below.
- Additional topics discussed included planning applications adjacent to or affecting the Hill and Common, liaison through the Borough Council with Natural England regarding the management of the hill, Ash dieback, the possible registration as Public Rights of Way of long standing paths and tracks that are not presently so registered, proposals for Public Spaces Protection circulated for comment by the Borough Council, liaison with other "Friends of" groups that operate under the egis of the Council, possible involvement in town twinning with Annency, and unapproved planting of shrubs along a footpath on the Hill.
- Three Newsletters were produced during 2016 (Spring, Summer and Autumn issues). Copies of these are available on the FOLK website. The cost of producing the Newsletter

has been significantly reduced during 2016 since the majority of members now receive the Newsletter by e-mail rather than as a printed document. The newsletter is the main channel of communication between the FOLK Executive Committee and the wider membership

- Work Parties. The work parties undertake a wide range of conservation work and a fuller write up of this is provided in section 4 below.

Organising or participating in events

- Spring Lecture. The 2016 FOLK Spring Lecture was given on the 29th March by Dr Ray Wilson on the Industrial Archaeology of Leckhampton Hill. The lecture was extremely well attended with approx 140 people consisting of both members and non members. After the event many people expressed their appreciation for such an interesting and informative event
- Magnificent Meadows. On the 18th June FOLK participated in the Magnificent Meadows project for the second year running
- Fiesta in the Park: In July FOLK had a stand at the Fiesta in the Park and used this to explain the work of FOLK and to attract new members.
- Industrial Archaeology visit to the hill. A tour of the hill was led by Dr Ray Wilson in July to visit several of the Industrial Archaeology sites on the hill. Work was agreed for the improvement of these sites and the Cotswold Wardens subsequently agreed to help with this work. The precise location of several sites was also identified for use in the mapping project.
- Litter Pick. On March 21st a large group of FOLK members joined in the Queens Birthday Litter Pick. The work was done on the Honeybourne Line between the Prince of Wales Stadium and Waitrose. A significant amount of rubbish was collected, and the CBC truck sent to collect it had to make several trips to remove it all.

Projects pursued through the year

- Website development. Considerable further work was done on the FOLK website and the site now provides an excellent “shop window” for the activities of FOLK. Anyone visiting the

Hill and Common is encouraged to send comments, suggestions, photographs etc for inclusion on the website so that it can reflect the current views of all the visitors to the site.

- Mapping. Progress has been made on developing a multi layered online map of the hill and common. Separate layers include information on the boundaries of the SSSI and management plan, industrial archaeology, ancient archaeology, vernacular names, butterfly surveys, vegetation cover, geology and other topics of interest.
- Database. An online database has been compiled for storing all available documentation relating to FOLK or anything of relevance to the Hill and Common. This will be continually added to so that FOLK can become the authoritative source for all information relating to Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common.
- Membership Drive: At the 2015 AGM I identified an increase in membership as one of our objectives for the year ahead. A fuller analysis of the membership at the start and end of the year is provided in section 3 below.

2. Volunteer Time

The work of FOLK is done entirely by unpaid volunteers. During the year ended Sept 30th 2016 this work amounted to approx. 1660 hours of volunteer time. This was made up of:

Activity	Volunteer hours
Work parties	1100
Project work	120
Newsletter production	90
Events	130
Committee meetings and work	220
Total	1,660

These figures are minima, possibly significantly so, as they do not include many tasks for which no records are kept. Such tasks include the preparation of papers for meetings, the preparation of display material for public events, the production and distribution of posters advertising FOLK activities, the management of FOLK notice boards on the site, visits to explore mapping options, the maintenance of tools used by Work Parties, meetings with Council

staff, many telephone calls, the administration of FOLK's membership records, and much more.

We are extremely grateful to those members who generously give their time to support our work in so many ways.

3. Membership Report

At the 2015 AGM increasing the membership of FOLK was identified as one of the key objectives for the year ahead. Existing members were encouraged to recruit friends and family as new members, and efforts were made at the various FOLK events during the year to recruit new members. As part of the effort to increase awareness and membership of FOLK a small number of volunteers spent hours spread over three days at selected car parks around the site to approach visitors and distribute FOLK material. The number of members at the start and end of the year is shown below.

	Members on 30 Sept 2015	Members who left in the year	Members who joined in the year	Members on 30 Sept 2016
Full members	161	10	33	184
Member organisations	7	2	1	6
Honorary life members	4	0	0	4
Total	172	12	34	194

Work Parties

The work parties consist of FOLK members working on the hill and common on conservation and management of the environment.

The sessions take place three times a month and the work is coordinated closely with CBC (the owners of the land) and Natural England. During 2016 the work parties of FOLK members were also joined at times by other groups such as CBC office workers,

Yorkshire Building Society employees or The Home Group, and their help was much appreciated.

Every 6 months a plan is produced for the work to be done in the coming 6 months and these plans are always available on the FOLK website

The work involved includes:

- Gorse, shrub, grass and tree clearance. According to Natural England rules scrub cutting and grass clearance should be curtailed during the period 1st March to 15th July and tree removal during the period 1st March to 31st August.
- Construction of steps on sloping paths to improve access and safety on the hill
- Maintenance of footpaths
- Litter clearance
- Clearing unwanted species such as Ragwort, Golden Rod and Hemp Agrimony
- Managing the Industrial and Ancient Archaeology sites on the hill and common
- Over the summer a section of the Common was fenced between May and August to exclude grazing cattle. The purpose of this was to explore whether the present level of grazing had an impact, potentially adverse, on flower production by dicotyledons, and hence on the abundance of invertebrates. Both flower production and invertebrate numbers were monitored, as they will be again in 2017 when the enclosure is repeated.

During 2016 FOLK was able to share with the Borough Council the purchase of a secure tool store where the tools used by the Work Parties can be stored. Previously the store had been generously loaned by Leckhampton Builders, but the purchase and ongoing renovation of the store provides a guaranteed facility that should serve us for many years to come.

Financial Report for the period 1st Oct 2015 to 30th
September 2016
Income and Expenditure

INCOME	2015	2016	Note
Membership subscriptions			
Individual members 5 year subs	383.50	680.00	
Individual members 1 year subs	120.00	120.00	
Organisational members 1 year subs	65.00	80.00	
Sub Total	568.50	880.00	
Donations / Sponsorship			
Cheltenham Borough Council	300.00	0.00	1
Cheltenham & County Cycling Club	100.00	100.00	
Leckhampton & Warden Hill PC	250.00	250.00	
Shurdington PC	50.00	50.00	
Charlton Kings PC	250.00	100.00	
Other	21.01	225.74	2
Sub Total	971.01	725.74	
Total Income	1539.51	1605.74	
EXPENDITURE			
TCV Membership and insurance	233.01	225.25	
Newsletter & AGM production			
Newsletter production	404.99	21.79	3
Newsletter postage	7.98	6.60	
AGM notice printing	20.00	61.56	
Sub Total	432.97	89.95	
Other Expenses			
Fuel and sundries	14.65	22.03	
Tools and equipment	8.30	438.04	4
Photocopying & Stationary	34.34	28.99	
Room Hire	25.00	100.00	5
Open Spaces Society membership fee	45.00	45.00	
Sundry	0.00	201.13	6
Sub Total	127.29	835.19	
Excess of income over expenditure	746.24	455.35	
Total	1539.51	1605.74	

Balance Sheet

	2015	2016	Note
Assets			
Current Account	1342.25	1938.30	
Less unpresented cheque	0.00	141.61	
Net Current Account	1342.25	1796.69	
Savings Account	2137.04	2137.95	
Total Assets	3479.29	3934.64	
Liabilities			
Members funds at start of year	2733.05	3479.29	
Excess of income over expenditure	746.24	455.35	
Members funds at end of year	3479.29	3934.64	

Notes:

1. No grants were applied for from CBC this year but CBC have continued to pay the costs for the insurance, replacement and servicing of FOLK's tools and machines and training courses.
2. Includes voluntary contributions of £182.83 made by attendees at the Spring Talk
3. Newsletter production is now mainly electronic with the small number of printed copies required being printed courtesy of CBC leaving FOLK to pay only for the paper used.
4. The main costs were for the joint purchase with CBC of the tool store (50% of £500) and the costs incurred to date for the refurbishment of the tool store (£141.61)
5. Cost of hiring the room for the 2015 AGM and for the Spring Talk
6. The main costs were for hi-viz vests with FOLK logos for work party volunteers (£136.13)