

AIRBNB, SECOND HOMES AND HOLIDAY LETS

Following our article in the Spring Newsletter regarding the above, our research shows that there are 72 properties that are unoccupied and furnished, 42 registered holiday lets and 60 Airbnb.

Assuming 1,500 homes in our village, the above represent just over ten per cent. This is below the numbers that have been reported for parts of Cornwall, the Lake District, South Wales, Whitby etc, but still a significant number. The NFDC, once legislation is agreed, plan to apply a 100% premium to the council tax for empty and second homes. They intend that this will start after 1st April 2024.

So, what effect is this having on Brockenhurst? A conversation with the Brockenhurst Business Association indicates that visitors are more likely to shop locally whereas residents tend to do their weekly shop in supermarkets outside of Brockenhurst. So, possibly no problem there.

Local school. There doesn't appear to be any lack of local children attending the local school. We can tell this by the army of mums (and dads) depositing (and removing) their offspring daily. However, we are told that increasing numbers come from outside the village so jury out on this one.

Village life. As far as we can tell the myriad of village activities from football to model railways are well supported. Other events such as BrockStock, the pancake race, the Christmas fair etc, again, appear well supported. So, presumably no problem there.

Property prices. This is far more difficult to judge. We would have to know details of every purchase and what other bidders were prepared to pay at the time. Markets such as property are fringe markets ie it is the small number being sold that give an indication of the whole. We would suggest that it would be presumptuous of us to speculate on this. So, if there is a problem it is difficult to ascertain.

Are local youngsters priced out of houses? With the average house price in Brockenhurst hovering around £1 million youngsters are probably priced out anyway. What is needed is some form of social housing to cater for our youngsters. Even long term lets would help rather than the lucrative holiday lets or is that a form of oxymoron!

Having said this we believe that there are certain roads in our village that are more exposed to holiday lets etc. We hear that hot tubs, barbecues and the constant turnover of large numbers of visitors have changed the dynamics. Indeed, the concept of community is failing in these areas. This is obviously a problem that surcharging council tax is unlikely to change. This is a problem that is real and we will discuss this with the local authorities to see what, if anything, can be done.

We will continue to monitor the holiday let situation.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10th November 2023

Main Hall, Village Hall, Brockenhurst

Drinks & Nibbles from 7.00pm

Meeting starts at 7.30pm

Guest Speaker Cllr. Keith Mans – The Brockenhurst Representative on Hampshire County Council.
“Brockenhurst – Our Village”

BROCKENHURST WHEEL

Your committee was recently reminded that we are responsible for the wheel near the village car park. We will be renovating it and its surrounds.

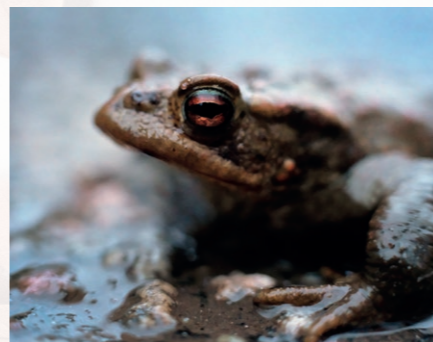


It seems that many years ago the attendant FoB committee wanted to erect this monument as a reminder of the village forge. This stood where Cyclexperience now stands and was demolished in 1915. A blurb on the forge and wheel stands next to the wheel.

We were surprised to find out that this monument was the idea of FoB but pleased to think that our predecessors had a mind for history. So, out with the cuprinol and brick restorer.

AMPHIBIAN TRAIL

Frogs and toads tend to spawn in the same area annually. Thus, every February/ March our amphibian friends hop along to their spawning grounds to reproduce in their favourite ponds and streams.



One such route crosses the A337 near Balmer Lawn. Not ideal for those frogs wishing for a long life for themselves or their off-spring - or should we say off-hop!

So, our thanks go to the volunteers who leave their tellies at dusk to go to the A337 and assist our froggy friends cross the road. Well done. Luckily this is not France or our froggy friends might find hopping a little more difficult.

EVENTS...

Brockenhurst Football Club will be hosting their annual fireworks display on Friday 27th October at their grounds on Grigg Lane. This is a great community event for all the family to enjoy with fireworks, refreshments with local band Absolute Block playing in the clubhouse afterwards.



Friends of Brockenhurst are manning a stall and will be running a bottle tombola. If you have any bottles to donate (wine, beer, fizz, bubble bath, shampoo, etc.) please get in touch - all donations welcome! Thank you.

The Brockenhurst Christmas Fun Evening will be taking place on Friday 1st December, from 6-8pm. The Parish Event Committee are busy planning the evening and it sounds like a great community event with music, stalls, fun fair, Santa's Grotto and lots more.



AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2023

WELCOME TO OUR AUTUMN NEWSLETTER,

Throughout the summer, your Committee has continued to react where necessary to matters affecting the Village and its residents. Items which are topical are explained further in this Newsletter.

If you are new to our Village and reading our Newsletter for the first time, we welcome you and hope you will become a member of Friends of Brockenhurst.

Full details of our membership are available on our website or you can contact us by e-mail or telephone. Details are given in this Newsletter.

Our Autumn meeting, to which everyone is welcome, will be held on Friday, 10th November 2023 at 7pm in the Main Hall of the Village Hall. This is our AGM and will be followed by a talk by Councillor Keith Mans. Keith has been our representative on Hampshire County Council for 6 years. He was previously an MP for 10 years and served on various parliamentary committees. He was also leader of HCC until he stepped down in 2022.

Friends of Brockenhurst cannot succeed without the work of our Committee and we urgently need new committee members. If you are passionate about preserving our unique Village, do please join us. For further information please contact either of us by e-mail.

Thank you for your continued interest and support.

Rachel Smith
President

David Eley
Chair

email: info@friendsofbrockenhurst.org.uk
www.friendsofbrockenhurst.org.uk



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PROGRESS?

FoB's mission statement is well documented and, indeed, is repeated in our Newsletters. Having aims is laudable but what have we achieved?

Your committee recognise the need not to be just a talking shop. In recent years we have examined what FoB can and should do in order to be relevant in modern times. The following examines some of the results so far.

We have formed good links with the Parish Council and our fellow village societies namely Brockenhurst Business Association, Greener Brockenhurst and, more recently, Friends of Brockenhurst Station. We recognise the advantage of working together. We are happy to talk to other organisations as well.

It may be that, in the past, FoB was regarded as a one trick pony - that being planning. Well, we are still interested in planning and what happens to the fabric of our village. Indeed, one of the reasons FoB was formed in 1957 was planning. Recently we have played our part in getting the planning authorities to take against high, close board fencing (although they are not always consistent). We were instrumental in getting the decision to increase the weight limit crossing Sway Road bridge reversed, re-opening the bridge over the railway in North Road and many others. Our links with other village societies helped in these successes.

However, we are more than just planning. FoB has started the debate about the future of Brockenhurst. We formed a group consisting of members of other societies to attempt to come with a long-term plan for our village. The disparate nature of this group made agreement difficult but did manage to produce a rough plan. We've presented to you, the members, a number of articles and talks on the subject of the future of our village. It has proved to be a popular subject as the talks attracted significant numbers and comment.

We were promised representation on a PC sub-committee doing similar work albeit on a smaller scale. In the event, this sub-committee finished their work and decided to appoint consultants to carry it forward - yet to be appointed. Following the PC's annual elections it was decided to resurrect this sub-committee with new members. Hopefully, they will get things moving and we can play a part.



Hampshire County Council has accepted our idea of a "village square" for the area outside Tesco. Their plan has been published and we are told that work will be completed during the winter. This is not exactly what we had in mind but it will lead to a bigger "recreational" area.

FoB has done a significant amount of work on cycle and foot paths in and around Brockenhurst. This was presented to the PC who have decided to take it further. The PC, as the statutory body, is the obvious body to progress initiatives of this kind.

We are currently looking into the thorny subject of second homes, holiday lets and Airbnb. This has attracted a lot of press nationally over the last year and, indeed, we mentioned it in an article in our Spring Newsletter. In order to produce a realistic view of its impact on Brockenhurst it was necessary

to get accurate figures. It is, obviously, easy to jump to conclusions on this subject but we are keeping an open mind until we can better analyse the facts. See accompanying article.

The problem is the lack of affordable housing. However, with average house prices in Brockenhurst at about £1 million, affordable is a misnomer. Social housing might be a better expression. Developers, understandably, do not choose to build these kind of homes but would rather pay a section 106 payment to the authorities in lieu. FoB would suggest that it is up to the planning authorities to tighten up.

The above are a few of our achievements. We hope that you agree that these are worthwhile and maintain FoB's relevance in this modern world. However, we do need to appeal for new members, especially younger members. It is well known that societies of our kind tend to attract those of us that "are past the need for gainful employment" but we are keen to attract new blood. As your committee starts to slide into senility it will need new representation.

FoB has maintained a significant membership over the years. It is this that has helped your committee influence events. We thank you for your continued support. We also welcome your views so that we can better talk as a society.

PLAN FOR OUR NATIONAL PARK 2022-2027

It must be a long time since we wrote about the New Forest National Park Authority ("NPA").

The New Forest ("the Park") became a national park in 2005 and is managed by the NPA. It caused a bit of controversy locally as it added an extra layer of bureaucracy (and expense) when we were used to being managed by the Verderers.

However, the latest Partnership Plan ("the Plan"), (see newforestnpa.gov.uk) is worth a read. It states that it is a plan for the Park, not the NPA. It reiterates the purpose of the NPA being:

1. To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park; and
2. To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public.

It is interesting to note the "Sandford Principle" which states that every effort should be made to reconcile any conflicts between these purposes. However, if this fails the first purpose shall take priority. Conservation and enhancement shall take priority.

The Plan faces many problems. 69% of rivers and 100% of lakes failed to meet 'good' ecological status. 47% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest are in unfavourable condition.

Over 15 million day visits each year. (This is probably higher now with "staycation"). 130,000 new homes being built within 15 miles of the Park by 2036.

The Plan has been written in conjunction with neighbouring authorities and bodies such as Natural England and Forestry England. It extols the virtues of the Park and lists a number of areas that they wish to achieve. It is long on aims regarding flora and fauna, climate change and other laudable aims. It is short on the impact of visitors.

Whilst national parks should be enjoyed by the population as a whole, it has to be recognised that visitors in large numbers can be harmful. We think that plans of this kind must address this problem.



COMMITTEE

President: Rachel Smith | Chair: David Eley
Hon Secretary: Ross Mitchell | Treasurer: Tim Angel

Planning Secretary: Graham Baker

Additional Committee Members:

Gerald Parker, Philip Butt,
Bronya Szatkowska

Contact number: 01590 623197

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The Society exists to protect, improve and develop the character and amenities of Brockenhurst and the surrounding forest area for the benefit of the residents of the village and of the wider community.

It shall concentrate especially, but not exclusively, on matters relating to planning, environment and the welfare of the community and will seek to influence local and other government bodies to advance its objectives.

In particular, it shall carry out regular and detailed reviews of all regional, structure and local plans, together with significant local planning applications, making representations as appropriate.

The Society also aims to invite speakers on matters of interest to its AGM and Spring meetings.



email: info@friendsofbrockenhurst.org.uk

www.friendsofbrockenhurst.org.uk

BECOME A MEMBER...

Membership of the Friends of Brockenhurst is open to all residents of Brockenhurst and the surrounding forest area. Our annual subscription is currently a minimum of just;

£7.50 per single person OR £10.00 per family

Subscriptions in excess of the minimum are always very welcome, and we thank those that continue to do so.

Membership forms and Standing Order forms are available to download from our website and can be returned to us or taken to Pot Pourri Gift Shop in Brookley Road:

www.friendsofbrockenhurst.org.uk/membership