

Minutes
Annual General Meeting
Hythe Green Preservation Society
28 July 2021, 7pm

Present: R Bateman, G German, C German, T Bateman, A Weatherhead, M Swan, L Sims, B Garfield, V Down, D Ormston, J Bridges, P Knight, D Horton, J Horton, J Matthews, M Matthews, S Bailey, J Nelson

Apologies: A and J Davison, L and J Stiling, C Smith, J Metcalfe, J Marks, M Whybrow, P Chipping

1) Welcome and Introductions

Chair Richard Bateman thanked all who had come to the postponed Annual General Meeting in exceptional circumstances.

2) Minutes of last Annual General Meeting

Proposed by: L Sims ; seconded by: G German.

Minutes of last meeting were accepted as a true record with no changes.

3) Chairs Report

Richard reported on the achievements of HGPS in the last year.

Following HGPS's approach to Hythe Town Council, the Council voted unanimously to apply to Fields in Trust for a Deed of Dedication for the Green. HGPS put together the documentation for the application. The Council returned the final legal papers in June so we are now awaiting Fields in Trust response.

Covid had an impact on activities, however a Green Day was held on 5/12/2020 - 450 whips were planted along the school fence, and a general clean-up was also carried out.

Hythe Environmental Group and Eric Brown have conducted litter picks on the Green throughout the year.

A ward grant from Cllr Doug Wade allowed HGPS to start to clear the western boundary and create a Woodland Walk, which has been seeded with wild flowers and ferns. HGPS plans to sow 40,000 bluebell seeds in the autumn.

The traveller invasion in May caused a great deal of stress and destruction. HGPS has done what it can to make immediate repairs and improve security and have offered to help with the Council's security review for green spaces.

Following a consultation HGPS was granted permission by Hythe Town Council to raise the money to plant a wood in the south western corner. There was a successful crowd-funding campaign with Kent Council, which raised £16,000 for this. Work will start in late summer and we will use the opportunity to hire a digger to clear the waste left by travellers.

The labyrinth is proving popular and we will look to maintain this while encouraging more wild flowers here.

HGPS is supporting the Hythe Hops initiative by planting 10 hops on the Green.

Hythe Town Council has given HGPS stewardship of the pocket park beside the Dukes Head pub. We are re-wilding this and the Hythe Institute Fund has generously offered funds to put up a memorial bench here.

HGPS has an aspiration to provide two wheelchair friendly drinking foundations on the Green (by the play area and by the labyrinth). We will also look at getting permission to plant a mature tree near the play area for shade.

S Bailey has succeeded in eliminating Alexander weeds which choked many plants and the result has been a strong wildflower resurgence which should increase.

Finally Richard thanked a lot of people who have made big contributions this year – Julie Abbott, Town Clerk, and Laura Cook, Plans and Facilities Officer, who managed the issue of the traveller

invasion and who have been unfailingly helpful; Mike Matthews and Nick Hollands for their photos of the Green posted to our Facebook page; the HGPS committee for their work behind the scenes; Veronika Down for checking and approving the accounts; Stephen Bailey who provides many hours of support and helps us professionally to formulate our plans for planting, coppicing and maintenance of the Green, while charging a fraction of normal commercial rates for his work.

4) Report on Financial Accounts

Treasurer Geoff German gave a report on the accounts (see Treasurer's Report)

HGPS accounts were hit by a problem this year which was that Nationwide stopped Treasurers' Accounts, and we have had difficulty opening a new account. Geoff drew all the money from the bank which is now held in cash (£177.04).

Upcoming costs are the insurance for volunteers on the Green and the website costs.

Geoff went through the accounts explaining the details and answering questions. Veronika Down (who is independent and not a member) has checked the accounts.

After the summary of HGPS finances, Geoff gave a summary of grants to HGPS from Hythe Town Council (which are subject to council audit).

On 28/7/21 Geoff has made an application for £2,500 for 2021 to fund HGPS maintenance of the Green

The Financial Accounts were approved as a true record. Proposed by: T Bateman; seconded by: B Garfield.

5) Election of new officers

B Garfield proposed that all the officers should be re-elected en bloc : J Nelson seconded.

Chairperson – Richard Bateman

Vice Chairperson/Treasurer – Geoff German

Membership Secretary – Celia German

Secretary – Theresa Bateman

Committee member – Lynne Sims

Committee member – Betty Garfield

Bid Manager – Vacancy. Richard explained that we need a bids scout who has knowledge of local fundraising opportunities and sources of grants. This post will be kept open and will be shown on the website. Fundraising ideas were exchanged.

6) Any other Business

David Horton said that he and Joan Horton now have a certified copy of the covenant and have handed it to Hythe Town Council; this could be offered to Fields in Trust; HGPS should also have a copy.

Lynne Sims proposed an open day for Hythe Green to share ideas and aspirations; there was a discussion on communicating with residents, and how to bring in volunteers and involve the community (eg taking a HGPS stall to the boot fairs, insect survey, links with schools).

Jane Bridges raised the issue of litter bins overflowing on the Green creating a health and safety problem. It was suggested that residents could get in touch with Environmental Health department at Folkestone and Hythe District Council or write to the local District Councillors.

The meeting ended at 8.30pm.