

Friends of Whirlow Brook Park - Minutes of Annual General Meeting 2022

Meeting held on Monday 20 June 2022 at Whirlow Brook Park

The meeting was attended by 27 members (listed at the end of these minutes)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from 9 members (listed at the end of these minutes)

2 Minutes of the General Meeting held on 28 September 2021

Proposed by Maggie Girling, seconded by Chris Cave, accepted nem con.

3 Chair's Report for the year ended 31 March 2022

Shelagh Woolliscroft spoke briefly to her report, which had been circulated before the meeting. Her theme was friends and volunteers – for the work done in the garden, in organising and manning events and in working on the management committee; to the friendship and support of many other organisations and people, notably Sheffield City Council Parks & Countryside and Vine Hotels, and to Sheffield Soroptomists, the Tree Council and The National Lottery for their financial support: many thanks to all.

The Lottery has funded the Climate Action Project, our biggest project by far. Shelagh offered a huge debt of gratitude to Christine Handley, colleague to Prof Ian Rotherham, leading the Project.

Kathleen Cox, speaking from the floor, spoke for everyone involved with FoWP in giving thanks to Shelagh for all she has made happen over the year.

4 Treasurer's Report and Accounts for the year ended 3 March 2022

Chris Cave spoke to his report, which had been circulated before the meeting. He noted that £13,500 of our funds are for specific projects, notably the Climate Action Project (£8,500). This leaves just £4,200 available for discretionary activities: fund-raising must continue to follow on from the generous one-off donations received.

Shelagh invited the members to accept the Treasurer's Report:

Proposed Alison Cowper, seconded Maggie Girling, accepted nem con

5 Appointment of External Examiner

Chris thanked Chris Jones for acting as External Examiner and proposed he be reappointed, seconded by Roger Lasko, accepted nem con.

6 Charitable Status: to seek in principle support from the membership

Chris Cave explained the advantages of charitable status as being that donations could be Gift Aided and that we might have more credibility with the wider public and with grant-giving bodies (and many such bodies favour registered charities). We would have to comply with Charity Commission rules on the way we run FoWP; and any changes to our constitution would have to be approved by the Charity Commission, as well as by FoWP members.

We would not be able to employ anyone, nor own property, without changing our constitution but both would be beyond the scope of what we envisage for FoWP. In answer to a question, Chris said that once we became a registered charity, it would be possible but difficult to de-register if we changed our minds.

Chris advised the meeting that in his view, the balance of advantage lay with seeking charitable status. If the meeting agreed, the Management Committee would pursue the option and bring the issue back to members for a decision.

Shelagh invited members to agree with that we should seek charitable status proposed by Bridget Tattersall, seconded by Peter Bower, accepted nem con

7 Re-election of members of the Management Committee

The following members stood for re-election

Chris Cave
Maggie Girling
Nick Goffin
David Jordan
Roger Lasko
Shelagh Woolliscroft
and were re-elected nem con

Shelagh gave thanks on behalf of the Management Committee to John Coldron, who had not stood for re-election, for all his work on construction and maintenance

8 New elections to the Management Committee

James Hall had agreed to stand

Proposed by Shelagh Woolliscroft, seconded by Nick Goffin, elected nem con

9 Any other formal business

There was none.

10 Close of AGM

Shelagh closed the meeting and invited questions or comments.

Jan Woodstra, who had given a talk on garden design before the AGM, commented on the scope for reinstating the historic views, from the House, towards the mill pond. He advised that the Heritage Lottery Fund favours such projects.

Elizabeth Birks asked when and if we would develop any of the ideas raised during the Walks and Talks? Christine Handley, who has been working closely with Prof Ian Rotherham on the Climate Action Project, said they intended to have more events, extending the ecological audit of the Park; this would lead to a final event where priorities could be discussed and agreed; and then a Master Plan would be prepared.

Jo Pearce from SCC Parks & Countryside told the meeting how much she and her colleagues enjoyed working with FoWP, reported on progress in converting the old toilet block to a café (she was confident work would start in August), and mentioned work on the ponds as a key priority for SCC.

Jo said that SCC was close to inviting bids for restoration and development of the compound at the back of the House, the invitation closely reflecting the values of FoWP. She emphasised that the intention was to lease the compound to an appropriate partner, not to do a commercial sale. Interest has already been received from potential partners including Whirlow Hall Farm

Jo's colleague Rowan Longhurst described the plans for replanting after the felling of larches along the Limb Valley, Extensive felling has taken place but there is more to come.

Shelagh Woolliscroft made several points:

- It would be really helpful if SCC colleagues could find the deeds to the Park which are likely to include important information for FoWP.

- Several small projects are underway including:

 - a tree trail (50 different species to be identified with QR codes); linked to this could be invitations to 'adopt a tree';

 - we need to decide whether to use wooden bins or grass turves for composting;

 - we aim to replace rotting wooden figures in the children's area with new features;

 - and, possibly, new park gates might be made. This possibility arises from the meeting earlier today between our Patron, Sir Jamie Benton-Jones, and his third cousin, Andrew Renwick. Andrew in his retirement is now blacksmithing at Ridgeway Forge and has restored or remade several grand gates for stately homes. The meeting arose from research by FoWP History Group, to the delight of both Sir Jamie and Andrew.

Maggie Girling reminded members of the Ice Cream Sundays (2-4pm every Summer Sunday); Music in the Park (5-7.30pm every month); and of the Plant Swap & Sale on 2 July.

This marked the end of the evening.

Attendance and Apologies

27 Members attended the meeting:

Janet Barnsley
Elizabeth Birks
Peter Bower
Chris Cave
Kathleen Cox
Alison Cowper
Margaret Darling
Jane Doyle
Derek Eastwood
Chris Fildes
Mo Frith
Miles Garnett
Maggie Girling
Nick Goffin
Tricia Goffin
Peter Horner
Sue Horner
Chris Jones
Roger Lasko
Andrea Lowe
Iain Lowe
Kate Pinder
Bridget Tattersall
Sue Turner
Paul Whyman
Pauline Winn
Shelagh Woolliscroft

Also in attendance at the AGM

Jo Pearce (SCC)
Christine Handley (SYBRG)
Rowan Longhurst (SCC)
Jan Woudstra (pre-AGM speaker)

Agenda item 1: Apologies were received from the following members

John Coldron
Malcolm and Jenny Dixon
James and Jane Hall
David Jordan
Gill Kaye
Gill Llewellyn
Pauline Perrett

and from

Thea Kerwick
Cllr Colin Ross and Ian Rotherham