



Friends
Of
Leckhampton Hill &
Charlton **K**ings Common

Annual Report
Year Ended 30 Sept 2017

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

1. Chairman's Report

This Introduction and the sections that follow it summarise FOLK's work over the past year. I hope that you find the contents interesting and that you see them as both a continuation of and a development of delivering FOLK's aims. You will see that FOLK has continued its active contribution to the conservation of the Hill and the Common, but that some of our hopes for 2017 have not yet materialised. In this Introduction I will concentrate on matters not covered in later sections.

- Spring, Summer and Autumn issues of FOLKtalk, the FOLK newsletter, were produced in 2017. The newsletter complements the website in communication between the FOLK Executive Committee and the wider membership. Special thanks are due to John Harvey, Geoff Holt, Serena Meredith, Wayne Sedgwick and other contributors for regularly providing material for the newsletter. The newsletter Editor has notified the Executive Committee that he wishes to pass on the responsibility for production of the newsletter after 5 years in the role. Would any member wishing to take on this important role please contact the Committee. Support will be provided in the handover of responsibility. Members are encouraged to provide material to be included in future newsletters.
- A new initiative this year was a contribution to Cheltenham's Heritage Open days. This took the form of guided walk to explore the Industrial Archaeology of Leckhampton Hill. Our member Dr Ray Wilson very kindly acted a guide to a well-supported and very well-received event.
- A contact with Miller Homes was also a new event. The company sought FOLK's views on its proposed housing development on Shurdington Road and offered a meeting. Given the views expressed at the last AGM, the Executive agreed to limit its response to a letter stressing the importance of the views of the proposed housing site from Leckhampton Hill and of the Hill from Leckhampton Road, and hoping that neither would be significantly affected by any development. In its reply the company shared these concerns.
- Enquires during the year revealed that there seemed to be little documented information on what species of Bats occur of the site, although there are records on evening walks to observe bats being held on Leckhampton Hill. Contacts with

local experts lead to a survey being carried out over several evenings in August. At least five species of bat were recorded, including good numbers of the uncommon Lesser horseshoe.

- The study of the possible impact of grazing on the numbers of invertebrates in the grassland on the Common continued for a second year. Once again protection from grazing in the spring and early summer resulted in a dramatic increase in the abundance of flowers, but there was no evidence that the number of invertebrates also increased. The study has now ended.
- Having had a stall at the Borough Council's Midsummer Fair event in the Montpellier for several recent years, it was decided not to have one in 2017. However, thanks to hard work by Mike Donnelly, a stall was taken at the enhanced Charlton Kings Fair. Unfortunately footfall was low, but there were informative discussions with a number of visitors. Some of these revealed a surprising lack of awareness of the Common and a very limited knowledge of FOLK. Maybe in consequence of the lower public profile, the number of new members recruited during the year was lower than hoped.
- At the last AGM I reported the hope that we would be able to produce one or more new maps of the Hill and Common. Despite considerable effort, progress has been disappointingly slow. Amongst aborted trials have been: the use of Google Maps; exploration of the use of the Borough Council mapping system; trials of mapping using the GPS facility on mobile phones; contact with the local Orienteering Group. More recently contact has been made with several small companies that use drones to collect data from which detailed base maps, and also maps of vegetation, can be developed.
- In an effort to increase the involvement of members in our activities, a Skittles Evening was arranged in July. This was reasonably supported, but mainly by already active members. Thanks to Pete Niblett for arranging the event. Further such activities are planned, with a quiz night in March currently in the pipeline.
- The working relationship with Cheltenham Borough Council continues to good effect and our thanks are due to the warden and his manager. We are grateful for their support and involvement. Also the Borough councillors input to FOLK through membership of the Executive.

Update on matters arising from 2016 Annual Report

- Ash dieback - the disease has been recorded in Cheltenham this year but not actually on the Hill/Common
- Possible registration of Public Rights of Way – this work is still ongoing with the involvement of CBC and advice from others
- Proposals for Public Spaces Protection – this was not taken forward by CBC in relation to the Hill/Common
- Involvement in town twinning with Annecy – the chairman met with their equivalent of FOLK in August
- Planting of shrubs on a boundary footpath – the shrubs were replanted within the privately owned land.

2. Secretary's Report

The work of FOLK is done entirely by unpaid volunteers. During the year ended Sept 30th 2017 this work amounted to approx. 1676 hours of volunteer time. This was made up of:

Activity	Volunteer hours
Work parties	913
Project work	213
Newsletter production	110
Events	70
Committee meetings and work	370
Total	1,676

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

The FOLK Executive committee met 7 times during the year and all meetings were well attended. Several sub groups also operated during the year covering such topics as work parties, mapping and communications.

3. Membership Report

The number of members at the start and end of the year is shown below.

	Members on 30 Sept 2016	Members who left in the year	Members who joined in the year	Members on 30 Sept 2017
Full members	184	25	5	164
Member organisations	6	1	0	5
Honorary life members	4	0	2	6
Total	194	26	7	175

4. Work Parties Report

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.

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

General survey of developments on the Hill/Common

- The Magnificent Meadows project ended in August 2017; we will still have access to the seed harvester in future and seeding of parts of the Hill/Common with locally collected seed may continue
- Area 16 above Daisybank Road was seeded in 2016 with seed gathered from the Hill/Common. It was surveyed this

year in July and about 40 species of wildflowers identified in an area that 2 years ago was scrub and poor woodland

- Hopkins field running down from the Gallops/Hartley Lane has been fenced, partly re-seeded and new stiles installed. This is a large area which will help with the grazing regime on the Hill/Common
- At the top of Hopkins Field on Hartley Lane a Cotswold stone wall is being rebuilt; this work involves the Cotswold wardens and is used as training for projects working with the long-term unemployed
- The bad drainage at the Daisybank Bridge carpark at the bottom of the incline has been addressed by creating a hardcore/gravel soakaway (“french drain”)
- Natural England made an inspection visit in March 2017 (a further visit is planned for November) and were generally content with how the site was developing and the impact of the CBC and FOLK management work; they made suggestions for further work
- Butterfly monitoring has continued in 2017 for the 5th year in succession – annual results and overall trends are yet to be fully analysed; the next steps (if any) in this work will then be considered
- Owl boxes have been placed at selected points
- FOLK has been contacted by the coordinator of volunteer efforts from companies and other organisations; this may lead to extra manpower for our Autumn / Winter work on the Hill/Common
- The management of the land benefits greatly from the involvement of the grazier and the grazing regime developed for the Dexter cattle

5. Financial Report

1st Oct 2015 to 30th September 2016

INCOME	2016	2017	Note
Membership subscriptions			
Individual members 5 year subs	680.00	502.50	
Individual members 1 year subs	120.00	39.00	
Organisational members 1 year subs	80.00	65.00	
Sub Total	880.00	606.50	
Donations / Sponsorship			
Cheltenham Borough Council	0.00	0.00	1
Cheltenham & County Cycling Club	100.00	0.00	
Leckhampton & Warden Hill PC	250.00	100.00	
Shurdington PC	50.00	50.00	
Charlton Kings PC	100.00	100.00	
Other	225.74	58.56	
Sub Total	725.74	308.56	
Total Income	1605.74	915.06	
EXPENDITURE			
TCV Membership and insurance	225.25	229.52	
Newsletter & AGM production			
Newsletter production	21.79	7.99	2
Newsletter postage	6.60	0.00	
AGM notice printing	61.56	0.00	
Sub Total	89.95	7.99	
Other Expenses			
Fuel and sundries	22.03	30.83	
Tools and equipment	438.04	187.93	3
Photocopying & Stationary	28.99	46.20	
Room Hire	100.00	25.00	4
Open Spaces Society membership fee	45.00	45.00	
Sundry	201.13	29.00	5
Sub Total	835.19	363.96	
Excess of income over expenditure	455.35	313.59	
Total	1605.74	914.00	

Balance Sheet

	2016	2017	Note
Assets			
Current Account	1938.30	2250.83	
Savings Account	2137.95	2139.01	
Total Assets	4076.25	4389.84	
Liabilities			
Members funds at start of year	3620.90	4076.25	
Excess of income over expenditure	455.35	313.59	
Members funds at end of year	4076.25	4389.84	

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
2. 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.
3. The main costs were for the refurbishment of the tool store which was shared with CBC and the purchase of fuels cans and individual sprayers for use by the work party volunteers.
4. Cost of hiring the room for the 2016 AGM
5. Cost of hiring a skittles alley and the prizes for a social event held in June 2017.