



Minutes of fourteenth Annual General Meeting 28 September 2021

This year's AGM was held over Zoom. Approximately 22 members were in attendance.

28 September 2021

1. a) Apologies: Sue Gordon-Roe, Peter Gotham (had to leave early).
b) In attendance: Jeremy Francis (Chair), Steve Cheek (Secretary), Kit Holland (Orchard Manager), Rosica Bates, Charles Hattersley, Kate Hurst
c) Also in attendance: Dick Baxter, Inbali Iserles, Valerie Neal, and around 20 other members of Friends of Midsummer Common.

2. a) Introduction of committee members
b) Departing members – many thanks to Sue Gordon Roe and Charles (who was responsible for cultivating the hops which are being brewed into a beer by Calverley's Brewery – Charlie will alert us when it's available). Their hard work over the years is much appreciated, and we look forward to their ongoing involvement in a less formal capacity.
c) New member – Inbali Iserles - Inbali has lived in the area for 6 ½ years, has been a lawyer and is now a writer of children's books, and is very interested in biodiversity and ecological issues.

3. Members' talks:
 - a) History of Midsummer Common – Dick Baxter (please refer to the history of midsummer common document on website for all of Dick's research).
 - b) Orchard update and discussion regarding the Newmarket Road entrance of the orchard – Kit Holland
 - Eastern Pound development is still in early stages. Would involve opening up the drainage ditch and perhaps having a nature reserve in that area. We are still waiting on funds to do a feasibility study and keen for input.
 - brief update of developments in the orchard (bug hotel, raised bed, wildflowers)
 - Requests for help: volunteers, untreated wood, cardboard
 - discussion of Newmarket road entrance.
 - issues with the space – poor soil, dry, shady, crowded planting. Organic mulch, irrigation, improved footpath and moving some of the saplings should help with this.
 - straw poll of options for the design of the area – majority prefer food forest style planting scheme.
 - d) Questions

How did Jesus Green end up not having cows, whereas Midsummer Common does?

- After Jesus green was left off the official designation of midsummer common in 1965, it was subsequently registered as common land separately. At this time, the council voted not to have cows on Jesus Green.

Are cows and ditches compatible?

- Dick is unsure as to whether ditches and cows are mutually exclusive. It's clear that local people really enjoy the cows, but it's unclear what the future of grazing in Cambridge is.
- Kate points out that cows + ditches = muddy patch rather than conservation area. Ideally ditches should be fenced from cows.

Would temporary signage be useful to explain changes in the orchard?

Yes.

Will needles be a problem with a food forest planting scheme?

- Not sure. It's not the worst area for discarded needles, but we would want to discourage people from walking over the planting, so hopefully they won't step on a needle.
- It's noted that tidy and cared for areas seem to attract less antisocial behaviour and litter.

Can cows be excluded from Eastern pound?

- Unsure. Kit will make contact with Angelica. Kate suspects it will cause problems as the area is used to keep the cows safe when circuses etc are on.

There are hops left on the vines – is there still more brewing to be done?

- No, we've got enough already for the beer. If anyone wants to pick some hops, go ahead, we have a surplus!

4. Officers' reports:

a) Peter Gotham – Treasurer

Jeremy Francis giving report on Peter's behalf:

- Most of our grant comes from the council. Money goes to orchard, insurance, and newsletter.

- some money from joining fees

- some donations – contact secretary to donate

Current finances

-£1000 contingency cash

- we are applying for sec 106 funding for orchard

b) Steven Cheek – Secretary

- 24 new members

- Newsletter has been well received

- explanation of process of raising issues with FoMC (email secretary, committee will discuss, even if not taken up by committee Steve may be able to help.)

- New website coming – website will be down later this week

- Request for help with website

- Request for help with data management

- Request for help with photos

- 2020 minutes ratified – no issues or objections

5. Chair's report:

a) ratification of constitution

Revisions consist of:

- Constitutional aims and objectives updated to reflect current management plan (the latter still awaiting approval from the council)

- Currently only Chair secretary treasurer get re-elected, now ordinary committee members will face re-election every three years.

b) reminder of the aims of FoMC:

- to hold council to account re: biodiversity and benefit of users

- to manage the orchard

c) Discussion of current council tree policy – canopy to be increased, will now include planting of introduced species, planned planting of two more dawn redwoods. Jeremy notes that Cambridge is only mid ranking in UK in terms of tree cover, and welcomes these plans on behalf of FoMC.

d) grass left to grow on common – this is likely to be the pattern in the future.

e) enhance orchard

f) eastern pound

g) electric bikes and scooters

- city council's response to issues re: electric scooters and bikes

- the Voi scooter company is not awarded the contract by the city council but by the Cambridge and Peterborough joint authority. So there's not a lot the city council can do.

- the Voi scooters are limited to 12mph in most of the city, but 5mph in the city centre. Motor cuts out entirely in the no-go area of Christ' pieces. So it's clearly possible to limit speed in a particular area. Ideally we would limit the speed on the common.

- how many accidents have there been? The county council receives reports from the police so should know, we have asked them, haven't heard yet.

- current Voi scheme has been extended to March 2022

h) Request for help with leaflet delivery to flats

i) Some trees will be removed as they are dead or dying – we have discussed and agreed this with the council

j) Midsummer fair/gathering

- There was quite a lot of antisocial behaviour, of which we have collected accounts and relayed this info to the council & police, neither of whom seem to be willing to take action.

k) Marshall's radar mast.

- it is the chair's view that the mast will not cause significant impact to midsummer common, and the radar mast will presumably be dismantled in 2030 when Marshall's leave. Members are welcome to make their own comments, but FoMC does not take a formal stance on this issue.

- Valerie Neal – pointed out that the new mast will be visible from Midsummer Common, according to Marshall's own predicted zone of theoretical visibility. Although the deadline for comments on the proposal is technically past, anyone who would like to comment can still do so until the planning committee meets. Val is happy to be contacted on the subject and encourages anyone who's concerned to register their comments.

6. Treasurer, secretary, chair, and orchard manager re-elected by simple majority.

7. Inbali Iserles proposed and appointed as new committee member

8. Changes to the constitution ratified with no objections or concerns