



Suffolk Flora Preservation Trust

Trustees: Earl of Cranbrook, Mrs Sybella Zisman,
Charity reg. no. 802804
VAT reg. no. 902 0121 01

ANNUAL MEETING OF TRUSTEES AND GUARDIANS at THE VILLAGE HALL, KELSEA === SATURDAY 20TH JANUARY 2018

Trustees' meeting

Amanda Daniel and Martin Farley both resigned before the meeting.
Hon. Treasurer Sybella Zisman was detained in New York.
As the sole trustee present, Gathorne Cranbrook declared that the meeting was postponed to a later date, to be decided.

11.00 Guardians' meeting

Present: Gathorne Cranbrook (Chair), John Rainer (Hon. Landscape Officer), Rose Battye & Janey Cullen (Hon. Editors), Judy Rainer (Membership Secretary), Janet Barnes, Keith Dickerson, Kaaren Whitney, Serena Inskip, Sally Hartley, Edwina Galloway, Pete Southgate

Apologies: Sybella Zisman, Sally Sampson, Julia McLean, Paul Parry

Chairman's welcome: Gathorne Cranbrook welcomed all Guardians attending. All expressed their condolences to Julia McLean on the death of her father. Guardians were informed that Amanda Daniel and Martin Farley had resigned as trustees.

Minutes: The Minutes of the previous AGM were circulated and approved.

Appointment of Officers: In the absence of any other proposals, the following were re-elected by acclamation:

1. Chairman : Gathorne Cranbrook
2. Hon. Secretary: Paul Parry
3. Hon. Treasurer: Sybella Zisman
4. Hon. Publicity Officer: Julia McLean
5. Hon. Membership Secretary: Judy Rainer
6. Hon. Editors: Rose Battye & Janey Cullen
7. Hon. Recording Coordinators: Rose Battye & Janey Cullen

Open days 2018: NB The following dates have been proposed for 10.00 - 13.00h on each day:

FROMUS: 15 April (spring flowers); 16 June (S. Marsh orchids and, if we can get him, Adrian Chalkley again for freshwater); 29 September (blackberries).

ORCHID GLADE. 17 June (Orchids and other early flowers); 12 August (later flowers, butterflies)

PLEASE PUT THESE DATES IN YOUR DIARIES, AND ENCOURAGE FRIENDS TO ENJOY THE GREAT EXPERIENCE OF A VISIT TO SUFFOLK FLORA TRUST'S UNIQUELY MARVELLOUS LITTLE RESERVES

Financial report and budget 2018: Hon. Treasurer was detained in New York. Her report will be circulated in due course.

Publicity report: Hon. Publicity Office was not present. Chairman noted that the website urgently needed revision and updating. For some months it had not been possible to upload Laurie Forsyth's reports. **All present agreed** to look for someone willing to take on the website management.

Archaeology report: John Rainer drew attention to Chapter 2 in the 2017 annual adult educational book. This is based on the technical report of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History (SIAH) which, for technical reasons, has not yet been published. He also mentioned that he will be talking at the April meeting of the SIAH Field Group, which will be held at Sutton Hoo. Please see the SIAH website for details.

John was thanked for his remarkable work on the landscape history of Simpson's Fromus Reserve

Membership Secretary report: Judy Rainer reported that SFPT currently has 64 registered and paid up Guardians. The suggested annual subscription is still £25.00. She encouraged as many people as possible to pay by Standing Order as this is the most efficient way of dealing with subscriptions. The form attached has been created to facilitate this.

Judy was thanked for her good work on behalf of Guardians.

Editors report: Janey Cullen reported

"*Barons to Botanists*" is the fourth annual educational volume published by the Guardians of Suffolk Flora Preservation Trust. Contributors were invited to show how past ownership is reflected in the present condition of the two reserves managed by Guardians of the Trust; to illustrate different ways that these assets are valued; to describe present management and to discuss future options to meet the objectives of the charity.

We were delighted with the response to the invitations. Simpson's Fromus Reserve has surprised us all with more revelations about its past. The fascinating and lively descriptions in Chapters 1 and 2, describing its Mediaeval history and archaeological discoveries, are exciting to read and give another dimension to the pleasure of visiting this beautiful site. Chapters 3 and 4 give glimpses of the precious experience this place gives to visitors. Chapters 5 and 6 describe the enormous challenges to be faced and the complicated work that goes on behind the scenes to manage and protect our reserves, and others like them. This volume is a very interesting read and we hope it will be much enjoyed.

Rose and Janey were congratulated for their editing of another excellent annual book.

The Chairman mentioned that the subject of the 2018 book will be the aquatic environment as represented on the Trust's reserves. Some good submissions were already in preparation.

Reserves management report: Gathorne reported as follows

Fromus : The year has been dominated by the decision in 2016 to change to the Stewardship option of management of the reserve by grazing. We are grateful to neighbouring cattle farmer Philip Baskett for agreeing to manage the cattle on a daily basis. Six head of the British White herd at Sinfield Trust's White House Farm, selected by John Daniel as Suffolk Flora's share, were brought to Fromus by Philip. Two of the six had previously bred; one 5-years old and three 4-years old (in 2016) were still technically heifers. Suffolk Flora's quad bike was also retrieved from Sinfield, brought to Philip's farm for his use and, after long bureaucratic delays, registered for road use. Our small herd was registered with a veterinary practice at Bungay. At the start of 2017, all were treated with hormones and, in due time, artificially inseminated with pedigree British White bull semen. Disappointingly, not one became pregnant. In the late summer, we managed to borrow a pure bred young bull, with no previous experience. Further disappointment when, in late autumn, a veterinary inspection found that, once again, not one was in calf. The bull's owner has agreed to a free loan of another, proven bull. The exchange will take place in February. The cows will be tested for pregnancy in May. Eleven big bales of haylage were taken on Meremeade, and remain there for winter feed, as or when necessary. Meanwhile the cattle look well, and the pasture has been grazed to the 5 cm level required by Stewardship, and looks good apart from excessive Creeping Thistle. Philip has volunteered to get sleepers to make walkways at the side of all muddy gateways, for the benefit of visiting Guardians. The extent of general trampling will be assessed in the spring, and Philip will use disc rolls to level the surface where necessary.

The 10-year Stewardship Agreement at Fromus will terminate at the end of January (2018) and re-entry will not be possible until 1st January 2019. Two Natural England officers visited the reserve in December, and were pleased by the condition of the reserve. They suggested an appropriate Higher level category to re-enter. Information on the new Stewardship options was released on the RPA website on 15th January, and Gathorne will take steps to complete an application on behalf of the Trust. Meanwhile, he alerted Guardians to the gap in finance by the loss of 11 months Stewardship payment in 2018, and **urged Guardians to encourage like-minded friends and acquaintances to join the Trust**, enjoy the reserves and, by their contributions help to finance the cost of environmental management.

READERS PLEASE NOTE

Gathorne also asked for volunteers to join a panel to discuss reserves management. Keith Dickerson volunteered. It was agreed provisionally to hold a first meeting in the spring.

Orchid Glade. Gathorne reminded Guardians that the conservation management at Orchid Glade is supported by a Stewardship agreement (running until 2022) covering the whole of White House Farm and held by Sinfield Trust. Under Sinfield's management, Orchid Glade was registered for part (2.5 ha of 4 ha) 'restoration' to flower rich meadow by grazing with rare breed cattle. Unfortunately, the existing woodland was planted by the previous owner onto ploughed land, and was not meadow, so the seed bank in the soil is dominated by traditional Suffolk clayland arable weeds. This reserve provides a rich floral resource, but it will not convert to meadowland. Moreover trials with the British White cattle showed that they do not control the shrubby growth of alder coppice. In fact, as Gathorne's trail-camera images showed, wildlife, notably fallow deer, are actively grazing the ground flora.

In past years, Sinfield has passed to Suffolk Flora the Stewardship payment, less a charge for looking after the cattle herd (usually a larger figure, so that Suffolk Flora ended up with a bill). This year, Amanda has told us that Sinfield is in dispute with Natural England over alleged infringements elsewhere on White House Farm and payment is affected. Sinfield is appealing and she is confident the issue will be solved. However, matters such as this are not in Suffolk Flora's control. We have reduced management to an annual mowing of the vigorous alder regeneration but, again, Guardians are reminded that cost control is important for successful conservation management.

None the less, collectively, we can all be pleased at the increasing floral richness of Orchid Glade, and the attendant wildlife (mammals and insects especially) that this attracts.

PLEASE COME ALONG ON OPEN DAYS AND BRING FRIENDS

Recording coordinators report: On behalf of herself and Janey Cullen, Rose Battye read the Botanical

Report for 2017:

Laurie Forsyth continued with his monthly visits to both reserves. As we have no website manager at the moment, his reports are sent to Guardians by email. This is a summary from his reports of new plants he has discovered and some interesting observations.

Orchid Glade. In May, within a few feet of each other, two plants new to the reserve records - rat's tail plantain and enchanter's nightshade. Laurie also saw tway blade orchids in places he had not seen before. There are adder's tongue ferns which do not look like fern but are a species indicator of old grassland. Although it has been recorded here before in one's and two's Laurie suspects we may see more. He recorded bugle, flowering near the pond and bird's eye speedwell both blue and beautiful. These are two more new records for the reserve. In June he saw an early purple orchid and, not new to the reserve but a reappearance of a single plant seen before, a common spotted orchid. On the 6th July Laurie reported that marsh woundwort had increased from a single colony to at least five. He also saw two new plant species; broad-leaved pondweed and field bindweed. In September Laurie reported seeing in mud beside the pond, several plants of gypsywort, which is like a white-flowered mint with serrated, nettle-like leaves. Near the gypsywort Laurie found Canadian fleabane, both are new records for Orchid Glade.

Fromus Meadows. Although there were no new plants reported, in May Laurie counted 30 southern marsh orchids and 3 common spotted orchids. Later in June we counted 28 southern marsh orchids. A positive increase since 2013 when 18 were counted.

Laurie Forsyth was congratulated, in his absence, for continuing his monthly reports on the reserves, and for his additions to the botanical records. Rose and Janey were thanked for maintaining the recorder service for the Trust,

12.40 LUNCH Many thanks to all who bought delicious food to share

13.40 Display of Sally Hartley's oil painting: *"Endeavour and Crocus: daughter and dam"*. Sally has kindly offered to sell this attractive oil painting for the benefit of the Trust. Various alternatives were discussed, and it was agreed that putting it on E-bay was the best approach. As a registered seller on E-bay, Keith Dickerson kindly agreed to help. Sally undertook to send a photo of the painting and draft information about the painting to Keith who would then carry the issue forward.

14:00 Results of Poetry Competition and award of cash prizes (Senior & Junior)

Kaaren Whitney presided, and has reported:

: "The Poetry Reading after the AGM and shared lunch was the culmination of much work during the previous eleven months beginning in February 2017. Flyers were created and distributed to poets in the area and information was placed on the website. Although there were not hundreds of entries it was still very difficult for Florence Cox and I as adjudicators to come up with the four finalists. Fortunately we were in agreement about the first prize winner, Tim Gardner, who received £50.

Caroline Gill read her poem and was applauded. Due to ill health and previous commitments of other finalists Ann Follows and Sue Benbow, their poems were read in absentia. Sue Wallace-Shaddad and Susan Mobbs also shared their poems. Several of the entrants have become Guardians as a result of the Poetry Competition.

There were only four junior entrants and finding a winner was difficult but accuracy and grammar saved the day. The first prize was £50 from the trust and the Saxmundham Free School gave additional prizes of £25 to each of the runners-up. Everyone enjoyed the afternoon of creativity."

Many thanks to Kaaren for the key role she played in organising the Poetry Competition and sharing the judging of the poems

Launch of the 2017 (4th) Adult Education volume: *"Barons to Botanists: Landholders and land-use on two Suffolk nature reserves"*. All Guardians present collected their free volume, and some bought extra at a concessionary price. Other sales were made. Editors Rose Batty and Janey Cullen kindly agreed to pack and post other copies to Guardians on the current paid-up list.

The Editors were congratulated on the excellence of this 4th volume in the series.

The 2018 book will focus on the aquatic environment of the Trust's reserves, and will also contain the four adult poems, and one junior poem, selected for publication.

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm