**BRINGSTY COMMON MANORIAL COURT**

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**

**held on 10th October 2020**

**by Zoom**

**Present:**

Catherine Fuller (chair), Tom Fisher (vice-chair), Peter Bridge (treasurer), Tim Phillips, Martin Roche, Sally Knowles (Whitbourne PC), Cllr. Nigel Shaw (ward councillor), Jenny Creek (clerk), Sue Long

Kirsty Udall, James Udall, Stephanie Carpenter, Greg Swadener, Peter Hall

1. **Apologies for absence**

Graham Chapman, Mike Davis, Sarah Graham, Allan Corder, Derek Brookes, Nick Hinchcliffe (National Trust), Peter Seal (Butterfly Conservation)

**2.** **Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting**

These were approved.

**3. Matters arising from item 2**

None

**4. Chair’s Report**

*Despite a global pandemic and withdrawal of any funding from Natural England Bringsty Common has in the last year remained a place where residents and visitors alike have been able to safely enjoy physical and mental well-being in a peaceful, beautiful and biodiverse landscape. It has been a privilege to have chaired the BCMC at this difficult time and contribute with others to enhancing the sense of community. I am grateful to Allan Corder who previously chaired the BCMC and his support throughout the year.*

*In February of this year the BCMC started to formulate priorities for the next five years, which were circulated in the Commoner for all residents to comment upon and were later fully endorsed. These have steered activities in the year, namely:*

***Community****- The shock of the pandemic and the immediate problems experienced by residents in lockdown quickly brought the community even closer together. A Community hub was formed immediately offering help with obtaining supplies and emotional and practical support to residents and a means for residents to help others. Covid-19 remains with us and looks likely to be around for a while and this offer of help remains. With limited opportunities for face to face communication the BCMC have established a Bringsty Common Manorial Court Facebook site (32 members) which has details of all BCMC activities and a platform for sharing information and events. Morgan Motors (via Graham Chapman) have kindly funded the publishing of “The Commoner” which Tom Fisher continues to edit, with contributions from a variety of residents. Email communications are sent to residents who provide their contact details for this to the Chair and the two notice boards are being updated frequently with BCMC and other news.*

***Bio-Diversity and Carbon Reduction-*** *In February a**Conservation group was established to liaise with conservation experts and promote bio-diversity and carbon-reduction activities. The group has piloted planting wild flowers, and successfully helped obtain sponsorship for £3k towards conservation activities from Butterfly Conservation and Morgan Motors. The abundance of butterflies seen this year may well be related to this, but the full impact is likely to be seen next year. Moss and Fungi experts have also visited the common during the year and provided guided walks. For the future we are looking for residents and others who are willing to help with specific conservation activities on the common. Contact the chair if you are interested.*

***Health and Safety-*** *In addition to Covid-19, health and safety activities have focused on speed control on the A44 further to serious accidents, and dog control with the aim of serious attacks no longer occurring and dog fouling coming under control. Living on a common, the risk of fire is also a concern and further to initial advice from the fire brigade a full fire risk assessment is being sought.*

***Heritage-*** *The Common has a wealth of history, including listed buildings, the Gospel Oak and the Drovers pond****.*** *Heritage stories and photos are being shared on the Facebook site and residents are encouraged to add to these or the Commoner.*

***Mental Health and Well-Being-****. BCMC was quick to both protect residents at the beginning of the pandemic and to open the Common once it was safe. We have worked successfully with Bringsty football team to establish their return to the Common and wish them every success. The team has put in an enormous amount of work on the pitch, and are grateful to residents and visitors, who have ensured they can use it safely. A bit more work is needed to reach the FA pitch standards (including reducing dog fouling), but the team hope to be using it regularly before the winter and even bring the Cricket Pavilion back to life.*

***Funding.*** *The withdrawal of Natural England funding to the BCMC means that we only have enough funds to continue maintaining the tracks and the grasslands as we do for the next five years unless we receive addition income. Exploration of options for funding will therefore be a priority for the forthcoming year.*

*Going forward the following* ***mission statement*** *was agreed for the next 5 years*

*“Bringsty Common will remain a place where residents and visitors alike can safely enjoy the physical and mental well-being from visiting or living in a peaceful and beautiful landscape.  We will enhance the sense of community, honour our heritage, increase the bio-diversity of the Common and contribute to CO2 reduction.”*

**5. Matters arising from item 4**

None. The report was approved.

**6. Treasurer’s Report**

The accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting.

*At the end of the 2018-2019 financial year we had £15150.29 in our current account, £11051.58 in our Secure Trust 180 day Notice Account and £0.17 in our Flex Saver Account.*

*Interest on the Secure Trust savings account was £135.98*

*We received funding from both Brockhampton and Whitbourne parish councils to help pay for the football pitch mowing for which we are, once again, extremely grateful.*

*The spreadsheet shows an expenditure over income of £8698.72 due to there being no other income but, for the moment, continued expenditure.*

*Our "audit" for 2018-2019 was completed and approved by Mr David Hunter-Miller Bsc(Hons), PSLCC, MCIHT, Clerk to Brockhampton Group Parish Council who has agreed to continue to carry out our audits should we so wish.*

*As of October this year (financial year 19-20) we have already overspent by £7451.46 only three months into the year. Obviously this is not sustainable and the committee have some difficult decisions to make over the coming year.*

**7. Matters arising from Item 6**

Nigel Shaw thanked Peter Bridge for taking over from him the role of treasurer, which he had been doing on an interim basis.

It was pointed out that we receive no funding from HCC. Cllr Shaw replied that in the current financial circumstances the council is already overspent and would therefore not have any funds to spare. It might be possible to get some funds from easements, as had been the case in the past.

The report was approved.

**8. Election of the committee for 2020/21**

Allan Corder, Sarah Graham and Sue Long tendered their resignation from the committee. Catherine thanked them for their participation.

Nominations were received from:

Tim Phillips, Tom Fisher, Mike Davis, Graham Chapman, Kirsty Udall, Peter Bridge, Catherine Fuller, Derek Brookes and Martin Roche. All were proposed and seconded.

There were no further nominations and no objections to the nominees so the above have been elected for the current year.

Jenny Creek was co-opted again.

**9. Appointment of Auditor**

As mentioned in the Treasurer’s report, Mr David Hunter-Miller Bsc(Hons), PSLCC, MCIHT, Clerk to Brockhampton Group Parish Council, has agreed to continue auditing our accounts and this was unanimously accepted.

**10. AOB**

**a) Gigaclear outage**

The outage lasted 22 hours. Cllr. Shaw said he was waiting to hear the cause of the problem. There are still some properties on the common which have not yet been connected. We have been assured that this will happen shortly. There has been some damage to equipment.

**b) Bus shelter**

This is due to be erected in November

Sally Knowles congratulated Catherine for her efforts as Chair during a difficult year. This was endorsed by all present.

Catherine mentioned the work being carried out by the conservation group and invited anyone interested in joining working party events to contact her.

The next ordinary meeting will be held on Wednesday 11th November 2020 at 7.30 p.m.by Zoom.