

Minutes of the Fairfield Association Annual General Meeting held on 23rd June 2010 at the Friends Meeting House.

Present: Wendy Anderson, David and Clare Austen, Jon Barry, Helen Bennett, Sheila Beven, Andrew Brennand, Dave Brookes, Steve Bullen, Margaret Burtonwood, Cherry Canovan, John and Doreen Champness, H. Cleasby, I. Cleasby, David Costley-Wood, Ann and Sid Duncan, Helen Easton, Anne Elliot, Pat Edmondson, David Farthin, M. Foxall, Oliver Fulton, Carol Groom, Ian Groom, Ruth Haigh, Warwick Hardy, Hazel Harrison, Sheila Henderson, Helen Hicks, Henry Hicks, Deirdre Jacks, Richard Leadbeater, Jane Littlejohn, James McDowell, Margaret Masters, Alan Morris, Jean Mussell, Sue Nieduszynska, Jude Naish, Geoff Oliver, Jane Parker, Dorothy and Gordon Phillips, Rebecca Procter, Ian Reader, Jane and Hermione Roff, Hilary Short, Mick Short. Mary Ridley, Jean Stuart, Paul Shackley, Michael Sheppard, Sarah Taylor, Aileen Torday, Ceri Turner, Pat and Rod Waters, Pamela White, Graeme Williams, Ann Woodfine.

Apologies: None.

Matters Arising: None

The Minutes for the last AGM, held on 9th June 2009, were accepted.

Chair's Report: Fairfield Association – Chairman's Report 2010

Since we will be receiving additional reports this evening from the various projects that are underway it is my intention to keep this report brief and to the point.

This has been my first year as Chairman, and I am incredibly fortunate to have inherited the Chair of a well organised, well thought of and energetic Association. My thanks are extended to all the committee members and the previous Chairman Michael Sheppard for making the assumption of my new responsibilities as pain free as possible.

As the preceding meeting showed, we are currently engaged in two very large and significant projects to protect and enhance community and green spaces in Lancaster. Oliver Fulton has slaved tirelessly to make the Fairfield Association Urban Nature Area (FAUNA) a reality and this is the year that things have really come together. He has been successful in growing a seed of £5,000 from the Association into £100,000 to meet the costs of building the nature reserve. Our five was followed by fifteen from the County Council, thirty from the Lancashire Environment Fund and we are pretty hopeful of fifty from the National Lottery's Community Spaces fund. This demonstrates two things: firstly that Oliver and the people he has gathered to assist in bid drafting are amazingly effective, and secondly that the money we raise as an Association can be leveraged ingeniously. Every 50p piece that is dropped into the collecting bucket at an event is important.

This is worth bearing in mind when we consider our second large project, the appeal to raise enough money to buy the fields adjacent to FAUNA. This has been masterminded by Mick Short, but he is not alone and is making good use of recently recruited volunteers to make the fund raising process as effective as possible. The amount of pledges we have received so far is very impressive, but we can use every penny raised over the summer to increase our chances of success. Everyone here can

get involved and feel part of the process. Donations of time, energy and organisational expertise are just as welcome, indeed without them we will not succeed.

The energy of Association members has delivered a full and varied calendar of community events this year. Since the last AGM we have organised, run and enjoyed no fewer than nine well attended events. In chronological order these were Fun Day, Apple Day, Carol Singing in town and on Christmas Eve, Wassailing, the Easter Egg Hunt, the Blossom Picnic, Go Wild Week and the recent Kwik Cricket match. Our thanks as an Association go out to everyone who organised, helped out at and attended these events. If anyone feels like they would like to be involved in the next year's calendar of events then please let me know.

We do not focus solely on events though – the Association provides facilities and services to the people of Lancaster throughout the year. The playground on Fairfield Green continues to be well used, and I would like to extend a special series of thanks to the fathers who assisted me with the removal of graffiti and the team who are preparing the plaques for installation. The Millennium Orchard is also a focus for daily activity, and a great deal of effort has been put in behind the scenes to ensure our Breathing Places grant was wisely spent. To those who spent countless hours planning and proof-reading the imminent information boards my heartfelt thanks. Anyone who can spot an errant comma when they are installed will win my children's pocket money for a week. The Bug Hotels have been opened for business, and local schools have been making good use of the Orchard for educational visits. Volunteers continue in Stakhanovite fashion with their diligent maintenance of the trees, paths and flora. For their energy and engagement we are grateful.

There have been other successes this year, which demonstrate that we are an Association that continues to thrive. Our Secretary Hilary Short has demonstrated she is an alchemist when submitting grant applications, and has had grants for new signs for the apple trees, the installation of commemorative plaques and the Fun day marquee awarded. We have also built upon the sterling work of the previous Chairman and developed our links with the local media, appearing on BBC Radio Lancashire a handful of times and making the front page of the Lancaster Guardian with our fields appeal. Communications with members has also been ably managed by Ruth Haigh, who has kept a diligent eye on the membership database and coordinated the delivery of newsletters and fliers to the Fairfield area. Her ability to conjure suitable names from the ether when a particular task needs doing has been particularly effective this year, and we have managed to involve a number of new members in various projects. We are never short of jobs that need doing – so if you feel like you can get involved in any way then please let Ruth know. Whether your talent is baking cakes, digging holes or taking minutes, the Fairfield Association needs you.

Finally, I would like to thank the only Committee member I have not thanked so far, Jude Naish our Treasurer. She's hanging up her abacus this year, but we're truly grateful for her years of service. To show this gratitude we've bought her a bunch of flowers. Since she's standing down she doesn't need to worry about processing the receipt.

Treasurer's Report: Jude Naish circulated the accounts for a year in which our receipts were £6,846 and our expenditure was £12,805. She commented that our payments exceed our receipts largely because we have spent most of a Breathing Places Grant received in the previous financial year. She commented specifically on Fundraising over the course of the year which raised £3,431 (this

included £946 in fundraising related costs) and £531 in membership fees. The full accounts are appended.

Jude formally asked for the right to change the signatories to our bank account, to include Andrew Brennand (chair) and the new treasurer. This was agreed by the meeting.

Membership Report: Ruth Haigh, the membership secretary, reported that our membership is steady at around 120 and also that around 80% of our members regularly help in some way. There are also many non-members who regularly help. The meeting was reminded that it is now possible for members to use a standing order. It was also reported that Fairfield has become a popular district for people moving into the area on account of its known sense of community.

Ruth was asked about the definition of Fairfield and after some deliberation the meeting concluded that the Fairfield Association is defined by its work within Lancaster, and that on a more local level we are defined by the area to which we deliver. It was suggested that our boundaries are somewhere between the two and Ruth added that our furthest member lives in Peru.

Election of Officers

Office	Name	Proposed	Seconded	Result
Chairman	Andrew Brennand	Michael Sheppard	Hilary Short	elected
Secretary	Hilary Short	Andrew Brennand	Mary Ridley	elected
Membership	Ruth Haigh	Henry Hicks	Mick Short	elected
Secretary				
Treasurer	Jane Parker	Jude Naish	Mick Short	elected

All the officers were elected unanimously.

Orchard Report:

Mick short reported that as a result of the Breathing Places grant there have been numerous educational visits from primary and nursery schools in 2009 and that these have been very successful. He thanked Tony Finn for his work in liaising with schools and organising these events. The insect houses also result from the Breathing Places grant and new information and notice boards will soon be in place. The Orchard is maintained entirely by volunteers and Mick thanked Simon Gershon for his work in organising the volunteers and his commitment to maintaining the Orchard. He also thanked all the people who regularly help and Jonathan Tansley who has taken over from Simon as the organiser of the volunteers. Mick said that all were welcome to come along and help on the second Saturday of every month between 10 am and 1pm or on in the evening on the last Wednesday of the month between 7.30 pm and 9.30 pm. Tea and biscuits are provided.

This has been a year in which a lot of work has been done on the trees and in particular on the large sycamore and ash. Mick thanked Andy Lee for his careful and sensitive pruning of the trees.

There have been some problems during the year particularly around the picnic table which has become a place where people congregate to drink and barbecue. There has also been tree-barking around this area. Mick asked anybody who witnessed destructive behaviour or fires in the Orchard to contact us immediately; a contact number is given on the noticeboards. He also asked for permission to remove the picnic table. The meeting voted by 17 votes to 9, with numerous abstentions, to remove the picnic table.

Mick reported that the regular programme of events in the Orchard, (Wassailing, an Easter Egg Hunt, Go Wild Week and Apple Day) remains very popular and thanked all those who organised an event or helped. Photographs and reports of Orchard activities are on the website as are details of the Orchard Subgroup which meets on the first Monday of every month at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close. All are welcome.

FAUNA

Oliver Fulton described a busy year in which progress had been made largely thanks to the support of Lucia Marquart, from Lancashire County Council. Thanks were given to Lucia. Oliver reported that the County Council had been helpful throughout the year and had paid for plans and consultation as well as providing £15,000 of funding for the creation of FAUNA. The help given by Jon Barry, as a city councillor, has supported our efforts, over many years and continues to do so. Oliver said that the £5,000 which the Fairfield Association committed to the project had been a helpful lever. We now hope to be able to start the project in September and will be looking for volunteers to plant hedges and also to monitor wildlife. Natural England who have also given us help and advice, are keen that we should develop educational links.

A question from the floor asked about the prospects for FAUNA should there be housing development on the fields to the south of it, and the possibility of transferring funds from the FAUNA project to the fields if there is a shortfall in the money required to buy them. Oliver replied that the quality of FAUNA would certainly be reduced should it become surrounded by houses. In terms of transferring money to the fields fund, he said the situation was mixed. The money committed by the Fairfield Association can certainly be transferred; the £15,000 given to us by Lancashire County Council *may* be able to be transferred. However, the majority of the money from LEF and the Lottery could only be used on FAUNA. Michael Sheppard pointed out that although the sale of the fields presents a real opportunity, we remain committed to *all* our project.

A vote of thanks was given to Oliver for all his work.

Fields Update: There was a short meeting immediately before the AGM which provided information about the project to buy the fields and took questions on what we knew about plans for housing, who we were working with, how we would secure the fields in their natural state for future generation and our motivation for choosing a particular field.

Mick Short proposed that the committee should look at the FA Constitution to see if it provided sufficient protection for the land the FA owns and the land we might buy. If not it was agreed that we should work towards a suitable amendment. The meeting agreed that the committee should

look at the constitution with a view to amending it if required. Oliver offered a vote of thanks to Mick for all his energy, enthusiasm and hard work.

AOB

The next FA meeting is on 14th July at 49 Wingate Saul Road. The dates of all our meetings are available from our website and all are welcome.