

FRIENDS OF KNOLLS WOOD
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on Thursday 1 August 2024 at 7.00pm at Rushmere County Park Visitor Centre

1	<p>PRESENT</p> <p>Committee Members Clive Atkins (Chair), Roger Seldon (Treasurer), Diane Liness (Secretary), Fiona Shillitto (Website & Social Media), Jack Owens, Martin Purvis and Pierre Court (Ranger, Greensand Trust).</p> <p>Members Lisa McGee, Jenny Monk and George Monk</p>	ACTIONS
2	<p>INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Members of the Association to the meeting. Apologies were received from Diane Clarke, Helen Bryant and Tony Bryant, who had all appointed the Chair to vote on any decisions on their behalf, and from John Creasey (Senior Countryside Manager, Central Beds Council).</p>	
3	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2023 were reviewed and formally accepted.</p> <p>Matters arising <i>Articles of Association</i> Martin was thanked for the tremendous amount of work he had done to bring these Articles up to date and subsequently have them adopted.</p> <p><i>2024 Meeting and Volunteer dates</i> The meetings for this year had been set, apart from the half term Children's Event which would be held on Wednesday 30 October.</p> <p>The Volunteer working parties would now be consistently referred to as "Volunteer Action Days".</p> <p>MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2024 were reviewed and agreed.</p> <p>Matters arising <i>Newsletter and Facebook articles</i> The frequency and promulgation (currently bi-annually and by electronic media) and possible additional content of newsletters, was discussed. Pierre noted that the Friends of Tiddenfoot Waterside Park and of Linslade Wood were also looking into theirs. This would be considered at the next Committee meeting.</p> <p><i>Additional Volunteer Action Day</i> The Committee had agreed to hold an additional session which would be funded from the monies received from the Co-op Community Fund.</p>	Diane All

4	<p>REPORT FROM THE CHAIR</p> <p>Clive Atkins submitted his presentation reviewing the past twelve months: <i>Friends of Knolls Wood – Aims & Objectives</i> Our objectives, reviewed each year, had been slightly amended last year and Members were asked if there was anything they would like to add or amend.</p> <p>Fiona proposed greater positivity about the “climate debate” by promoting our commitment “to help save the planet” and including benefits such as mental health and air pollution. This would be discussed at the next meeting and Members were asked to submit their suggestions prior to the meeting.</p> <p><i>Events 2023-2024</i> Volunteer Action Days were currently held four times per year plus a Children’s Event in the Autumn half term school holiday. Pierre supported an extra Action Day utilizing the Co-op donation received earlier in the year.</p> <p>The Greensand Trust would be asked to confirm the price (which Pierre had estimated to be in the region of £500-£600) and to include a staff member to oversee the task plus tools required assuming the timing of the event might be, as usual, a Sunday 10am -1pm. Fiona noted that fitting in this additional Action Day would keep our Volunteers engaged.</p> <p><i>Guided Woodland walks</i> We had again organised walks, led by Roger, in conjunction with the Greensand Country Festival and Great Big Green Week in May and June. As well as being pleasant way for people to spend an afternoon or evening, they encouraged people to get engaged with Knolls Wood. Might they be repeated or added to?</p> <p>Both event organisers had their own websites through which we had advertised. Fiona pointed out that this year only 1 person attended the afternoon walk whereas last year it attracted 25, perhaps having already captured anybody interested. Promoting our own walks independently probably would not result in more people turning up.</p> <p>Having a stand at the annual Canal Festival was suggested as a possible platform to recruit Volunteers, by promoting what we do and an opportunity to see what other local organisations were doing (eg Friends of Tiddenfoot and Leighton Linslade Wood) who had attended for several years). Fiona would find out how to go about this.</p> <p><i>Surveys of the Wood</i> The visitors’ survey conducted in August 2022 proved both interesting and beneficial - letting walkers know who we are / what we do and generating a few more volunteers. The Committee was planning another for late September.</p> <p><i>Website, Social Media Platforms and Communications</i> The Website is at the core of our information platform – including dates and reports of events, General Meeting minutes as well as an outline of the Wood’s history and the Friends’ role. Clive noted that John Foreman, who maintained the Website for us, had commented that there was some repetition in it; and the number of people looking at our Website was slightly down on last year. This could be reviewed by the Committee.</p> <p>In addition, Fiona maintained our presence on Facebook and Instagram to capture and communicate with their audiences, with Martin engaging with NextDoor.</p> <p>A discussion followed on what we could do to increase interest and engage more people. A WhatsApp group for Members, as used for the Committee and for Volunteers, was suggested. Other local platforms which could be explored included Leighton Buzzard is Great! and Totally Leighton Buzzard (both on Facebook), Bee Local magazine (already used</p>	<p>Diane All</p> <p>Chair</p> <p>All</p> <p>Fiona</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p>
---	---	---

5	<p>REPORT FROM THE TREASURER</p> <p>Roger Seldon noted that we currently had a healthy financial position due to donations received. He presented his report for financial year 2023-2024 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opening balance at the beginning of the period was £991.34. • The end balance at the end of the period was £1,663.03. • Incoming finances were predominantly the Co-op Community Fund donation of £910.50. • Expenditure - Facebook expenses £21.80 and advertising £15.99, Web hosting and domain renewal £160.10, Secretary expenses £16.97, SGM refreshments £4.45, Volunteer Fair donation and Get Well Gifts £14.50 and £5.00. • We have also secured donations from Waitrose and there was a little more to come from the Co-op community fund later in the year. <p>Roger noted that some Members had borne expenses to continue our work which he recommended should be reimbursed. This was approved.</p> <p>The cost of previous tree plantings had been covered by Central Beds Council charitable funding. Additional plantings, such as being considered for the Taylors Ride entrance, might also qualify for Central Beds Council or Leighton Linlade Town Council funding. The Committee would explore that possibility.</p>	Diane All
6	<p>ELECTION OF COMMITTEE 2023-2024</p> <p>Clive Atkins reported that he was standing down as Chair (after 20 years) though would continue as a Member of the Committee. He was thanked for his work and commitment.</p> <p>Martin Purvis had offered and was being nominated for Chair. The other existing Committee Members were willing to stand again for election to the offices they hold and all, together with Lisa McGee, as Committee Members.</p> <p>Other nominations were invited before proceeding to vote. There were none.</p> <p>Each position was proposed and put to the vote:</p> <p>Martin Purvis – Chair (proposed by Clive and seconded by Diane), Roger Seldon – Treasurer (proposed by Clive and seconded by Jack), Diane Liness – Secretary (proposed by Martin and seconded by Fiona), Fiona Shillitto – Website & Social Media (proposed by Martin and seconded by Diane), Clive Atkins (proposed by Jack and seconded by Martin), Jack Owens (proposed by Clive and seconded by Roger), and Lisa McGee (nominated by Fiona and seconded by Martin in March).</p> <p>It was agreed that the Committee would operate with this membership for 2024-25.</p>	
7	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>Pierre announced that he would be leaving the Greensand Trust at the end of the month to start a new position at the Kent Wildlife Trust. The meeting thanked him for everything he had done for us and wished him well for the future.</p>	
8	<p>DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The 2025 AGM meeting date would be arranged at a future Committee meeting.</p>	Martin