

## MINUTES for FoLW AGM - held on Thursday 13/04/2023

Committee members:

John Creasey - CBC representative  
Gary Peach - Greensand Trust Ranger  
Brenda Harvey - Chair  
Colin Porter - Treasurer  
Judith Knight - Membership secretary  
Mike Sumpter - IT manager/support admin secretary  
\*Sue Phillips - spokesperson (to stand down after this meeting but remaining as a Warden)  
Ken Barry - Publicity  
Malcom Chaney - Coordinator CBC, GST and contractors  
Magdalena Cosgrave - admin secretary

### AGENDA

1. Welcome FOLW members - Apologies for committee member absence
2. Notification of changes in posts
3. Approval of 2022 AGM minutes
4. Annual Accounts for 2022 and general health of finances
5. Update of current projects; hedge laying, planting of new saplings
6. Volunteer participation - up/down and how to encourage more
7. Site Warden's Report
8. FoLW presence at the Canal Festival in July
9. Appointment of committee members
10. AOB
11. Guest Speaker to deliver: "Citizen science and its value to nature."

Apologies received from: Victoria Harvey, John and Kerstin Hewitt, Bob and Barbara Bansback, Sheila Meekums

### Brenda Harvey as Chair

- Declared the meeting open promptly at 7.30pm by thanking those present and announcing sent apologies for non attendance.
- Confirmed unanimous approval of 2022 AGM minutes.
- Identified changes in posts:
  - John Creasey is now the CBC representative,
  - Jennifer Curtis who was with FoLW from May to November 2022 moved to another post,
  - Gary Peach took over from Jennifer,
  - Sue Phillips has stepped down as spokesperson but will continue as a warden. Sue was thanked heartedly by Brenda and all present for her many years of active involvement within the FoLW committee.

### Colin Porter as Treasurer

- Handed out copies of the annual accounts for the period 1 January 2022 - 31 December 2022 and these were unanimously approved. (See website for full details). Given the healthy balance in the account it was unanimously agreed to keep membership at its current cost.
- There followed a short brainstorm session to identify areas where the woods could benefit from some expenditure. This focused on more signage to increase visibility of: *fire prevention, cycle access and no access areas, notices that the woods are watched over by wardens - it was agreed that more time was needed to consider this item and further ideas will be collated as they are put forward.* However, one idea put forward by Dave Booth did get the green light, to be acted on right away, is the scattering of wild flower seeds along the new path boundaries created by the hedge laying team. The objective being to encourage birds to the area. (John Creasy will arrange for the acquisition of relevant materials)

### **Gary Peach as Greensand Trust Ranger**

- Gave an update of the projects undertaken by the volunteer group in the last 12 months: the ongoing removal of brambles and hazel coppicing on the volunteer work days, hedge laying as a joint venture with Tiddenfoot group. Repair of the hedge along the southern end of the woods to keep the horses out of the woods. Restoration of an old hedgerow by planting 1.000 saplings (supplied by CBC) during a Community Day Activity with a very good turn out. (See website for details of saplings planted). He thanked the efforts of the volunteers who clocked up 782 hours (approx.) over 12 months.

### **Dave Booth as Senior Site Warden**

- Spoke about some pertinent points of his interesting and detailed report by identifying some of the tasks wardens carry out during the many extra hours (530 hours approx.) attributed to the patrolling the woods. Ensuring the safety of the area. For example: 8 bonfire sites have been managed, 6 unsafe tree shelters/dens dismantled, several fallen branches due to high winds removed, and much more. (See website for his full report)
- Dave also made reference to his request, seven years ago, for the woods to be put forward for Local Nature Reserve Status. It is hoped that both the Ancient Woodland and the new woodland will both gain Local Nature Reserve status this year to give it further protection.

### **Judith Knight as membership secretary**

- Reported there are 63 members signed up, 3 of whom are honorary and 25 are fully paid up. She confirmed that most prefer to pay the membership online but there are still the 'cheque' and 'cash' routes available. Details will be included in the Membership reminders to be sent out shortly.
- Some discussion over how to encourage more volunteer participation and membership resulted in agreement that reviving the Newsletter for distribution at the Canal Festival and increasing publicity ie. monthly notice in the 'Bee Magazine' and 'the LB Observer' highlighting each Work Day upcoming and expected tasks might help to raise awareness.
- This year 2023 FoLW will again share a stand with CBC.

### **Brenda Harvey as Chair**

Finalised the Agenda items with the appointment of committee members. Brenda proposed a new Member and Warden for the FoLW, Janice Roberts. Janice was unanimously approved. The rest of the members retained their positions.

### **AOB**

After some confusion as to the meaning of SANG **John Creasey as CBC representative** gave a brief overview of the proposed Plan. This is not the same as *Local Nature Reserve mentioned by Dave*. **SANG** (Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space) Plan has a bursary attached from which a budget can be claimed for the upgrading of paths and general green space areas for its users. However, this plan is still awaiting consultation and it will be some time before it can be applied.

General discussion was given over to areas that need attention:

- Improve the entrance to the wood at Alwins Field where it floods.
- Improve the entrance to the woods at the Knaves Hill.
- Add a rubbish / dog poo bin at the Stoke Road entrance, the most used by dog walkers.
- Replace the information board at Stoke Road entrance.
- Cleaning graffiti on the tunnel vent and on the new wood bench.

Concern was expressed over the lay-by areas near the Stoke Road entrance. The poor condition of the surface area with huge potholes and lack of any kind of maintenance is a magnet for litter. John explained that it is not the responsibility of his department and it is highways who should maintain it. However, it is likely that the costs outstrip the benefits and will not be a priority.

Meeting was declared closed at 20.15 and after a brief break our **Guest Speaker Judith Knight** gave a very interesting and informative talk on : "Citizen science and its value to nature."

During the talk we were made aware of how important it is to participate in schemes such as 'Garden Bird Watch' and many others like it available to us, the public, for measuring the welfare of our wildlife.

Minutes prepared by Magdalena