

PUTTENHAM BARN BUNKHOUSE

Newsletter – Autumn/Winter 2021



The new bunk beds have proven popular with our 2021 visitors
Photo by David Kirkham



Stephen Goddard's characterful sketch – see the tribute to Stephen below



John Joyce of The Gatliff Trust (see below) visiting the Barn
Photo by Martin Barnes

Barn Project on track for 2022!

Despite the most challenging and extraordinary time since our Puttenham eco barn opened, the brilliant news is that the Project is still on the map! Yes, thanks to the immeasurable ingredient of goodwill (that elusive “something” which even some commercial companies attempt to value) we are still here. This wonderful spirit of friendliness was illustrated so well – yet again – at our November 2021 close of season work party when volunteers participated with both indoor and outdoor tasks.

With coronavirus all too present in the general community, a number of other ventures offering communal style accommodation have failed and we are especially sad to see the closure of Gumber Bothy on the South Downs Way – where we originally took Guildford Council officers when seeking their understanding and support for what we were attempting to do at Puttenham... Please stick with us at this time, dear friends and supporters, and help our venture on the North Downs Way to survive – and hopefully thrive! – as we seek to navigate into the future...

Appreciation galore!

Bunk beds... As reported in the Summer newsletter, our venture is now known as *Puttenham Barn Bunkhouse* following the dismantling by volunteers of two of our three sleeping platforms and arrival of bunk beds with mattresses – quite a moment in our history!

This happened because of three financial contributions, one being a grant of £2,000 from The Gatliff Trust – renowned for encouraging independent adventure. There were also two generous personal donations – one from our warden John Summers and another from our Trustee and former treasurer Keith Chesterton, both of whom have been involved with POND since the very early beginnings. We hugely appreciate all this support.

After the bunks were installed we invited John Joyce from The Gatliff Trust (whose sister organisation has hostels on the Outer Hebrides) to come and see the result, and John enjoyed walking to the Barn from Farncombe station with Chris Meeks where they were joined by POND Treasurer Martin Barnes for a picnic lunch. John was very pleased, saying the wooden bunks were very much in harmony with the character of the timber Barn.

Legal help... And *more* words of warm appreciation! This time backtracking to the end part of 2020 and the beginning of 2021, to acknowledge the invaluable contribution made by Sue Otty during the negotiations that led to renewal of our Lease. As a former solicitor for Sustrans, Sue understood what we were trying to achieve – thank you Sue!

Supporters welcome!

A big welcome to our most recent newcomers – Caroline, Hazel and Siobain – who have given new energy towards recreating our wildflower areas...

Thank you also to all who have renewed their membership, including several of you who have found it possible to support us by taking out POND Life Membership.

We give thanks for the life of our supporter **Stephen Goddard** who died earlier this year. Stephen's sketch of the Barn has been used on a number of occasions in our literature – and is, again, reproduced in this newsletter – the original being on display in our common-room area. Stephen generously donated the copyright to us so that we can use the sketch in the future as we wish.

A life-long walker and non-motorist, Steve was a great character indeed: this was exemplified by his actions on the day he married Jeni, to whom we send our condolences, when they caught the bus to their wedding in Guildford and afterwards led walkers across the fields to their reception. – *Chris Meeks*



We are very grateful to our regular warden and artist Morag who has donated two of her lovely paintings to the barn...

...check out their locations on your next visit!



Whilst visiting Puttenham to view some maintenance concerns, Mark Graham from Guildford Borough Council also opened up the unused parts of the Barn and invited volunteers present to join him inside – a fascinating look back in time!



This south side comprises two separate sections walled off from each other, one section still with supporting scaffolding in place which we understand was originally put in to prop up the roof. This view of the second section shows Chris Meeks, voluntary warden Nigel and Mark Graham checking things out.

Photo by Dave Williamson

Dry weather helped to ensure a highly successful close-of-season work party....



- The wonderful colours of our hedge as Caroline begins the tidy-up.
- Ben gets stuck in with a very noisy strimmer!
- Hazel and Caroline, new volunteers with gardening knowledge, explore the diversity of the wildflowers.
- The group pause to look over their results so far:
L-R Chris, Siobain, Caroline, Hazel, Dave W, Martin, Ben, Sarah.

We also thank Eric who for many years has ensured the water supply is safely turned off at the end of the season to prevent frozen pipework, and returns in the spring to reverse the procedure.



Photos by Tish Piwowarek

~~ Newsletter contributions welcomed by Hilary – hjperry88@gmail.com ~~

One of many positive reviews on the ‘Visitors’ views’ page of our web site:

Walker from Kidlington 15th July, 2021

Overall rating: 5.0 of 5

Comments: Warden David was a great host. As a keen Walker he was most helpful in giving advice on the ongoing route of my walk. The location is peaceful and the newly installed bunk beds were good.

Would Recommend: Yes

Tips for other travellers: The nearby village pub was friendly and the food reasonably priced. Splendid church immediately opposite the barn.

This newsletter is published by Project Oasis North Downs, the registered charity that manages Puttenham Barn Bunkhouse

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