

Minutes of the Fairfield Association Annual General Meeting held on 20th June 2017 at the Friends Meeting House.

Hilary Short, Chair, Wendy Anderson, David Austin, Clare Austin, Mandy Bannon, Kathy Barton, Jon Barry, Dave Brookes, Steve Bullen, Margaret Burtonwood, John Cheshire, Julia Cheshire, Patricia Clarke, Davis Dawson, Sharon Diffenthal, Ian Diffenthal, Liz Eyes, Tony Finn, Ian Fraser, Anna Fraser, Helen French, Oliver Fulton, Clio Graham, Ruth Haigh, Helen Hicks, Henry Hicks, Carole Martin, Anne Murphy, Sue Neiduszynska, Geoff Oliver, Jane Parker, Ian Procter, Suzanne Procter, Rebecca Procter, Mick Short, Ruth Tanner, Rod Waters, Pat Waters, Elaine Weedy, Pamela White, Shirley Rawsthorne, Secretary.

1. Welcome

Hilary welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Andrew Brennand, David Elliott, Glenys and Paul Ferguson, Deidre Jacks.

3. Minutes of 2016 AGM

The minutes were agreed.

4. Chair's Report

Hilary delivered the Chairs report:

- The variety and volume of work undertaken by the Fairfield Association increases every year. For example, hedge layers had committed 250 hours.
- The Association has been recognised with The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service; Hilary thanked all the volunteers for their achievements.
- The Sharing Heritage project has resulted in a new web page where local people share their memories of the long pads path and surrounding area and an article published in Contrebis magazine.
- Schools activities are thriving.
- The Aldcliffe Road Triangle is approaching completion.
- A full programme of community events has taken place this year; thanks were given to Andrew Brennand for arranging the 20th Anniversary Fun Day.
- Significant funds were raised from the sale of calendars and cards; Carole Martin's Fairfield recipe book will go on sale at the Open Garden event in July. Thanks were extended to two children from Aldcliffe Road, Matilda and Finbar, for their special fundraising efforts.
- The 'Beyond the Castle' meadow project provided funding for a scything course; there will be a joint exhibition in late summer.
- Thanks were extended to Julia McDowell, who is stepping down as webmaster.
- Funding is still being sought for the Pony Wood footpath, and the Lancashire Environment Fund has been approached. Hilary explained that a maximum grant of £30k could be topped up from FA funds.
- Hilary offered her thanks to recorders, communicators, organisers, ground workers and bakers and photographers.

See report at Appendix A

5. Imminent Events

- Open Garden – 1-2 July 2017
- Apple Day – 23 September 2017

6. Treasurer's Report

Jane presented her report, and explained that 'restricted funds' refers to amounts that are ring-fenced for particular projects. Thanks were extended to Alan Burton, who had examined the accounts. It was suggested that Jane looked at a couple of alternatives to the Co-op Bank, who have reduced the amount of interest to nil. Ecology Building Society was suggested.

Jane explained that a reserve of funds was needed to pay for work which couldn't be carried out by volunteers.

In response to a question about the abolition of annual membership fees, Mick Short explained that there was a great deal of bureaucracy involved in chasing up payment of fees, and the 'Friends' scheme had proved a popular alternative. Hilary explained that the matter was kept under review at regular meetings.

See Appendix B for full report.

7. Education Report

Tony explained that there had been an increase in visits from schools, who had been involved in wildflower projects, birdwatching and exploring their local environment.

Students from Beaumont College had visited to carry out some supervised hedge-trimming as part of a bid for the John Muir award.

Dallas Road had offered to put some willow sculptures in the Orchard.

Disappointment was expressed at the difficulty in attracting visits from secondary schools.

Tony explained that Natural England awarded FA a grant of £500, and pay £100 per school visit. He thanked Trish Robinson and June Moriarty for their help with the schools project.

8. Election of Trustees and Officers

Hilary advised that advance notice of the election of trustees and officers was given in the most recent newsletter and the website.

Trustees Andrew Brennand, Dave Brookes, Michael Sheppard, Hilary Short and Mick Short were re-elected as trustees. Sue Nieduszynska continues to serve as a trustee.

Hilary was re-elected as Chair, and Jane and Shirley were re-elected as Treasurer and Secretary respectively.

9. Standing Item for Notification of third parties of change to trustees.

Nothing to report.

10. Items for Discussion – the future of Little Wood

Hilary explained that one of the outcomes of the Flora consultation in 2013, had been a vote in favour of Little Wood becoming open to the public. Ian Procter, who had attended a Woodland Management course, explained why that isn't the preferred option of conservationists:

- The wood is small; therefore a path would encroach on much of the interesting fauna.
- It has been free from grazing animals for centuries, which means it has been able to support three levels of fauna, including ancient trees. This will be compromised if a path, and people and dogs cause disturbance.
- The woodland is a haven for interesting fauna, which would be displaced if there was public access.

It was therefore decided, unanimously, that the wood will remain closed to the public.

11. Short Flora, Fauna and FA report

- Sue reported an increase in diversity of species across the Reserve, including birds and invertebrates.
- The size of the herd of White Park cattle is regularly reviewed.

See full report at Appendix C.

12. Short FOTT Update

Dave advised that the Tesco grant is almost exhausted. The money has been spent mainly on materials, labour being provided by volunteers.

The workshop is currently being cleaned and prepared for use by craftspeople.

13. Short Playground Update

- Andrew's sent a brief report: maintenance has continued through winter with the climbing nets repaired, the safety surface tidied up and the roundabout enjoying a full service. In the next few weeks, the pull-up rope on the multi-unit will be replaced. He encouraged us all to feel free to take some sand paper to any grafitti they spotted and encourage people to put their litter in the bins now the summer weather is here.

14. Any Other Business

Geoff reported that there are currently 70 friends, generating an income of £5k per annum. Forms are available on the website.