

# Hawridge & Cholesbury Commons Preservation Society

## Newsletter, 2002 February/March

### NEW COMMITTEE

At the AGM the members reelected our officers: myself as chair & Fletcher Nicholson as vice-chair (a swap, as Fletcher had served his maximum of 3 consecutive years as chair), Mike Fletcher as treasurer & Jenny Parsons as secretary; & those of the committee still standing: Amanda Houlihan, Chris Bristow, Guy Attenborough, Isobel Clark; & added as new committee members Lindsay Griffin & Mike Wallis. This left one vacancy. We have since had a volunteer to fill the vacancy, Sue Sapey, a welcome addition.

### WORKING PARTIES

These have been well supported since then, with lines of sight cleared (e.g. down from the cricket ground to the northeast), and elderly blackthorn & gorse cut back to allow regeneration. For this, the blackthorn (e.g. bottom ride southeast from Horseblock) has been cut to ground level, and the gorse cut back to about 20 cm south of Horseblock (where we were aided by the Hemel Hempstead Conservation Volunteers). We have also raked & burnt a considerable quantity of bracken, particularly from the gorse patches. Now we let the birds nest in peace. If you have not joined in any of the working parties, and would like to when they resume, please contact Fletcher Nicholson (758 366), or any committee member, to be added to the list. It is fun!

### DOG FOULING

Chiltern District Council are considering new designations of land relating to dog fouling byelaws. The parish council asked us to comment. We did not ask for the commons to be included but would support the cricket club if they asked for their ground to be included. We opposed disposal bins strongly.

However, we do ask all users of the commons to take care that their dogs do not foul paths nor the edges of paths, nor the open spaces of clear grass - that is, do not let dogs foul where small children may play or crawl!

### PERMISSIVE RIDES

We have reopened the unofficial permissive ride down from west of Common Ley to the bottom of Rays Hill, and hope riders will use it regularly to avoid the dangers when horses & cars meet on Rays Hill. The annual closure was on March 4th, when no horses should be on the commons, a once a year necessity to maintain their status as permissive rides.

### THE BENCH

This work of modern art near the cricket club & post box is solidly planted & frequently used, though there are those who are not altogether flattering about it. We received it as a gift, and on the whole much prefer it to the old bus shelter it replaced.

### CHAINSAW COURSE

We are going to arrange one or more chainsaw/brushcutter courses for our own (paid-up) members later this year. They will also be open to other commons enthusiasts via the Chilterns Commons Network. They will take 2-3 days, depending on the response we receive. The courses are of course open to both sexes. Please contact Mike Wallis (758 172) or myself (758 365). They will be run by a Lantra specialist & lead to a qualification recognised by the HSE.

### FOOTPATH SIGNS

Two new public footpath signs have appeared at the bottoms of Horseblock & of Stoney Lane. The highway authority is required to put signs where footpaths leave tarmac roads, but we hope to agree with the Rights of Way officer concerned a type more in keeping with the commons.

### SUMMER PARTY

We are again grateful to Aubrey & Chris Bristow for inviting us to hold our summer party at Hawridge Court. Note the date: Saturday June 15th

NEW WEBSITE : [cholesbury.com/hccps](http://cholesbury.com/hccps)

There is now a village website which has some pages devoted to the Commons Preservation Society. These are being developed over the coming months to include information about the Society, the Commons and the activities of the Society. This is the place to look to find out:

- when the working parties are on, where they are meeting and what work is planned. Any last minute changes will be displayed here. The "what's on" page includes the dates & times;
- when the Summer Party is to be held and where to get tickets from;
- when to pay your membership subs and how;
- what offers of help are needed, e.g. tractor mowing, strimming, food preparation, seating preparations, etc.

You can also send comments and questions to the Committee via the website. The address to send emails to is [hccps@cholesbury.com](mailto:hccps@cholesbury.com) .

Please use this site, and send any ideas you have for other things you would like to see on it to the above address.

#### RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Thanks to everyone who filled in and returned the questionnaire last year. We received 35 responses out of the 175 delivered to members and other village residents. This is a good response rate of 1 in 5. (Many questionnaires have a response rate of 1 in 10.)

The aim which was considered to be MOST IMPORTANT was

"Protection of the Commons, keeping the paths and rides clear, and preventing the further growth of scrub".

Coming in at almost joint second were

"Preservation of the Commons as a natural sanctuary for small wild animals and birds" and "Clearance of existing rubbish and prevention of further accumulation".

The other aims were somewhat less important and resulted in the following order:

- To give the Society's views on any development which might detract from the natural beauty of the area.
- To enforce the law under the Road Traffic Act, 1960, that no vehicle is to park more than fifteen yards from the road.
- To keep a watching brief on matters arising from the Commons Registration Act, 1965.
- To arrange and organise an annual Social Occasion to enable members to get to know one another.
- To nominate a member for election to Parish and District Councils.

It is good to see such a good response from the society. These results confirm that the natural character of the Commons and access to them are particularly important to us.

If you would like to see a more detailed analysis of the results, or you have any comments, please contact Isobel Clark, at East Wing, Shire Lane (Tel: 758987, email: [isobel.clark@cholesbury.com](mailto:isobel.clark@cholesbury.com) ).

#### HERITAGE STUDY

This document, now nearing completion, describes the history & status of the commons, their value for nature conservation & as an amenity, how they are used & enjoyed, & the history of the society & the work it does. Phase 2 will be a more general look at the history of the villages, houses & people.

#### MEMBERSHIP

Subscriptions are due for 2002 (if you did not pay at the AGM nor since), at the rate of £5 per person. Mike Fletcher would be happy to receive them, at Ivy Cottage Cholesbury (opposite the Wigginton road) HP23 6ND. Cheques should be payable to HCCPS. Note that donations in addition to the £5 are also welcomed.

David Barnard, chairman (758 365 or [david.barnard5@which.net](mailto:david.barnard5@which.net))