

# 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 36 March 2019

### Chair's Report (Councillor Maria Gatland)

This morning on a beautiful, sunny February day I decided to take a walk around Croham Hurst Woods without my dog or any distraction. I wanted to remind myself how much the Friends of Croham Hurst Woods (Friends) had achieved since I started our group in 2002. I remember how dark and uncared for it was back then, now it was a joy standing at the mini roundabout at Bankside to be able to see right to the top of the Hurst with the sunlight steaming through the trees, highlighting bark and mosses. Through your support we have removed hectares of invasive holly, the most recent being on the Upper Selsdon Road side to stunning effect. Whilst seeing people sitting on one of our benches at the top of the Hurst looking across Croydon, I was reminded that the restoration of this historic view was one of my favourite projects that we funded. In looking at our Information Boards I was grateful for all the work that was done on the design and installation and the recent two days of cleaning them by one of our committee members; it makes them really stand out. These are just a sample of the projects funded by our members over the years reaching nearly £30,000. I have no doubt that few if any of these projects would have happened without the support of local people for the Friends.

This support was reflected by a great turn out once again for our 16th Annual General Meeting (AGM) back in November. Our speakers this year were Iain Greenwood and Louise Wilkinson from The ARC Centre, which is a unique animal education centre based in Selsdon. It always gives me great pleasure to see so many members and to thank them for all their hard work. Our newsletter deliverers, workday volunteers, our committee members, those who clear up litter every day and care enough to alert me to problems, all do a fantastic job. All these contributions help to renew our energy and enthusiasm for another year of hard work. After so many years their continuing support is both heartening and appreciated.

The devastating fire last summer that destroyed a large part of scarce heathland reminded us just how precious Croham Hurst Woods is and how easily it can be damaged. I have been in contact with the Council to discuss what steps they will take to repair the fire damage. As the Hurst is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) the government body Natural England has advised the Council to leave it to see if it will renew naturally. If not it will have to be reseeded or planted. In my meeting with the Council it was suggested that Friends might wish to fund fencing to encircle the damaged area to prevent trampling at a cost of £3,000. I put this suggestion to our committee and to the members at the AGM. The overwhelming view of both was that it would be too expensive and too intrusive, and we had already funded holly removal this year. Since then the Council has come back to me to say they would fund fencing of a smaller area. To date this work has not happened.

We will of course keep an eye on this important area and will certainly arrange a work morning to pull any encroaching bracken and remove any unwanted plants and growth. Let us hope that nature will do its work and the burnt heather can regenerate if the roots have not been destroyed by the fire. I was shocked to learn that despite the incredible heat last summer Croham Hurst Woods was the only green space in

Croydon to have such a major fire. I hope it does not happen again but we need to remain vigilant.

The Hurst provides so many ways for people to enjoy nature. You can see deer bounding through the Hurst, admire drifts of wood anemones and to hear a woodpecker tapping away is balm to the soul. But it is not just special to us locally it is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and of Nature Conservation. We would remind people that yes, there are some rules but they are there to protect the Hurst. Fires are prohibited and cycling is not permitted except along the bridleway. Please be mindful of the harm that litter causes to the wildlife that we are so lucky to have, and please take your rubbish home with you.

My walk this morning has reminded me just how stunning Croham Hurst Woods is, how much has been done by so many people to care for it and how fortunate we are to have it as our local woodland.

### **Message from the Treasurer (Carrie Hay)**

A big thank you to all who have paid a subscription for the 2018/2019 year. The new financial year started in November 2018 but if by any chance you have forgotten you can still pay your annual subscription now. New members are welcome to join at any time.

### **Newsletter Delivery (Richard Kellaway)**

Many thanks to all those who so kindly deliver the newsletters. Vacancies do occur from time to time to deliver newsletters in the local area. If you are willing to help please contact Richard Kellaway on 020 8657 4672 or at [rekellaway@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:rekellaway@blueyonder.co.uk)

### **Website (Ann Kellaway) [www.friendsofcrohamhurstwoods.com](http://www.friendsofcrohamhurstwoods.com)**

Thank you to all those who have sent in photographs for the website.

### **Committee**

Chair .....Councillor Maria Gatland  
Treasurer.....Carrie Hay  
Secretary .....Ann Kellaway  
Additional Members ...Nick Gill, David Coups

### **Subscriptions**

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