

FOKW AGM JULY 5TH 2017

PRESENT: Clive Atkins, Chris Christoforou, John Cook, Maggie Cook, Mick Hewett, Rosemary Hewett, Marjorie Hounscome, Julie Lau, Claire Mills, Jack Owens, Gary Peach, Anne Smart

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Clive welcomed everyone to this 2017 Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Knolls Wood

APOLOGIES were received from Jenny Monk, Roger Seldon, Sylvia and Taffy Williams

MINUTES OF 2016 AGM AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the 2016 AGM were accepted - proposed by Jack Owens and seconded by Mick Hewett.

Matters arising from the minutes:

Nothing has happened about the task of filling in the holly hedge gaps on the edge of Plantation Road. It is the responsibility of the Highways Department. The job hasn't been forgotten but discussions are still going on. Gary will let us know when decisions have been made. Clive suggested that we put it on the agenda for the meeting when Paul Burgess will be in attendance

Taking up the point from last year's AGM, Mick pointed out that there have been more volunteers at the **Volunteer Sessions** lately. Claire reported that there was a good range of ages. People shouldn't feel pressurised into coming for a full 3 hours but every little helps. We can see that our work is making a difference. It's also a social thing. Gary said that if many more people had turned out then he would have been struggling to find things for everyone to do because we are still in the nesting season. The **Owl box** is to be moved to a better place, possibly in the south side of the wood, where it's not so busy.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Notice boards

Julia gave good feedback about the notice boards. They have improved greatly. Thanks to Toni and Roger and Claire for refreshing them from time to time.

Chairman Clive Atkins projected his presentation (please see separate document)

Under the section "OUR OBJECTIVES"

Item 1: it was agreed that we should emphasise the educational element

It was decided that the wording be changed from "potential educational value" to "facilitate educational opportunities".

Anne mentioned that a notice that had been placed on a tree created more attention than notices on the notice board because a lot of people ignore what's on the notice board.

Children's Event - 11am – 1pm Wednesday October 25th

Mick said that we sometimes have problems coming up with ideas for the Children's Event but this year the activities will be to "Identify The Tree" and "Leaf Drawing"

Holding the event in the October half term seems to be quite successful. Communication is important. Leaflets will be distributed to the local schools

Website: This is an important archive for FoKW. Claire is our single point of contact with John Foreman who is constantly making improvements. It is fascinating to find out where visitors to the site come from. Should we include new links to local organisations such as the Hawk and Owl Trust and the Bedfordshire Natural History Society (BNHS)?

It is important to attract local people.

Facebook

Claire is maintaining the Facebook page. She suggested that those of us who use Facebook share the posts and show "likes" to raise our profile. Discussion followed about how to use the Facebook page to the best advantage. For a £2 fee you can have the site go to the top of the list.

What about Twitter? Gary said that the GST have a Twitter account which they use for advertising events. The Facebook page is a public page.

Claire reported that we have 74 Facebook followers but each post reaches about 220 people, primarily from Leighton Buzzard, followed by Heath and Reach, Linslade and, lastly, Milton Keynes. 66% are women, 33% male. The followers are growing. Claire wants to keep the posts positive and make the page interesting by refreshing it regularly.

It was felt that the greater numbers attending our Volunteer Sessions can be attributed to the publicity through Facebook and the website. Do we create events? Yes we do.

Volunteer Sessions and the website will be included in the agenda for the next committee meeting
There was discussion about the low numbers attending the Annual General Meeting. What puts people off coming to the AGM? What else can we do to encourage a better attendance?
Our biggest attendance seemed to be the year when the presentation was about the changes to Rushmere.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Maggie read out Roger's report.

- * We don't need to spend money on trees because we manage to source them free
- * Regarding the Waitrose token scheme, the more people who go into the store to apply for the token scheme, the higher up the list your organisation goes. Claire will get a few forms from Waitrose so that several of us can apply for the scheme again
- * Is there anything that we need to raise funds for? Tesco demands us to be specific about this

Jack asked about the Heath Wood and Linslade Wood friends groups. How do they fund their work?
Gary doesn't know anything about their fundraising. Mick thought that the Linslade Wood probably gets a lot of publicity. It's a much bigger wood and is near the main road and near housing. John Creasey may be able to tell us. Maggie will email John and ask if we can contact the Linslade Wood Friends to ask how they raise their funds. Marjorie suggested that we have conversations with people when we meet them in the wood and make them aware of our work. We don't have any projects at the moment for which we need to raise funds. When we have a specific project then we can go round asking for money. It was decided that we may want to do this in about a year's time.

RE-ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE

Chairman - Clive is happy to stand

Secretary - Maggie will stand again

Treasurer – Roger, in his absence, was proposed as Treasurer

Claire is happy to stand

Jack will stand again

Jenny (in her absence) is happy to stand again

Sylvia is standing down. The Chairman, on behalf of the committee, expressed his gratitude for all the work Sylvia has put in over the years. She will be missed, although she has made it known that she will be continuing to help at future Volunteer Sessions

It was proposed that Chris become a formal committee member if he is happy with this. He is happy to continue on the committee as our resident Naturalist

Strimmer – John Cook, along with Roger, has recently become qualified to use the strimmer and will be happy to be called upon when needed

AOB

There was no AOB.

There followed a short break followed by a talk on "Fungi" by Chris Christoforou

ACTIONS

- Maggie will put the holly hedge job on the agenda for the meeting when Paul Burgess will be in attendance
- Maggie will change the wording of the Objectives section of the Constitution from "potential educational value" to "facilitate educational opportunities"
- Maggie will include "Volunteer Sessions" and "Website" in the agenda for the next committee meeting
- Claire will get several forms from Waitrose so that several of us can apply for the scheme again
- Maggie will email John Creasey and ask if we can contact the Linslade Wood Friends to ask how they raise their funds