

FRIENDS OF KNOLLS WOOD
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on Tuesday 20 June 2023 at Rushmere Park Visitors Centre

1	<p>PRESENT Clive Atkins (Chair), Roger Seldon (Treasurer), Diane Liness (Secretary), Fiona Shillitto (Website & Social Media), Martin Purvis. Pierre Court (Ranger, Greensand Trust) and John Creasey (Senior Countryside Manager, Central Beds Council).</p> <p>The meeting was also attended by: David Burke, Helen Ingle, Dave & Ann Cheeseman, Edwina Osborne and Frank & Jackie Grover who had responded to the Notice inviting past and new Members to come along to the AGM, and they confirmed their intent either to remain or become Friends and to be included in the Register of Members.</p>	ACTIONS
2	<p>NOTICE, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES Clive Atkins welcomed all those attending. He outlined the notification process the Committee had adopted to ensure any past and prospective participants had Notice of the meeting with the intention of revitalising the Association and then updating its Constitution, and the plan for this evening's event. The Notice was taken as read and the Chairman presented the Agenda. Apologies had been received from a number of Members, including Jack Owens a committee member unable to attend (who had granted the Chair authority to vote in his name, at his discretion, on matters arising from the meeting which required a vote).</p>	
3	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM MEETING The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2022 were reviewed and formally accepted.</p> <p>Matters arising <i>AGM attendance</i> This year's AGM had been advertised via newsletters delivered to the last-known addresses of past members as well as several hundred homes in the vicinity of Knolls Wood, and made available at noticeboards and on the Friends' social media channels four weeks before the event. The exercise had proved to be more successful than in recent years and resulted in positive responses and an increased attendance.</p> <p><i>History timeline</i> The timeline is now available on our Website and thanks were extended to Fiona for her diligent work in putting this important reference document together.</p> <p><i>Watering system</i> We had held various discussions about installing a watering system for the Wood (this was during a spell of very high temperatures) and spoke to Leighton Buzzard Golf Club about tapping into their system or via a bowser, neither of which could be realistically achieved.</p> <p><i>Volunteering tasks</i> The Greensand Trust Rangers conducted regular inspections of the Wood to identify tasks that could be carried out by our Volunteer Sessions, which had included the new tree plantings.</p> <p><i>Eco Social Group</i> Fiona was going along to these group meetings on a monthly basis which was attended by like-minded people.</p>	

4	<p>REPORT FROM THE CHAIR</p> <p>Clive Atkins submitted the following report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FoKW Objectives – The Objectives were presented and Clive talked the meeting through the current objectives, explaining they are kept under review and updated from time to time. • Articles of Association - As the Constitution, originally set up in the 1970s had become out of date, it was proposed to re-write the document; updated Articles of Association including how we are going to operate going forward with our new membership would be circulated for approval at a future meeting. <p>Clive noted that he would be happy to receive any comments and suggestions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings and Events - We currently hold four committee meetings per year on Tuesday evenings, four Volunteer sessions on Sunday mornings and a Childrens' event in the October half term, and recent walks introduced for the public had also been a success. Every Member would be invited to attend any, or all, of these events. • Volunteer numbers remained low despite leaflet drops to 380 local households in the immediate area. Any ideas to boost these numbers would be very welcome. • Communications are mainly by the Friends' website and its social media channels (Facebook and Instagram) and the Committee is conscious of the need to reach a wider and younger audience. Again, any ideas would be welcome. • We have a very good relationship with both the Greensand Trust and Central Beds Council which we were keen to maintain. • We had lost track of some of our Members, which prompted the exercise to advertise via a formal Notice. As a result, we had received a number of responses and were now able to identify approximately 30 Members going forward. • When this organisation was originally set up, every Member knew each other as neighbours. However, since then several have moved away from the area and newcomers moved in, some have continued to attend our Volunteer sessions and we were not exactly sure who constituted "Members" now. • Our aim was to re-establish and re-confirm the organisation with a new/ongoing membership, some of whom are present at this meeting. • After this meeting, the former memberships will lapse and the organisation will be reformed with our newly-identified Members. • We will aim to communicate with our Members by email and arrange a get together during the course of the year when hopefully more Members will attend. • We hope to raise some funds through a number of sources in the future which might be discussed with Members at an ordinary meeting. • The numbers attending this AGM meeting totaled more than one third of the membership necessary for the meeting to be quorate. 	<p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p>
5	<p>REPORT FROM THE TREASURER</p> <p>Roger Seldon noted that we currently have a healthy financial position and presented his report for financial year 2022-2023 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opening balance at the beginning of the period was £643.49 • The end balance at the end of the period was £901.49. • Incoming finances were predominantly from Central Beds Council for the Tree Planting Grant in the sum of £1,106.04 and the Waitrose Community Grant for £600. • Expenditure was £154 website maintenance, £16.07 for a replacement leaflet holder, £1,106.04 to Ashridge Trees Ltd for planting in Area 2 and £82.08 for printing the AGM Notices and Newsletters. The trees were therefore at nil cost to us following receipt of the CBC grant. • The Waitrose Community Grant was being cut and the distribution decreased. The £600 we had been awarded was unlikely to be repeated in the near future. 	

6	<p>REPORT FROM THE GREENSAND TRUST AND CENTRAL BEDS COUNCIL</p> <p>Pierre Court and John Creasey submitted the following report:</p> <p><i>Management Plan 2023-28</i></p> <p>Roger had read through the Plan and offered some minor comments as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Query about reference to the Ouzel Valley Park and John confirmed that there was an Ouzel Valley Park Steering Group who meet every couple of months. • Section 2.1 – delete “towards the North end sycamore is dominant”. Add Grass Snakes to wildlife and Owls to bird list. • 2.3 – Add Robert Marnock as Superintendent of Planting (also responsible for Regents Park Gardens). • 3.1 – Delete section on bicycles and horses. • 3.3 – We have done most of the things on the list. Oakbank School needs a mention as they come into the Wood most days. Contact Anna Larkin. • 4.2 – Laurel needs to be included as an invasive tree/shrub. • 5.1 – Include Friends of Knolls Wood in Most management work is undertaken • 5.2 -1.3m refers to girth. • 5.5 – We now have 3 dog bins on site which are regularly emptied, not thought necessary to instigate a positive publicity campaign. • 6.2 – Again include Laurel with Rhododendron etc. <p>Objective. Method section (in green) 0 Scrub – add Laurel.</p> <p>Ground flora and shrub layer – add Laurel. Bird and Bat boxes – Add Owl box.</p> <p>7.1 – Delete bench. Regular monitoring of site – include Friends in Lead Partners.</p> <p>7.3 – We need to maintain newly planted areas.</p> <p>7.4 – Delete interpretation boards as we have these in the Noticeboards.</p> <p>Objectives – delete removal of Monkey Puzzle fence.</p>	
7	<p>ELECTION OF COMMITTEE 2023-2024</p> <p>Turning to the election of Officers and Committee members, Clive invited nominations and for any Member interested in joining in any capacity to volunteer. Present Committee Members confirmed that they were willing to continue in their current roles; no others coming forward, each position was proposed and put to the vote:</p> <p>Clive Atkins – Chair (proposed by Martin and seconded by Fiona), Roger Seldon – Treasurer (proposed by Diane and seconded by Martin), Diane Liness – Secretary (proposed by Clive and seconded by Roger), Fiona Shillitto - Website & Social Media (proposed by Roger and seconded by Martin), Jack Owens – Committee (proposed by Martin and seconded by Roger) and Martin Purvis – Committee (proposed by Clive and seconded by Diane).</p> <p>Each was approved unanimously and appointed.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Committee would continue to operate with this membership for 2023-24.</p>	

8	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>Clive thanked everyone for attending the meeting, particularly the new Members who were welcome to ask for any further information.</p> <p>Question 1 – <i>How did we go about choosing new trees for the Wood?</i> John Creasey explained that an extensive survey of the Wood had been carried out by Claire Wardle, Central Beds Senior Countryside Officer in 2021 who recommended species which would not be prone to disease or affected by climate change (as were some of the original species) and would also be beneficial to wildlife.</p> <p>Question 2 – <i>Will we plant trees that have been donated by local households?</i> The trees we have planted in Areas 1 and 2 were purchased “passported” from a local supplier but any opportunity to involve local people by donating trees would be an interesting idea and could possibly link in with local school involvement. John noted that the woodland canopy in Knolls Wood was quite full but we had managed to identify two suitable areas for planting in connection with the Central Beds Tree Planting Grant.</p>	
9	<p>DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The 2024 AGM date would be arranged at a future Committee meeting and publicised.</p>	Clive
	<p><i>The meeting was followed by an interesting and passionate presentation from Em Robinson from Fight for Wildlife about “The Value of Fungal Diversity”.</i></p> <p><i>Chad Killoran displayed his wonderful examples of his wildlife art and sustainable fashion.</i></p>	