

The Magog Trust

Annual Review 2016

Development, activities and achievements this year



Over the Easter weekend, an invitation to speak with Governors and Volunteers gave a good opportunity for visitors to Magog Down to reinforce the overall opinion that Magog Down is a great place to visit, for fresh air, recreation and sometimes reflection, with or without a dog! It was gratifying to receive a number of requests from these visitors to become a Friend of Magog Down. A couple of the sessions were brought to an end with some wild weather, but in between times we leafleted all cars not carrying an 'I'm a Friend of Magog Down' car sticker, which will now be issued to Friends and Members on an annual basis. This Easter weekend promotion emphasized that the site is privately owned, manned by volunteers with some contractual input. This includes our Conservation Ranger, Jon Gibbs, whom we contracted over the last year to engage with visitors and develop the conservation aspects of Magog Down. You will have seen the work he has carried out coppicing hedges, removing scrub encroaching on Magog Down, not to mention mending fences and litter picking. His presence on site has had a positive influence on some of the dog owners using Magog Down to walk them responsibly. Sadly there remains a minority who neither keep their dogs on leads where requested, nor pick up after their animals.



A change in what we can crop gave us the opportunity to introduce a strip sown for winter feeding for birds (*the brown strip in the above picture*). The mix of plant types sown for flowers and seeds included millet, seed radish, triticale, quinoa and phacelia, the latter creating a beautiful blue blanket when in flower.



The slope of Little Trees Hill towards the Feoffee Field and the village of Stapleford is a continuation of the chalk landscape, so important for Magog Down. Over the years, the boundary hedge here next to Feoffee Field had become very overgrown with ivy now submerging the remains of the hedge, with a few hawthorns smothered and potentially dangerous. The intent is to re-establish a chalk bank abundant with native species, and work began this year with initial clearing of the bank.

We continue to thin the woods in rotation creating an understorey to support invertebrates, insects and small mammals as well as flowers. Glades and paths are being formed in the process extending the routes to enjoy while walking on Magog Down. The Upper part of Memorial wood will be thinned this winter. Where a group of trees have been dedicated, every effort will be made to retain at least one; no guarantee can be given, however, as the health of the whole wood has to be considered. Ash die back has been noted and expert advice is being sought on the future management of affected trees. Meanwhile, more Singing Trees have been planted and money from the dedicated fund has been directed towards their nurturing, especially watering.



Many will have noticed the new and re-populated Noticeboard which our volunteers try to keep up to date. A bench has been moved to the car park area, along with three others to more accessible parts of the site.

Throughout the year our monthly volunteer working party assists in the upkeep of Magog Down. The tasks they have achieved over the year are reported on our website www.magogtrust.org.uk which also gives all the information you need to join in with volunteering, either with these outdoor tasks or with anything else. Our Administrative Assistant works hard in posting latest news on the site. The amount of mail coming into the website has increased markedly, some complimentary, others less so. However this does give us the opportunity to engage with users and encourage them to become Friends.

Work in maintaining our database and streamlining methods of payment does lead to more efficient use of administrative time. We are very grateful to the 70% or more of Members and Friends who pay their subscriptions by annual Standing Order, as the time spent generating reminders for those who pay only when prompted is disproportionate.



In July 2016, one of the main volunteer tasks was the pulling of ragwort, and in this, were joined by a group from Natural England. This area, which had been closed for a few years for regeneration, was re-opened in 2015. **Dogs are not permitted in Colin's Paddock, at any time.**

Stapleford is indeed fortunate to have this unique piece of landscape within its boundaries, enjoyed by visitors from far beyond the Parish. With all the new building around us, footfall is going to increase even more and ways have to be made to sustain our income in the years ahead. Open Access funding will be withdrawn from our grant funding by the UK government, so the Governors of Magog Trust are actively seeking ways to manage the introduction of parking fees in the future.

The Governors have developed their formal business plan to take full account of the risks and opportunities that lie ahead. Sustainability is one of the key criteria we apply to our work.



Transactions and financial position

The full report and accounts have been compiled and show a surplus for the year of £8,257 compared to £2,999 last year. Income reduced by 7%, however costs reduced by a larger margin of 14%. Full details

including the Balance Sheet can be seen in the Annual Report which will be available online after the AGM. To help our supporters to better understand the different sources of income, and areas of expenditure, we have broken these down in the table below.

SUMMARY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE (subject to formal examination)

INCOMING RESOURCES	2015/16 £	2014/15 £
Land Income, comprising:		
<i>Farming: sale of crops</i>	29,716	30,159
<i>Farming: BPS payment</i>	9,834	11,133
<i>Grants: HLS/ELS schemes</i>	8,155	9,518
<i>Grants: Forestry Commission</i>	2,174	2,174
Land Income Total	49,879	52,983
Investment Income	21,948	18,611
Member/Friend subscriptions	7,379	7,286
Donations and Gifts	2,590	9,149
Miscellaneous income	114	337
TOTAL INCOME	81,910	88,366
RESOURCES EXPENDED	2015/16 £	2014/15 £
Charitable Activities:		
Land rent and insurance	1,816	1,835
Depreciation on assets	1,043	694
Land Management, comprising:		
<i>Farming costs</i>	24,436	24,103
<i>Ranger Service</i>	14,995	13,553
<i>Trees and Woodland</i>	7,275	7,720
<i>Dog Waste removal</i>	4,179	4,324
<i>Grass cutting and paths</i>	2,970	2,980
<i>Maintenance of Hedgerows</i>	298	6,910
<i>Fencing and Gate repairs</i>	668	5,039
<i>Other Land maintenance</i>	835	2,317
<i>Noticeboard replacement</i>	234	1,899
Land Management Total	55,880	68,844
Governance costs: admin fees	7,637	6,368
Governance: independent exam.	515	516
Fund Management	5,686	5,710
Office costs, publicity, printing	1,076	1,400
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	73,653	85,367
NET INCOME FOR THE YEAR	8,257	2,999

For the financial year ended 31 March 2016, the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Registered Office: The Magog Trust,
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