

The National Trust locally and the Friends of Limpsfield Common

The National Trust Limpsfield Local Committee, also known as the Friends of Limpsfield Common (FoLC) is a small, dedicated group of around 12 members, comprising residents, National Trust representatives and other key stakeholders. The committee works closely with the National Trust to support the conservation, care and public enjoyment of the Common.

The FoLC currently has around 200 paying members, whose annual subscriptions and additional donations help fund local activities.

The National Trust appointed a new Limpsfield ranger, India Davies, in September last year, replacing Conor McNeil. India manages the National Trust's work on the Common, including the activities of the NT Taskforce.

Around five or six years ago, I was appointed as the Limpsfield Parish Council representative on the local committee. Since then, I have attended meetings regularly and have reported on activities at LPC meetings, particularly during the Covid period when issues such as Ridlands Grove, parking pressures and the need for additional bins on the Common were frequently discussed.

I was elected Chair of the committee last year, taking over from Tony Pearson, and chaired the Annual Public Meeting held in September. This was the meeting referred to by David Wickham in Chart News as "the Friends of Limpsfield Chart", and at which he expressed strong views, including regarding the loss of the animal houses. For further background, the FoLC website (www.friendsoflimpsfieldcommon.org) includes an excellent article on this subject written by Sophie.

Sarah is a member of the FoLC committee and serves on the National Trust Taskforce. Sophie is likewise a committee member (in her capacity as a Chart resident, not as LPC clerk) and has provided invaluable support with the website, social media and communications.

The committee meets approximately four times a year, with India and her National Trust manager attending so that local priorities and planning can be coordinated effectively. If any member of LPC would like to attend as an observer, please let me know. Issues raised by LPC can also be fed into these meetings where appropriate. FoLC and National Trust plans for 2026 include footpath and bridleway repairs on the High Chart National Trust land, a major renovation project at Yalden Spring, and the continuation of the excellent work to publicise and improve access to the air raid shelters.

As mentioned at the last LPC meeting, Sarah was contacted by the operators of the FIKA coffee outlet at the High Chart car park. They have concerns about the combined costs of the National Trust lease (£150 per month plus 5% of takings) and the Tandridge District Council street trading licence (£570 for six months). We have met with the FIKA team and are working with them to explore whether these costs can be reduced. An email has recently been sent to Stephanie Fudge, the National Trust's Surrey Hills Manager, to discuss the NT charges.

We have also agreed to support FIKA when their street licence with TDC is renewed in April. The current licence is full-time, although the outlet operates only three mornings a week, and we are hopeful that the TDC Community Services Committee will consider a reduced fee.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, Sarah or Sophie if you have any questions regarding the Friends of Limpsfield Common.

Ann