

THE GORING AND ILEX CONSERVATION GROUP

Conserving the beauty and present character of Goring, the Ilex Avenue,
the trees in Sea Lane and the Goring Gap



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7.15pm for 7.30pm Thursday 15th Sept 2022

at

Methodist Church Hall, Bury Drive, Goring



Members and Non-Members are cordially invited to attend.

Following the AGM there will be a talk given by the Highdown Gardens Plant
Heritage Officer Alex New about the gardens.

Review of the Year

Introduction

We are delighted to be able to produce this newsletter and welcome you to our Annual General Meeting in September. As you can see our committee has been working hard on various matters over the year and the following reflects their commitment. We hope that you will find it interesting with news on Planning, Finance, our continued work in the Plantation and our newly launched Website.

Planning

During the main period of the Covid restrictions, our committee regularly reviewed planning applications by Zoom. We are now back to live committee meetings and continue to review current applications at our regular meetings for both the Goring area and wider areas adjacent to Goring if we believe that the character or amenity of the area would be affected. If we are concerned we will communicate this to the planners and also liaise with our councillors on larger issues. The “post-pandemic” period has seen an increase in work being planned or started, somewhat tempered by material shortages and costs.

A main feature of planning during the last year has been the Persimmon application for up to 475 dwellings at Chatsmore Farm (Goring Gap North) which was refused by the council but appealed by Persimmon. The appeal took place over 8 days in January under a Government Planning Inspector – Mr Rory Cridland – with both sides having legal representatives as well as specialist witnesses. As one of the “Interested Parties”, we spoke at the Zoom inquiry along with The Worthing Society and Ferring Conservation Group. The inquiry was also broadcast live on YouTube by the council. We, along with most other parties were surprised and disappointed when the Inspector allowed the appeal.

Following further legal advice, the council successfully applied for a judicial review of the Inspector’s decision which was expected to be undertaken this autumn. We now understand that it will be during the third week of July which is unfortunately before the new Local Plan is in place. Should the review conclude in the council’s favour, another Planning Inspector will undertake a further new appeal process. We hope that the final results are in favour of protection for the Chatsmore Farm Gap otherwise this housing development will go ahead.

The initial success of Persimmon’s appeal sparked four new or possible planning applications for further housing developments to the west of Goring as far as the Rustington Golf Centre. This has resulted in the Goring and Ilex Conservation Group

joining forces with the Ferring conservation Group and other local amenity and conservation groups to form the ProGaps (Protect the Gaps) Action Group whose aim is to support Arun District Council and Worthing Borough Council in resisting the demands of the developers who want to build on land not allocated for housing in Local Plans.

As we explained in our last newsletter, we have also worked with other groups such as the Goring Residents Association, Ferring Conservation Group and the Worthing Society on larger issues which included resubmissions for initially a few but up to 94 additional beach huts on the foreshore between the Waterfront development and Sea Lane café. Although a few additional huts doesn't sound many, the siting of the huts would reduce open sea views, be in front of memorial seats and the full amount would obliterate any sea views from the path. Working with other groups, we managed to generate enough opposition that the proposals were withdrawn and the planners initially stated that they did not anticipate there will be any further submissions in the foreseeable future. Unfortunately, there were further submissions in November last year that were then withdrawn and re-submitted in May 2022. One of these applications along with others east of George V Avenue were taken to the Worthing Planning Committee in June. Two of our committee members, along with Councillor Martin McCabe spoke against these proposals at the committee and we are pleased to report that they have been deferred (along with the other Goring hut applications) for the new council administration to consider. Feedback from the new administration members at the meeting suggests that there may be no further beach huts in Goring in the near future.

Local Plan

The Inspector's initial report on the Local Plan considered that the North and South Goring Gaps should not have Local Green Space status although also recognising some protection for these areas as Local Green Gaps. Brooklands is, however, designated as Local Green Space. To allow for this and other amendments to the draft Plan to take into account the Inspector's comments and amendments to National Planning Policy, the council issued a schedule of Main Modifications for public comment by 17th May. We reviewed these and consider that the wording reflects the Inspector's recommendations and felt no need to comment further.

The Council will send the Main Modifications and comments to the Inspector who should then be able to finalise his report. It is expected that the Council will receive the Inspector's Report later this year and if the Plan has been found to be 'sound', the Council will then be in a position to formally adopt it. This Plan will then cover the next 15 years, although with five-yearly reviews. The timing of the adopted version of the Plan will now be too late to have an effect on the outcome of the judicial review on Chatsmore Farm although its principles will no doubt be taken into account.

Finance

Although Members were given a subscription holiday for 2021, donations were gratefully received from many members, plus our Committee, totalling £1,411 over the year to the 31st December 2021. These funds covered our costs during that year of £1,373 which left a modest surplus of £38.

Therefore, at the 31st December 2021, our Conservation Fund of £6,000 remains intact. These monies, which have been steadily increasing over past years, remain available to fund future costs, to protect Goring (for example, the continued defence of the Goring gap).

Plantation

Over the last two years our work has continued with a few more volunteers, gained space and with more recognition from the public walking through praising our work. The last two years has been difficult for everyone and we have been only able to work when permissible due to Covid.

Meeting once a month for 2 hours on the second Saturday of each month our volunteers have achieved 400 hours physical work over the last 12 months making a huge difference. We usually provide tea and coffee and sometimes cake!

We have planted native Bluebells, Daffodils and Snowdrops that will become an annual autumn task. We have planted 100 Oak saplings close to Marine Drive to remember a long serving member Vernon Kitch that slowly establish under the canopy of the larger trees. Establishing trees is not easy when you consider the high winds that constantly batter the Plantation from the sea.

We have continued to cut down a large area of brambles and we can now see through the trees that provides a safer area. The ground flora as a result has become more noticeable and colourful.

We do give a brief report each month in the Goring Guide of our progress but do remember this work is completely carried out by volunteers from the community. If you are fit and able do come along and join us to help improve the Plantation even if it's only once a year.

We thank all those volunteers that have come along in all weathers and helped improving the Plantation.

We have said goodbye to two intrepid Campaigners.

Byron Wynn-Davies - Byron Wynn-Davies started the campaign to save the Ilex Avenue in 1983 when so many trees had been threatened with felling. He called an emergency meeting which led to the formation of the 'Ilex Preservation Group' a forerunner of our group today. This resulted in consultation with tree experts who successfully challenged the need for so many trees to be lost and he persuaded The Times to publish a photograph of the Avenue with text which alerted many people to the cause. It was an inspirational move. The late Mr. Byron Wynn-Davies FRS was a consultant surgeon at Worthing hospital and last year his family donated a strong wooden seat in the eastern section of the Ilex Avenue to commemorate his contribution to the preservation of this magnificent avenue of Ilex Oaks.

Vernon Kitch - It is with sadness that we have to let you know that Vernon Kitch passed away last October. Vernon served as Treasurer to the Group for almost 27 years, then stayed on as Auditor until 2018. His contribution over the years has been considerable, using his expertise to defend the areas of Goring that we all value. He continued to help the Group after leaving the committee, and we will greatly miss his gentle humour and excellent advice.



Membership Subscriptions / Donations

Membership is a minimum of £1 per household. Feel free to pay more if you are able! Monies can be paid in by cash, cheque or preferably bank transfer. Our new Santander bank account details are below. If you have however already paid directly into our former account with the HSBC, this is not a problem, as these monies will flow directly into our new Santander bank account.

Account Name	Goring & Ilex Conservation Group
Account Sort Code	09-01-29
Account Number	64220493
Reference	Post Code & House Number

A membership card / receipt will be issued for all monies received.

Grass Cutting on the Greensward and Verge

We spent some time last year in discussions with Councillor Crouch, at the time the Executive Member for Environmental Services, on the lack of grass cutting in areas of the Greensward and put forward our views that not only were the affected areas subsequently very little used for recreation but that they also posed hazards such as the difficulty of picking up dog faeces and spotting things such as broken glass. We also considered that if these areas were to be “renatured”, this required some effort and just to leave them suggests neglect. We had little success with this last year but currently, following further discussion with the councillor and with the Head Ranger, there has been some progress.

The current situation regarding renaturing (also known as rewilding) in Adur and Worthing within the local parks and open spaces. is now published on the Council’s website: - <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/renaturing/> which includes a link showing the proposals and a map for each area. We understand from the Head Ranger, who attends some of our meetings, that the renatured part of the Greensward will now be properly managed with wildflower planting taking place in the autumn using naturalising bulbs which the Group have asked to be involved in. We hope that the result in future years will be a more attractive and varied display than the perhaps neglected look that we saw last year.

The grass verges are dealt with by West Sussex Highways to whom any problems should be reported, especially if any lack of cutting is causing a road hazard due to reduced visibility. Last year we contacted our West Sussex County Councillor regarding the verges which resulted in some being cut. Again, we believe that, along with allowing favourable conditions for insects etc., there needs to be some management to prevent these areas becoming weed infested.

Website

We are pleased to announce that our website will go live on 1st September. The site is open to all, with the site address www.ilex-conservation-group.co.uk This should help us keep those interested in our group updated with news etc. Please visit the site and make any suggestions for improvements to the committee.



The Goring & Ilex Conservation Group Subscription / Donation

We no longer collect door to door, so please bring the completed ‘tear off’ slip to the AGM or alternatively pop it into either of the two letterboxes below. A membership card will then be issued. Your details will be kept securely. Please be assured that we will not pass them on to any third party.

John Daley

48 Aldsworth Avenue

Bob Niall

34 Marine Crescent

Name.....

Address.....

Amount Enclosed / Paid In £.....

Tel.....