

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 34 March 2018

Chair's Report (Councillor Maria Gatland)

We held our 15th AGM at the Watney Room, Emmanuel Church last November. The Hall was packed with members and residents keen to hear about our work and projects over the last year and the sad loss of Green Belt status for Croham Hurst Woods. A big attraction too was our speaker Steve Pocock, the national organiser of London National Park City the initiative to make London the world's first National Park City. His presentation certainly provoked interest, questions and comment. Such a big turn out to support the Friends gives us fresh energy to continue our work to care for our wonderful ancient woodland in every way we can.

When I give my annual report to the meeting on what we have achieved I feel so proud of all our members and volunteers from our local community. Their support has helped us to carry out so many projects to benefit the Hurst. Our first project was way back in 2002/2003 clearing 30 years of scrub from outside the railings on Upper Selsdon Road, in 2004/2005 the restoration of the Meadow area shown on old maps along with the help of the Downland Trust, to the more recent restoration of the historic view from the top of the Hurst. Over the years we have funded the removal of hectares of invasive holly and now to see the winter sun streaming through the trees in the early morning is simply stunning.

Nearly all the questions and comments from the floor voiced real concern about the downgrading of Croham Hurst Woods from Green Belt to Metropolitan Open Land. This was proposed by the current administration of the Council in their Local Plan and despite huge objections has now been adopted. At present I don't see a threat to the Hurst but it has made us all realise just how precious it is and just how important for all of us in a time of intense development in our local area. The support of the local community for the Friends is really appreciated.

Recently I had a meeting with the Forestry Advisor to the Council to discuss some projects for the next couple of years that the Friends could fund through the generous support of our members. One of my concerns over the years of holly removal has been the problem of regrowth. Some works are constrained by the SSSI designation for the Hurst. Following my discussions with the Council a meeting was arranged with Natural England who have responsibility for the SSSI Croham Hurst Woods. A trial was agreed by Natural England and three parts of an area close to Banksy, where holly had been cleared a few years ago, were chosen for the trial. Part No 1 was strimmed only, Part No 2 strimmed and sprayed with an agreed chemical, and Part No 3 a machine with a claw removed the holly roots and scarified the area. Then the vegetation and roots were banked up to prevent run off, always a serious concern in the Hurst. Now we will have to wait to see the results of the trial. The Friends were pleased to fund this work.

Last week I met with Council contractors to show them the remains of a camp that was in the scrub near the old Yew tree at the Banksy entrance. It had been there for a while. The local police checked it out twice and confirmed it was not being used and left their details should anyone return. Camping is illegal in the woods. However because a number of residents were still concerned I requested the Council remove it as a fly tip and this was done.

It doesn't take long walking in Croham Hurst Woods to realise how special it is and how important it is that we care for it not just for our pleasure but also for plants, trees and wildlife and for the future residents who will walk there long after we are all gone.

Thanks to so many of you helping every day to care for Croham Hurst Woods

Message from the Treasurer (Carrie Hay)

A big thank you to all who have paid a subscription for the 2017/2018 year. The new financial year started in November 2017 but if by any chance you have forgotten you can still pay your annual subscription now. New members may join at any time.

Newsletter Delivery (Richard Kellaway)

As always many thanks indeed to all those who deliver the newsletters. Your help is very much appreciated. There will be a vacancy later this year to deliver 50 newsletters in Whitmead Close and other vacancies do occur from time to time. If you are willing to help please contact Richard Kellaway on 020 8657 4672 or rekellaway@blueyonder.co.uk

London is on course to be declared the World's first National Park City 2019 (Nick Gill)

For those of you fortunate enough to join us at our AGM in November, we hope that you enjoyed listening to our speakers, Steve Pocock and Anne Keenan, who presented their ambition for London to be named the world's first National Park City. They encouraged us all to make London greener, healthier, wilder and more enjoyable, allowing us to spend more time outdoors in nature, including in places such as Croham Hurst.

In February 2018 it was announced that the Scheme has official backing from over 1,000 local and regional politicians, including on the London Assembly and the Mayor of London. This will allow the London National Park City founder, Daniel Raven-Ellison and his team to move forward with the next phase of making the Scheme a reality and showing all London Boroughs what the Scheme means in practice. If you would like to find out more, please visit the website www.nationalparkcity.london

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

Thank you to all those who have sent in photographs for the website and please keep them coming.

Committee

Chair Councillor Maria Gatland

Treasurer Carrie Hay

Secretary Ann Kellaway

Additional Members ...Nick Gill, David Coups

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If you wish to subscribe to the **Friends of Croham Hurst Woods**, please supply the following:

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