

FRIENDS OF KNOLLS WOOD AGM JUNE 3RD 2008

PRESENT:

C Atkins, C Banks, R Banks, J Booth, S Coleman, J Cook, M Cook, J Creasey, V Jones, J Karmi, R Karmi, J Kiddle, P Kiddle, J Owens, J Parry, C Pick, J Pick, R Smith, V Smith, R Seldon, T Seldon, J Taylor, S Williams, P Winfield, Jane Parry

APOLOGIES:

Tony Green, Jenny and George Monk

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Victor Jones, Chairman, introduced the committee and John Creasey.

He went on to restate the FoKW objectives:

- to work with the GST and SBDC to maintain Knolls Wood
- to prevent exploitation of, or threat to, the woodland and local environment
- to monitor long-term planning and involve the local community
- to preserve the history and legacy of the wood

Victor outline the achievements of the committee during 2007 -8

- We maintained and improved the close working relationship with the Greensand Trust and SBDC
- Produced quarterly newsletters and distributed them to 365 households
- Arranged four working parties to clear rubbish and carry out brush cutting of Monkey Puzzle pathways
- Organised a Children's Fun Day to educate them about the woodlands. The children made bird boxes which were subsequently installed around the woods
- Appointed a professional to redesign our website which is now in operation www.knollsood.com.
- In conjunction with John Creasey, Ranger with the GST, we planted 4 Beech trees, 3 Redwoods, 1 Rowan and 1 Hazel. All are doing well
- We assisted the GST with the Marvellous Maps project to educate the children at Doverly Down School about the benefits of the woods
- Lobbied and pressurised SBDC to improve the surface of Sandy Lane

The Chairman then outlined what the committee would like to achieve in the future

- Arrange brush cutting of pathways
- Continue to provide newsletters
- Amend the constitution to take into consideration the long-term effect of change
- To raise money via donations and contributions
- Involve local schools in educational projects similar to the Marvellous Maps
- Continue to update our website with better links with other similar groups
- Renew the gates at Sandy Lane and Plantation Road
- Arrange for two new interpretation boards with information about the history of the wood
- Plan the planting of the wood for long term preservation

- Train two new members on brush cutting and First Aid
- Agree with the new local authority a new Management Plan for Knolls Wood

Victor then displayed three pages of the website.

Management plan - Where do we want to be in 5 years?

We will be completing the Woodland Survey 2008.

Also Morrison's supermarket is offering funding for environmental projects so it is hoped that the committee will be able to tap into some resources from this.

Victor asked for opinions from the floor. The following points were made:

J Taylor pointed out that we have a huge workload; the path clearing in itself is a mammoth task and urgently needs to be done.

John Creasey informed the meeting that the next working party will take place in two weeks' time and he welcomed all comers. Tools and equipment be provided – refreshments also. The dates of future work parties are already in the latest newsletter and are posted on the website.

MINUTES OF 2007 AGM

These were accepted as a true record of the AGM 2007 and matters arising from those minutes were discussed.

Charity status

The committee had planned to go for charity status and a lot of research was done into this. V Jones explained the reasons why the committee decided not to go for charity status.

Dangerous trees:

Trees which have been marked with two orange spots are considered to be dangerous.

Renaming the Association

Victor explained the reasons why the committee decided to change our name. It was felt that there was a label attached to the word "association"; people were inclined to think that we were a residents' association.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Clive Atkins, Treasurer, reported that we started the year with just over £2000 and spent over £200 on trees, £300 on the website, £350 on 4 newsletters and £50 on the AGM. We now have £930. We will need to think about asking for donations again in the near future. With the new constitution, we will open a new bank account and are thinking about the Coop which is a more ethical bank. Clive said that he would be happy to take questions.

It was suggested that the committee should go out again and collect more donations. If we can provide money towards the cost of things like erecting signs, SBDC have said that they will consider matching the funding.

Clive asked the meeting if there were any objections to the collection of more donations. All agreed that it would be perfectly reasonable for the committee to do more fund-raising. Clive reported that people had been very generous last time we had collected money.

Victor emphasised that this is a unique area and it would be great to preserve it for the future. We've spent enough on the website for now but we need to continue with newsletters as they are the main form of communication.

J Taylor suggested that we may wish to formalise this fund-raising and do it annually. V Jones pointed out that this requires a lot of work. The question was put to the meeting about a regular annual collection. Most people don't think about the maintenance of the woods until a newsletter pops through the letterbox. J Cook suggested that we may wish to make it an option for people to donate a regular amount by direct debit as many charities do this sort of thing.

P Winfield brought up the fact that we seem to be losing far more trees than we are replacing. John Creasey said that the wood is fairly crowded so we have to be careful. We are planting about twenty a year as it is. The price of the Redwoods is higher. Some time ago some trees which had been planted were stolen.

John C explained the GST covers a huge area including Aspley, Knolls Wood, Chilterns, Studham. 6 full time rangers are employed and they are all responsible for an area. John is the ranger responsible for Knolls Wood.

RESIGNATION OF THE CURRENT COMMITTEE

J Taylor suggested that we ask all current members if they wish to stand again. P Kiddle proposed that Victor Jones stand again as Chair; this was proposed and seconded. Victor agreed to be chair again. Clive Atkins and Maggie Cook also agreed to stand again as Treasurer and Secretary respectively. Joan Kiddle, Jack Owens and Jane Parry offered to stand again. Jenny Monk and Tony Green, who were unable to attend the AGM, have also expressed a wish to stand again. Victor asked if there was anyone who would like to join the committee. Toni Seldon volunteered. John Cook offered to help with the working parties and Pam Winfield and Sylvia Williams offered to help with the delivery of newsletters.

There followed a break for refreshments and Steve Coleman, Historic Environment Officer at County Hall, gave a presentation about "Knolls Wood, 4000 years of heath land use, archaeology and history".