

STWN Minutes
Friday 7th February 2025 2.30pm
Ewhurst

Present:

Trefor Hogg, Anne Richards, Sue Henderson, Liz Ramsay, Patricia Brookwick, Sally Pemberton, Elaine Griffith

Apologies:

Sam Village

Approval of Minutes of the last meeting:

Approved by Liz Ramsay and Sue Henderson

Spelthorne Member, Ellis Lewis, was welcomed as an observer to the meeting.

Chairman's Report

Note: Trefor missed the first 40 minutes of the meeting due to a council meeting that he was required to attend.

1. I am in discussion about SCC paying our insurance again this year and I'm hopeful.
2. Carolyn Mackenzie – Executive Director for the Environment has also been very positive about hosting a Tree Council SE Regional Meeting at Reigate. It would be a lovely setting to do so.
3. I expressed some concerns earlier about changes to UK Planning Law. It is now clear that Labour plan to strip environmental regulators/ local planners of their power to delay major house building and infrastructure projects under new laws aimed at boosting housebuilding. Developers may no longer need to mitigate environmental impacts before construction or demonstrate Net Biodiversity Gain, instead paying into a new Nature Restoration Fund. This rule change will be included in the [Planning and Infrastructure Bill](#). Despite being presented by Labour as beneficial for both the environment and economy, these changes could seriously negatively impact Surrey's biodiversity. Local efforts to protect the environment might be replaced by large-scale plantation projects for instance that don't preserve local features and biodiversity.
4. Local Government is being reorganised with County Councils and Borough/ District Councils being replaced by new Unitary Councils and Mayoral Authorities. Surrey is likely to end up as two or three Unitary Councils with a Mayor for Surrey responsible for strategic matters, the local economy, Police and Fire/Rescue services. That may include environmental strategy The Unitary councils will be responsible for operational matters. Exactly what the timetable and dividing lines will be is unknown.
5. Locally Surrey Heath Tree Wardens schedule is very busy.... a particularly nice place to work has been the [Frimhurst Family House Charity](#). At the same time, we are concerned about the prevalence we are seeing of Acute Oak Decline....
6. Surrey and Borders Partners (SABP) NHS Foundation Trust - Looking for help with trees/shrubs for their mental health hospital facilities. Trefor to discuss Sam to see if there is an opportunity for joint engagement with TTC.

TH/SV

Secretary's Report

- SCC have continued with the task of planting of 1.2 million trees throughout Surrey by 2030. We have seen hundreds of new highway trees being planted throughout the county this season.
- With the help of Rod Thorn, the email issue has been resolved with Members now split into three mailing groups.
- The Induction training (PB) and Tree Threats training (TH) were completed in December and January. LR will present Tree Biology later at 7.30pm on 21st February. PB to send reminder to Members. **PB**
- Our STWN database requires some housekeeping. It was decided that SH will start the ball rolling with an update of the Membership Spreadsheet. PB will draft an email to Members asking if they are still active Members. The email will be issued twice and then followed through with a text or call if a reply has not been received. A Data Protection Policy for the Charity will be confirmed by TH before the email is issued. **SH/PB/TH**

Treasurer's Report

- Please see attachment.
- Income: £34.96 - Expenditure: £15.00 - Cash in bank as at 7th February 2025 (less liabilities) £2,786.56
- EG confirmed that she had issued a letter requesting support for the Charity to all 81 SCC Councillors. She received 10 replies with two happy to discuss further (Jonathan Essex Redhill East and Bernie Muir Epsom West). EG to make contact when the next round of funding opens in April 2025. **EG**
- EG is currently working on the EOY accounts submission for the Charity. **EG**
- The Committee agreed unanimously the payment of the Zurich Insurance premium invoice of £405.49. With thanks to Trefor for negotiating with Zurich to ensure it reduced (by £60) and didn't increase.

Membership Secretary's Report

- SH reported that 7 new members have registered with the Network since December.

Communications

- Website
Rod Thorn has worked on tidying the Website as agreed at the last meeting.
- **Facebook:** We must all try harder to produce some sort of content for the FB page. Sally and/or Ellis to upload details of the Willow days there. **SP/EL**

Newsletter

- Liz is working on the Next newsletter to include Members local stories and photos. This should be available in draft form in a week. **LR**
- SV had previously mentioned that she would like to include some of the stories within TTC **SV**

Events

- **Training**

- Biology Friday 21st February
- We aim to include the next module at the 2025 AGM

LR /PB

- **Future Events**

- Spring 2025 - Kew Visit May 2025. EL to investigate opportunity with Jane Lewis (Spelthorne TW). Meet at the main gate. Members cover entry. Public Transport recommended. Guided tree walk.
- Autumn 2025 Wisley walk – LR to discuss opportunities with Jonathan at Wisley.
- Summer/Autumn AGM – combine with a ‘photographing trees’ workshop – maybe Jon would like to be involved with this – we could organise photos for a STWN calendar or gift cards?
- It was thought that either Runnymede or Newlands would make good locations for the AGM, to include a tree walk. TH to see if Runnymede SCC Councillor Merissa Heath can assist or Carolyn MacKenzie with Newlands.
- Another idea is to include a session from Forrest Schools.
- SP will speak to DP to see if he thinks Ted Green would like to be involved.

EL

LR

PB

TH

SP

AOB

- We would welcome advice from TTC concerning the new Planning Framework Policy and how it will affect trees and wildlife.
- A Member has an unwanted Silver Birch on her allotment that she would like to donate but it was thought to be too mature to move safely.
- Minutes will now be uploaded to the STWN Website every quarter.
- EG thought a Google STWN events calendar would be a good idea for the group. Members to consider.
- Spelthorne group recently completed the planting of 70 fruit trees with 40 more scheduled to be planted.

PB/SV

PB

RT/PB

ALL

The meeting closed at 4.45pm.

Date of next meeting:

Friday 4th April 7.30pm via Zoom