

FoLW AGM - MINUTES from 01/05/2025

1. Brenda - Welcome FOLW members.
19 Present: Brenda Harvey, Judith Knight, Ken Barry, Magda Cosgrave, Mike Sumpter, Derek Jones, Mike Cosgrave, Councillor Victoria Harvey, Janet Wood, Stephen Tyson, Rona Tyson, Sue Phillips, Dave Booth, Sue Booth, Gary Ross, Philip Braybrook, John Creasey (CBC Countryside Officer), Gary Peach (GST Ranger), Siobhan Vincent (CBC guest speaker).
Apologies from: Gill King, Andrew King, Colin Porter, Jan Roberts.
2. 2024 Minutes approved.
3. Gary Peach, Greensands Ranger, reports on the volunteer activities over the last 12 months. In summary, identifies the success of the water deflection and drainage channels in two areas. Brash and Briar clearing north of the 'picnic area' to create a wild grassland/wild flower meadow to allow for further biodiversity and in turn alleviate it from water clogging. Ride widening work has continued with significant removal of dead Ash and Larch to enable the recovery of grassland and encourage wild orchids to return. The installation of two waymark posts and several more benches are now available for the users of the woods. He concludes by thanking the volunteers and wardens. (See Gary's full report on FOLW Website/FaceBook)
4. Colin Porter (absent) submits his 2024 Annual Accounts via Magdalena. In summary as of 31st December the balance is £2,144.86. It is agreed that subscription will not be raised this year and remain at £5, £8 for couples. Expenditure projected for 2025 will be discussed at the next committee meeting and is expected to include the purchase of wild seed and planks of wood for bench replacement. (Colin's full report is published on FOLW Website/FaceBook)
5. Ken Barry has not been able to arrange regular publicity spots in either the Bee Magazine or About Town due to the lack of information supplied to him. Philip suggests that he and Gill King may be able to help in producing some short notices.
6. Philip Braybrook is happy to report that FaceBook views had grown to 333 at the last reading due to sharing with the wider community and thanks Dave Booth for his support. (See Philip's full report on The FOLW Website/FaceBook.)
7. Mike Sumpter again made a plea for someone with more advanced website management/maintenance skills to help. The usual suggestion of contact with schools is discussed with the pros and cons. Victoria Harvey has a possible solution and this will be followed up. Meanwhile, he will continue to post whatever information relevant to Linslade Woods is forwarded to him.
8. Judith Knight is concerned there is not enough interest in participation from the local community. After some discussion it was agreed to re-activate some activities of the past, such as:
 - 'Discovery Walk Around' to identify plants, tree, birds, bugs, the history of the woods. This was received positively and a few dates will be discussed.
 - Subscriptions, as mentioned before, will not be increased.
 - With regards to the 'Peabody Development Plan' there has been an updated proposal.
 - The pony field now advertised for sale for £30,000. It was suggested a community buy-out could be considered. Victoria Harvey was very keen on this possibility and pointed out the need for a dedicated Bank a/c to be able to proceed and stressed the importance of a quick Action Plan for which she is willing take on the lead role. Brenda Harvey agreed to support her.***Please see Note at the foot of Minutes**
9. Dave Booth went through his Site Warden's Report. In summary 8 site wardens clock -up approximately 500 volunteer hours. And the latest news is that the Woods have been mapped with 'What 3 Words'
(See Dave's full report published on the FOLW Website/Facebook page)

10. No new nominations were put forward and members present voted unanimously in favour for the existing committee. Judith announced this will be her last year as Membership Secretary.
11. 'Butterfly Survey' - Gill King was absent and a brief reference was made to this Project which reassuringly shows regular appearances by 8 species across the wood.
(See Gill's full survey on FOLW Website/Facebook)
12. Date for 2026 AGM - This was fixed for **Wednesday 29th April** with preference for it to be held in Linslade, venue TBA. Siobhan commented making the AGM a social early evening event with refreshment and 'nibbles' may get a better attendance.
13. AOB - Victoria Harvey makes a plea for SANG money to be used for for bramble management.
 - Victoria also requests copies of all Surveys conducted re Peabody and Pony Field.
 - The possibility of CBC taking over the pony field was raised. John Creasey and Siobhan will explore that possibility.
14. Guest Speaker - Siobhan Vincent from CBC delivers a detailed explanation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Legislation has been introduced country-wide to encourage wildlife and biodiversity over a 10 year programme. To this end counties are obliged to map existing reserve areas and discuss with all the land owners what must be/should be done. Our area covers Luton, Bedford and CBC, and will need to incorporate the 'Blue Lens Network' (a focus on water environment). To find out more about this strategy please see the following website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-nature-recovery-strategies>
CBC will also publish relevant information on its website, so keep a look out for it.

Siobhan also spoke about the allocation of money under the SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) scheme. It was reassuring to hear that there is an amount of money (not disclosed) which is ring-fenced, and without a time limit, for use in development/s to Linslade Wood. An example put forward was: management of muddy paths. It can also be used to cover the cost of publicity and activities. It is essential that we find ways to use this and a wish list is the first step. We welcome any ideas our members may have to include in said list, to be considered at the **next Committee Meeting on Wednesday 23 July**.

Close of meeting at 12.14

***For clarification. After the meeting and on further investigation re the sale of the Pony Field we now know the field has been divided into seven plots each of which is for sale at £30,000. So the total (excluding solicitor fees etc) is £210, 000.
I thank Judith for providing this information.**