

**Clausement Fen Conservation Group**  
**Annual General Meeting at St Faith's Parish Hall**  
**on Tuesday 21 February 7.30 – 8.30 pm**

**1. 7.30pm Welcome**

To the founding of the Clausement Fen Conservation Group and thank you for coming.

**2. Attendance named persons and organisation if relevant**

Colin & Sophie Armstrong, Martin & Grace Alderson, Marcus & Susan Swalwell, Ann & Christopher Balfour, Barry & Diane Jepson, Brian Millett, Andrew Smith, Anna-Maria Holt, Loraine Berry, Alex Jones, Marian Hollingsworth, Mike Gibbons, Rob Kerr, Susie Chiari, Ann Jones, Andrew Scott, Hugh Corry (Hampshire Conservation Volunteers) – 22 persons

Steve Ord (HCC Countryside), Rachel Bryan (TCV), Ian Tait (WCC), Fiona Mather (HCC) – 4 persons

**3. Apologies received for absence**

Marty Orton, Zoe De Ville, Ivor Snook, Janet Rowland-White, Nick Radford, Joan Hendry, Noel Jones, Marcus and Charles Mauleverer, Phil & Liz Crump, Jonathan & Liz Sleath, Nick & Hermione Tudor, Lee & Fiona Stannard – 17 persons

**4. What are the issues facing Clausement Fen?**

Overview - ownership, status, water, light, biodiversity strengths and weaknesses, public use, abuse (see attached presentation)

Mike's report on species reduction since 1992 - 25 years ago flocks of snipe would settle in Z3 fen area which was wet underfoot all year round. There were linnet in the honeysuckle opposite #23, they are gone. So are the house sparrows seen in Mikes garden and reed bunting that Mike used to feed millet. A spotted flycatcher lived in Virginia creeper at #25 and bull finches were common. Owls lived in the Z2 woodland. In the streams there were colonies of freshwater shrimp, brook lamprey, European eels, water voles and otters. Dragonflies darted out of Z4, stag beetles regularly flew above Clausement Road.

**5. Our general strategy**

1. Conserve - Learn about and protect the valuable animal and plant species across the site by achieving Local Nature Reserve and later SSSI status
2. Beautify - Restore the natural beauty of the fen and woodlands
3. Enjoy - Keep the play area beneath the central beech and the short cut path to Garnier Road

**6. What has been done since Christmas (see attached presentation)**

1. Initial consulting and meeting with our community
2. Inspection of the Fen with High Corry of HCV, EA, TPO, Andrew Scott (water)
3. Meeting HCC, WCC, Countryside Rangers to agree opportunity to be involved
4. HCC £1,000 start-up grant, opened Santander bank account, needed constitution
5. Meeting Rachel Bryan of TCV to establish options for our first steps as a group

**7. Membership Opportunities** – we are hoping that members will find special contributory roles within our Conservation Group. We need:

- species experts (to help research, monitor and educate the rest of us)
- Scientific monitoring techniques
- Photography
- Social media
- First aid
- Qualified power tool operators (e.g. brush cutter)
- Networking and Resourcing the support or skills we need

**8. Members registering at the AGM or by advance notification:**

Colin & Sophie Armstrong, Michelle and Brian Millett, Anna-Maria & Joe Holt, Alex & Noel Jones, Mike & Sarah Gibbons, Rob & Fay Kerr, Phil & Liz Crump, Jonathan & Liz Sleath, Nick & Hermione Tudor, Marcus & Susan Swalwell, Ann & Christopher Balfour, Lee & Fiona Stannard, Barry & Diane Jepson, Andrew & Liz Scott, Marty Orton, Zoe De Ville, Ivor Snook, Andrew Smith, Janet Rowland-White, Martin & Grace Alderson, Nick Radford, Loraine Berry, Joan Hendry, Marian Hollingsworth, Marcus & Charles Mauleverer, Pam Sanderson, Susie Chiari, Becky Kennedy, Ann Jones, Hugh Corry (46 persons)

**9. The constitution vote**

1. The reasons behind the formal clauses in the constitution were explained:
  1. These best practice insights from experienced conservation groups (inc TCV) should enable us to avoid pitfalls as we start anew
  2. Banks, associations and supportive organisations require evidence of clear management
2. Minor amendments were then raised by Rachel Bryan TCV
  1. under 16s could also be accompanied by a guardian
  2. we need to have our own insurance and not just rely on TCV cover when they are supervising us
  3. the new version is attached
3. Ratification – proposer Anna Maria Holt, seconder Martin Alderson carried with a total of 41 votes (22 at the AGM and 19 by proxy) no opposition

**10. The committee elections:**

1. Marcus Swalwell for Chairperson – proposer Ann Balfour, seconder Mike Gibbons
2. Mike Gibbons for Conservation Officer – proposer Alex Jones seconder Brian Millett
3. Anna Maria Holt for Treasurer – proposer Barry Jepson, seconder Martin Alderson
4. Jonathan Sleath for Website Officer – proposer Susan Swalwell, seconder Christopher Balfour

All elections were carried one by one, each with a total of 41 votes (22 at the AGM and 19 offered by proxy) no oppositions

**11. Next steps & Questions:**

1. Barry Jepson - how will we communicate and develop plans? - we will email and leaflet, encouraging members to develop ideas together informally and share them with committee officers. We will call meetings of interested parties as required
2. Andrew Smith - how wide will membership extend? we encourage members who either live beside the fen or who have a passion for contributing to the conservation of the fen

3. Christopher Balfour - what happened to species and how could we get them back? Mike Gibbons replied that there has been a massive reduction in insects (remember how many would stick to windscreens 25 years ago) because of farm chemicals in the air, in fields and in streams. We will not get all species back but we can create, in Clausentum Fen's protected area, the conditions to support continued biodiversity and possibly some recovering species looking for protection from the greater river Itchen.
4. Rob Kerr - are council supportive? Marcus replied Yes, the council have encouraged us and made a £1,000 start-up grant. HCC Countryside Services have assisted us in starting a Conservation Management Plan with TCV (Rachel Bryan). Councillor Tait reinforced the support that the councils are willing to give organisations that are well supported by the community and well organised.

## **12. Actions:**

1. Membership of TCV will be arranged within the next month
2. Insurance for the Clausentum Fen Conservation Group will be arranged as soon as we understand our requirements
3. Basic enabling hand tools and equipment will be purchased from our start-up fund to maintain our initial momentum
4. We will explore how to remove the bamboo plantation beside Clausentum Road in Z3 and arrange a first volunteer project for one Saturday, probably in April

## **13. Members are requested to consider the following issues with their friends and neighbours and prepare input to a series of focus meetings which will address them:**

1. **Water supply, flow rate, quality and stream environments:**
  - Beech tree reduction beside Priors Barton wall in Z1 (for wall damage limitation, improved water flow and light onto the stream)
  - Secure a year-round strong flow into St Michaels brook (improve all-seasons water flow)
  - Reconnect west stream into Z3 to restore the fenland (passing through or removing sycamore)
  - Restore Z4 aqueous woodland (deepening the recess for ground water or tapping into Lockburn stream)
2. **Balancing the amenity use areas with the importance of protecting special habitats**
  - Set restricted access biodiversity v amenity areas
  - St Michael's brook silt flush to enliven the west stream
  - Boundary management with hedging mix (protect north boundary v fly-tipping and west boundary v incursions into the bio-sensitivity area)
3. **Light, Tree and scrub management**
  - Removal of large invasive bamboo plantation, some willow and dry scrub in Z3 (NB Bamboo removal led by Rachel Bryan of TCV will be arranged as soon as possible)
  - Reduce shading Z1 and Z2 by reduction of the Lawsons cypresses
  - Reduce shading of Z2/Z3 border traverse stream by pollarding the sycamores

## **14. AOB**

WCC councillor Ian Tait encouraged the Group with compliments.

Marcus expressed especial thanks to Hugh Corry for his continuing examination and surveying of the fen and for sharing his considerable experience. Ann Balfour thanked Marcus Swalwell for preparing the Clausentum Fen Conservation Group arrangements.

**15. Close at 8.20pm**

Marcus Swalwell

Chairperson, Clausentum Fen Conservation Group