



Wolvercote Commoners'

NEWSLETTER May 2019

Horse Death On the Commons

It is very sad to report another horse death on the Commons. Several years ago a horse bled to death from a cut caused by a broken bottle left on the meadow. Now we have to report a further death, this time after being attacked by a dog. The horse had extensive treatment by a vet but unfortunately died from shock and secondary infection. Although there were no witnesses to the attack, the vet confirmed that the injury was clearly caused by a bite from a large dog. Over the last few months there has been lots of comment on social media about the need to keep dogs under control whilst on the meadow, and this incident emphasises that need. Julian Cooper, Oxford City Council Port Meadow Ranger, said: "This recent attack highlights the need to keep dogs on a lead whilst on the Commons. It should be remembered it is not a park, it is a haven, not only for grazing horses but also other livestock and wildlife. I want to express my sympathy to the owner of this horse and stress to dog owners the importance of controlling their animals to prevent further tragedies. Under the law, owners **must** keep dogs under control at all times and the City Council has put up signs to remind them of this responsibility. City Council enforcement officers carry out regular patrols and can issue £80 fines to anyone who fails to comply". Mr Cooper added: "Whilst we welcome responsible dog walkers on all of our sites they **must** adhere to any restrictions and signage. We know the majority of owners are responsible and keep their animals under control. Unfortunately some dog owners continue to ignore this rule. We need to emphasise to anyone who is tempted to let their animals run free that this is not the place to do it. The consequences for the animals that live in the Meadow can be horrendous. Oxford City Council recently took one irresponsible owner to court and as well as an increased fine, the magistrate ordered them to pay court costs totalling £1,700".



2019 Commoners' AGM Report

We were greatly saddened by Angie Goff's death last October, as she had been involved with the Commoners for many years. We will miss her invaluable knowledge and experience. A lot has happened during the year, sadly marred by a horse injury on the Commons (see main article). We met with the cattle graziers about maintaining the level of livestock grazing on the Commons. The amount of grazing is integral to the welfare of the Commons and last year we struggled to maintain it. It was only achieved by utilising extra Commoners' rights. The short-fall was due to poor grazing because of the weather, and cattle becoming diseased due to ingesting dog faeces. Following advice from the Fire Brigade and City Council, it was necessary for Committee members to dismantle the annual bonfire held at the Plough as it contained unsuitable materials such as painted/varnished wood and plastic or polystyrene. It was re-built and a successful bonfire party followed! All future bonfires must only be built with safe materials. Together with the Tree Group, we were invited to help with the planning of planting on Nixey's Field when it becomes a green area attached to the Mill Site Development. A representative of the Committee is involved in a Traffic Calming Group for Wolvercote in an attempt to restrict speeding through the village. We were very happy to be involved with the RSPB's project to encourage more swifts back in the area by the installation of special bird boxes. There was a great response in Oxford which included over 40 boxes being installed in Wolvercote. Our 'Commoners' Open Talks', brilliantly organised by Eleanor Woods, continue to be successful and of course our Annual Carol Concert was, yet again, a roaring success. We were very pleased to be able to welcome Julie Hamilton, Pete Wiggins and Lara Stockbridge as new members to the Committee and look forward to their contributions.

Mary Brown May 2019(Chair)

Don't Forget

Commoners' Open Talks Oxford Preservation Trust

RACHEL SANDERSON

'Preserving historic Oxford
in its green setting'

Tuesday 14th May 7.30

The White Hart Community Pub
Garden Room

Following the Oxford Council's commitment to a declaration of a Climate Change Emergency there was a clear majority to support this decision by those attending our AGM. Together we should all focus on this for the sake of our planet and our children. Everything is clearly explained in the recent Attenborough film 'Climate Change-the Facts' – watch it if you haven't already. Although the predictions for the future are dire and frightening, we can all do our bit to strengthen the wellbeing of this community we live in by sharing and by caring for each other and our environment.

Don't forget Village Work Mornings second Saturday of every month

Meet outside the Village Hall at 10am (bring garden gloves, wellies and any gardening tools you have). Children welcome

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