

Minutes of members' meeting 7/2/26

Present: Ben Spencer, Mark Harrison, Paul Sheridan, Tom Sykes (+ Larena + Arty), Nigel Westaway, Chiz Harward, Nick Mills, Oli Rodker, Jason Dilworth, Dominique Shead

Apologies: John McLellan, Carol Mathews, Nick Weir, Andy Freedman, Ruth Illingworth, Richard and Helen Keating, Julia Wade, Adam Biscoe, Martin Benson

Update on Slade Wood

After a long period of inaction from their solicitors, the vendors have recently informed us that they are changing solicitors to a firm in Cheltenham that specialise in land issues. Our offer of £1,800 towards the vendors' legal fees still stands.

Some trees identified in the safety audit have been taken down, with permission from the owners. There are other trees that will require more technical work to fell or prune, and Jason and Chiz will be quoting on this work.

Once the sale has gone through, we want to be ready with a plan to mark the occasion: there will be admin issues to deal with, but we could also celebrate with a get-together. It was agreed that investors in Slade Wood would be emailed with an update on the purchase, and invited to participate in a working group consisting of current and new members to plan the initial celebration(s) and also other activities to happen in the first six months or so, which might include litter picking, biodiversity surveys, etc.

Communications

Dom said that Googlegroups, who we have used for many years to communicate with members, is not allowing new members into the group unless they have a gmail address. Dom said she would prefer to move towards an email service like Mailchimp or Brevo, where you can email subscribers, add photos, and provide a return email address for any correspondence. If you have under 500 or 1,000 subscribers (depending on the service), it's free. It was agreed we should pursue this in due course, certainly once the Stroudwoods members of both woods are combined into one mailing list.

Refreshing the management plan / applying for grants

Oli is keen to look into grants so that he can do some paid work in the wood. He has contacted Farming in Protected Landscapes to see if they offer grants for tasks such as coppicing, and is going to find out more details; applications are in April.

It was agreed that the management plan (last done in 2011) needs refreshing. Chiz said that through the Forestry Commission you can get a £1,500 grant to create a woodland management plan. You need not be specific in the plan, and there is no follow-up, but it would unlock other grants if we needed them, e.g. fencing or infrastructure. It would be a way of putting on paper our future vision. Mark agreed to be the admin person. Nigel will check if there is a Single Business Identifier (SBI) for Slade Wood.

AGM

This will be held in April, date to be confirmed.

AOB

1. Mark proposed a revamp of the compost loo. He will investigate with Paul. The meeting agreed he could spend up to £100 on galvanised bins if necessary.
2. Jason asked where the top sign had gone, and Dom replied that it was with Richard Keating for repairs. She will email him.