

# Surrey Tree Warden Network

## MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016 at Crowhurst Village Hall, Crowhurst Lane, near  
Lingfield, Surrey**

### WELCOME

**Jon Stokes** welcomed everyone to the meeting, which included the launch of the recently published 'Remarkable Trees of Surrey' booklet, available for sale at the AGM. The booklet celebrates the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Surrey Tree Warden Network and provides information on the 25 most remarkable trees in the county, nominated by tree wardens at last year's AGM.

**Cllr Michael Sydney from Surrey County Council**, Member for Lingfield and Ted Green of the Ancient Tree Forum officially launched the booklet. Cllr Sydney had been approached by the local tree warden Anne Richards, who had enquired about county funding for this initiative. The Surrey Tree Warden Network are very grateful for his support.

**The first speaker of the morning was Ted Green**, one of the founders of the Ancient Tree Forum. He gave a well-illustrated talk on the importance of Ancient Trees from an archaeological perspective. Many ancient trees, especially Oaks were at one time working trees and provided wood fuel, timber for buildings and ships, food for livestock, as well as a source of charcoal and tannin. Such trees were often planted on open pastures, where they were able to grow to a larger size in the absence of competition from nearby trees.

Other fascinating items in his talk included the Hornbeam pollards in Essex (wood used by bakeries in London), Sallow pollards (used for wattle and providing an extract for making aspirins), extraction of turpentine from Pine trees, use of brushwood/tree twigs for feeding farm animals, and ancient boundary trees. Ted emphasised that trees can provide a renewable harvest of wood and other products, and as working trees they do not require felling.

Another excellent talk before lunch was given by **Rosemary Hopewell**, an ethnobotanist and a retired doctor. Her talk was entitled 'Toxic Trees' and she also included shrubs and as well. All plants have some poison, which act as a defence mechanism. The talk began by defining what a poison is, and the effects it has on the human body as well as animals. She outlined families of plants which are noted for various toxins, especially cyanides.

As well as poisoning caused by ingestion of certain parts of plants, handling of certain plants can cause skin irritation. Far worse is being pricked or scratched by Blackthorn, which has poisonous spines, and can lead to a fatality without immediate medical treatment.

Rosemary's talk provided much food (or should it be poison ?) for thought, and it is hoped that the contents might be made available on the web for the benefit of tree wardens.

Both the morning speakers were thanked in the usual way.

## **Annual General Meeting**

### **Attendance**

See list.

### **Election of Chairperson**

Don Henderson , Acting Treasurer was appointed to Chair the meeting.

### **Apologies for Absence**

As per list

### **Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting held on 6th June 2015**

The minutes had been circulated and were unanimously approved, with no matters arising.

### **Annual/Secretary's Report (posted on the web – link below)**

<http://surreytewardens.org.uk/Secretary-report-2016.pdf>

**The Secretary's Report was unanimously approved**

### **Financial Report**

Don Henderson reviewed the accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2015. The accounts were available for viewing on the STWN web-site – link below.

[http://surreytewardens.org.uk/2015\\_Accounts\\_for\\_2016\\_AGM.pdf](http://surreytewardens.org.uk/2015_Accounts_for_2016_AGM.pdf)

**RESOLVED THAT The Acting Treasurer's Report & Accounts for the 2015 financial year be approved.**

### **Election of Honorary Officers**

There had been no nominations received, and Don Henderson currently continues as Acting Treasurer, and Chris Pead was re-appointed as Secretary. The posts of Chairperson and Treasurer still remain vacant.

### **Election of Executive Committee Members**

The following were re-appointed – Peter Fischer (Merton Representative), Michael Lidstone, David Woods, David F. Pope, Anne Richards, Liz Ramsay, Sue Henderson and Sally Pemberton.

**RESOLVED THAT** the reappointment Chris Pead (Secretary), Don Henderson (Acting Treasurer) and the reappointment of the above committee members were elected with no objections.

Following the end of the Annual Meeting, a fundraising raffle was held.

After lunch Jo Stokes gave a short talk on ‘Planning your Treescape’ which included an update on the Ash dieback epidemic. It is anticipated that nearly all Ash trees will die within the next decade or so, and therefore the future landscape needs to be planned now, especially as Ash is our most common hedgerow tree. Where woodland Ash dies, it will be re-colonise by other nearby species, so no felling is necessary. However Ash next to highways need to be monitored and felled as necessary, before dead branches drop from the canopy.

Tree wardens play an important role in monitoring the spread of this disease, to identify ‘disease resistant’ trees and to plant tree replacements of other species.

After lunch and with rain threatening, a visit was made by cars to a nearby plantation to see the effects of Ash dieback first hand, which was explained by Jon. It was then another short hop to the final stop, the famous Crowhurst Yew, details of which appear in the ‘Remarkable Trees of Surrey’ booklet. With a raging thunderstorm nearby, everyone risked being struck by lightning, as Jon gave a history of the tree, and the problems involved in dating Yew trees. At about 4.00 pm people departed homeward, after yet another enjoyable AGM.