

Friends of Croham Hurst Woods

We aim to support and promote the preservation of Croham Hurst Woods and its flora and fauna for the enjoyment of the community

Newsletter No 26 March 2014

Chair's Report (Councillor Maria Gatland)

We had a great turn out for our AGM in November with over 80 people attending to hear about the work done by FCHW during the year. Our guest speaker Dr Dan Allen author, pet columnist and otter expert was certainly a draw and his talk was entertaining, interesting and certainly something different. The support and enthusiasm of so many people gives the FCHW committee fresh energy to continue all we do for Croham Hurst Woods.

In my annual report I thought it was worthwhile to mention all the projects we have done through the generous support of our members over eleven years. Our very first project clearing the bank on Upper Selsdon road of over thirty years of scrub was in retrospect a huge project. However it has had major benefits for the Hurst helping the endangered rare pale St John's Wort and bringing light to wood edge plants. My personal favourite was recreating the meadow shown on old maps but the clearing of nearly two hectares of invasive holly has had a massive effect on light and regeneration. The Information Boards and many benches including the memorial bench for our late and much missed President Lord Croham were designed and funded by FCHW. There was a desire from those present at the AGM to see more holly removed. Following a number of meetings with the Council we have agreed to commit funding along with matched funding from the Forestry Commission to remove another hectare of holly. However such was my concern that the surface of the Hurst would be damaged if the works went ahead during this exceptionally wet weather I secured the agreement of the Council that these works would be postponed until much later on in the year. This wet weather will have an impact on the flora and fauna in the Hurst, who will be nature's winners or losers we shall have to wait and see.

I hope during the coming year to arrange some walks/talks on different topics relating to our wonderful ancient woodland. The Hurst has so much to offer from an ancient monument to very special geology along with a wide variety of plants, trees, birds and animals. Do let me know if you any ideas on any topic or indeed any particular expertise or knowledge that would be of interest.

I contacted the Council twice over the last year to have two burnt out motor bikes removed from the Hurst. As you know this is highly unusual, the Hurst suffers much less from vandalism than other green spaces in the borough. It may be that these incidents are connected to stolen cars being parked then moved by thieves at the part of Bankside not directly overlooked by houses. Police have been dealing and I certainly haven't noticed any unusual activity there recently.

I reported to you before that FCHW had been nominated for the Queens Award for Voluntary Service. I am very pleased to tell you we have been shortlisted and I have recently been interviewed about our work. I am delighted we have got so far and my thanks goes to all our helpers and volunteers who do so much to help Croham Hurst Woods.

A number of residents have requested a bench to sit and rest half way along the bridleway. The Friends will fund this and I am currently arranging this with the Council.

We are currently looking to fill two committee positions one of newsletter co-ordinator and the other treasurer, if you can help with either please let me know.

Finally I would like to thank Ted Budden our current Treasurer who would like to stand down after eleven years for all his hard work and support.

Work Day Diary (David Coups)

The Friends work day is held on the morning of the last Saturday in the month except for August and December. It starts at 10:00am and lasts for up to 3 hours. Notices are posted at the entrances to the Hurst advising of the meeting point. This is usually one of West Hill, Wisborough Road or Bankside Green depending on the work area to be covered. The details are also published on our website.

The January work day concentrated on the path that runs alongside Upper Selsdon Road from Wisborough Road to Elmfield Way and was focussed on clearing leaves and fallen branches as a result of the bad weather. This is a well used path and the only tarmacked one in the Hurst.

At the same time some litter picking was undertaken and resulted in two large sacks full of rubbish, mainly bottles and cans. The litter pick on the grass verge alongside the road revealed just how much rubbish came from passing cars! However it was really heartening to find that two passing motorists (local residents) stopped to say how much they appreciated the fact that someone was willing to clean up this rubbish and make the area look tidy. It is feedback like this that does help with this work.

We are fortunate and grateful to have a core set of regular volunteers for our workday. Often they are supplemented by some new ones on a occasional basis. Without volunteers we would not be able to maintain our activities and so when you see them some words of encouragement will always be appreciated.

Message from the Treasurer (Ted Budden)

A big thank you to all who have paid a subscription for the 2013/2014 year. The new financial year started in November 2013 but if by any chance you have forgotten you can still pay your annual subscription now.

Newsletter Delivery

Many thanks to all the volunteers who deliver the newsletter. However we are still looking for more volunteers to help with this activity and in addition we need someone to take responsibility for organising the delivery of the newsletters twice a year and the AGM calling notice. If you are interested in helping with any of these activities please contact Councillor Maria Gatland on 020 8405 6718 or email Maria.Gatland@croydon.gov.uk

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Committee

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Treasurer Ted Budden
Secretary Ann Kellaway
Additional Members David Coups

Website (Ann Kellaway) www.friendsofcrohamhurstwoods.wordpress.com