

Friends of Whirlow Brook Park - Minutes of Annual General Meeting 2023

Meeting held on Monday 5 June 2023 at Whirlow Brook Park

The meeting was attended by 34/35 members (listed at the end of these minutes).

Note: Attached to these minutes are notes of the talk by Liz Ballard, CEO of Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust which preceded the AGM.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from 6 members (listed at the end of these minutes)

2 Minutes of the General Meeting held on 28 September 2021

Proposed by Alison Cowper, seconded by Maggie Girling, accepted nem con.

3 Minutes of the Exceptional General Meeting held on 3 December 2022

Proposed by Chris Cave, seconded by Denis Dacey

4 Chair's Report for the year ended 31 March 2023

Shelagh Woolliscroft started by apologising for not getting the papers for this meeting out sooner and promised that we would do better next year.

Shelagh highlighted some of the topics covered by her report, which had been circulated before the meeting. Shelagh started with the Climate Action Project led by Ian Rotherham and Christine Handley: the project report gives superb background to the issues arising from climate change. There has been a series of workshops on related themes – all made possible thanks to generous support from Chris Sowerbutts – with one more to go, on managing rainwater run-off. We are now starting to monitor the possible impact of our interventions such as bird and bat boxes, composting, and encouragement of marginal vegetation between lawns and woodland.

Next was the Tree Trail, to be launched the coming Friday by The Lord Mayor. This has been a super project, involving several members, which will be enjoyable as well as informative. An added bonus of the Trail is that providing access, to several of the trees featured in the trail, has resulted in welcome clearing of obstructive undergrowth. The cost of this project – about £1000 – has been met by a grant from the Local Area Committee.

We have run many events over the year – music afternoons, Easter Egg Hunt, Plant Swap and more – all involving many volunteers, all helping to bind us together as a group.

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Our continuing historical research has been complemented by a pro bono report from Oliver Jessop of TJC Heritage on the landscape and archeology of the Park. Together with the Climate Action Project, this has informed a ten year plan we have produced.

Catherine Downs, seconded by Nicola Gilbert, proposed that the Chair's Report should be accepted.

The motion was passed nem con

5 Key Objectives for 2023/24

Copies of our objectives for the coming year had been made available at the meeting. The note was self-explanatory but Shelagh emphasised our intention to support the café, once it is completed and operating. Everyone involved, not least the café operator, is determined that this much-delayed project should go ahead.

6 Treasurer's Report for the year ended 31 March 2023

Chris Cave told the meeting that the report presents a healthy financial picture but much of our income was accounted for by one-off grants and by ice-cream sales which will stop once the café is open.

David Jordan, seconded by Barry Wiles, proposed that the Treasurer's Report should be accepted.

The motion was passed nem con.

7 Appointment of External Examiner.

Roger Lasko, seconded by Peter Bower, proposed that Chris Jones be appointed External Examiner for another year.

The motion was passed nem con

8 Election of Trustees

Votes were taken post by post:

Chair of Trustees – Pauline Perrett, seconded by Anne Wright, proposed that Shelagh Woolliscroft be elected as Chair

Treasurer – Patricia Goffen, seconded by John Turner, proposed that Chris Cave be elected as Treasurer

Secretary – Nick Goffen, seconded by John Turner, proposed that Roger Lasko be elected as Secretary

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Each motion was passed, in turn, nem con

9 Election of other members of the Management Committee

Votes were taken for the other members of the Management Committee:

David Jordan, proposed by Maggie Girling, seconded by Nicola Gilbert

Maggie Girling, proposed by Alison Cooper, seconded by Christopher Yaw

Nick Goffen, proposed by Christopher Yaw, seconded by Anne Wright

All three were elected nem con

Shelagh Woolliscroft encouraged everyone present to consider joining the Management Committee.

10 Any other formal business

None was notified before the meeting.

11 Close of business

The formal business of the meeting was closed and followed by informal discussion.

Peter Bower asked whether we intended to follow the recommendation in the report of the Climate Action Project that the lower pond be left as a bog garden. Shelagh explained that the authors assumed that the cost of repairing the lower pond would be impossibly high. However, it seems it might be possible to improve the flow of water, in which case we could do better than leave the pond as now.

The last person to speak was Colin Ross, The Lord Mayor. He spoke warmly of Friends of Whirlow Brook Park, which he has supported from the very start, for achieving so much in just two and a half years and for our ambitious plans. He encouraged members to give all the support they could to the Management Committee in going forward.

Attendance and Apologies

34/35 Members attended the meeting:

Peter Bower
Jennifer Castens
Chris Cave
Kathleen Cox [thinks she is a member but said she may not have paid up this year]
Alison Cowper
Denis Dacey
Margaret Darling
Catherine Downes
Jane Doyle
Chris Fildes
Miles Garnett
Nicola Gilbert
Maggie Girling
Nick Goffin
Tricia Goffin
Jean Howes
Philip Howes
Anne Johnson
Chris Jones
David Jordan
Chris Kitson
Roger Lasko
Andrea Lowe
Iain Lowe
Kate Pinder
Andrew Renwick
Bridget Tattersall
John Turner
Sue Turner
Denise West
Paul Whyman
Barry Wiles
Grace Woods
Shelagh Woolliscroft
Anne Wright

Also in attendance at the AGM

Colin Ross, The Lord Mayor of Sheffield
Liz Ballard (our Speaker)
Christine Handley (SYBRG)
Karen Lewis SCC
Cllr Joe Otten

Agenda item 1: Apologies were received from the following members

James and Jane Hall
Sheila Harris
Kevin Marsden
Marilyn Small
Mary Woodcraft

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and from

Ian Rotherham

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Friends of Whirlow Brook Park
Talk by Liz Ballard, CEO of Sheffield Wildlife Trust before our AGM
Monday 5 June at Whirlowbrook Hall

Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust (S&RWT) is one of 46 Wildlife Trusts, with over 6000 members, 330 community volunteers and a board of 13 trustees.

The Trust aims to be 'advocates for our space' which it achieves by: providing advice to both individuals and organisations such as FoWP on how to encourage Nature; by organising Volunteer Rangers who help look after nature reserves; by providing expert responses to planning authorities eg as with the Sheffield Local Plan; and by promoting and delivering projects to protect and recover Nature.

The largest and most ambitious Nature recovery project currently planned is at Ughill Farm, on the outskirts of Sheffield, which S&RWT is buying at the cost of over £1m, to be farmed in a sustainable fashion. The objective of this project is both to bring wildlife back to Ughill Farm and its environs but also as a demonstration project to show other farmers how they can farm both productively and sustainability.

These many and varied activities are all carried out in the context of a 10-year plan with these ambitions for 2030:

- 30% of the Sheffield & Rotherham landscape to be great for Nature (vs 3% in 2020)
- An abundance of wildlife everywhere
- 1 in 4 people taking action for Nature
- Everyone in Sheffield & Rotherham bring within 5 minutes of Nature

Liz Ballard outlined the 10-year plan with the aid of a set of slides [to be found on the FoWP website at.....]