

# National Coppice Federation Annual General Meeting

Saturday 21 Oct 2017 at Gathering at Ruskin Mill Gloucestershire.

## Minutes

**Apologies** – Ken Hilton, Bill Oakes

**1. Membership Secretaries report – Renewals** – Like getting blood from a stone this year. Overall members - 17 groups in 2017- representing 537 individual people only one outstanding now Coppice Wood College (supporting member).  
Isle of Wight talking about getting a group together.

**2. Financial report-** Helen Waterfield stated that the current figures stand at: Co-op £4176.77, new Paypal account £1758.55, Paypal account to be closed £1249.76 Total assets £ 7185.08

### **3. Chairs report**

Insurance scheme has been a success but there is some concern that there is not a very big take up of the Beech Tree Insurance with Gary Alexander. Gary Alexander attended the gathering to answer questions. Committee keen to stress that it is very good value.

Gathering a success, well attended by over 80 people.

Membership growing, and good value at £2

NCFed has had a presence at the Confor Woodland show, the Arboricultural Association's Arb show, Countryfile live show, National Hedgelaying championships.

Affiliation to UKWAS (about to happen) This will give the NCFed a voice when UKWAS is updated next. Only one mention of coppice in their documents.

Rural Housing Initiative - reporting back at this event. National meeting with FC, Confor, Small woods etc. AONB's looking at affordable housing.

Coppice Conservation and Commerce conference to persuade conservation woodland owners to allow better access to coppice workers to their woodlands and to reap the benefits for nature and wildlife. A starter pack is being developed to give out to these organisations.

Publicity sub-committee - new lease of life thanks to Guy Lambourne who is about to join the committee.

Cleft Stick - Only one issue this year sorry, but plans afoot to get it going again.

Website – been a bit defunct this year but the old site getting revamped now and back in action.

### **3. Election of directors –**

Thanks to Dave Jackson who has stood down as director.

Martin Hales and Helen Waterfield - nominated and all agreed to accept.

Rob Newby to be co- opted for this year – agreed by the gathering.

Brian Williamson - able to be co-opted this year and able to stand again next year but will not go beyond three year term.

### **4. Discussion and debate –**

#### **A           Towards a five year plan. Do we think the NCFed is heading in the right direction? Would we like to set some goals?**

Peter Jameson – Charcoal bag revamp needed. RO asked for comments on the bag design update.

Housing issues very important. Keep the faith. Discussion group on Sunday.

Ffionn - Definition of coppicing it doesn't include other types of woodland work should we widen the remit of the NCFed, Why do we differentiate? BW - people who work in coppice do work in other ways. Sustainable woodland management and CCF. Duncan - we do have members who don't do coppicing but do want to feel part of the organisation. Rob Newby perception is that we can coppice for wildlife and turn product into woodchip. Coppicing should be an economic process supporting other rural industries (hedgers, thatchers etc) Grants should not be given for biomass production. Important to forge links with other organisations related to coppice markets. Jo Clayton - Should the definition of coppicing be tightened up? - discussion to be continued!

Rural skills dying out reported on Country File recently, NCFed should contact the programme to make the point that there is more that could be done to support the spar makers etc. Skilling people is important. Which is the most important access to the woodland resource or the lack of skilled workers? Do we need a workshop discussion on this? (We had a workshop on making spars instead, thanks to Alan Waters and Pete Jameson)

Andy Alder – lots of spars and hurdles being brought in from Poland. Thatchers are actively looking for British spars. Price needs to be hiked.

Other suggestions for a discussion topic 'What is going to replace ash in the coppice world' Martin Hales to lead.

When big orders come through what do we do? Coppice Products website can help or the local group network.

#### **B   How can we get some more individuals involved in the work of the NCFed?**

A very big Thank you to those who did step up and offer to make a contribution.