



FRIENDS OF STORETON WOODS



REGISTERED CHARITY No.1001472

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CHAIR- KEN WHITTLE

WORKING WITH THE WOODLAND TRUST FOR THE BENEFIT OF STORETON WOODS

MINUTES OF THE 17TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FRIENDS OF STORETON WOODS HELD ON TUESDAY 20TH MARCH 2007 IN VICTORIA HALL BEBINGTON.

Present: The Chairman, 11 Committee members, Tim Kirwin (Woodland Trust), 28 members, 2 guests (Friends of St.Benedicts Wood. Rainhill) and guest speaker Mr. Jeff Denton

Before the meeting started, the Chairman announced the death of Fred Bailey who had been a stalwart member of the FOSW and, until 2004, a committee member since 1991. Condolences were sent to his widow and family. Ken also mentioned that Garnette Bowler was stepping down as deputy chair but will remain on the committee.

1. Apologies: Received from George and Beryl Nelson, Gwen Owen, Matt Adams, Mrs. Finlayson, Doreen Histon, Rochelle Mclean, Miss Betty Greatbank, Jill Porter, Adrian Whittle, June Allender, Hilary Ash, Margret Sixsmith.

2. Minutes of 16th AGM dated 14/03/06 and Matters Arising.

2.1 Minutes were distributed to the meeting and had been available on the website. After a short period they were accepted as a true record following a proposal by Gordon Plumb and seconded by George Bowler. There were no matters arising from these minutes.

3. Chairman Report.

3.1 Ken reminded members that the Newsleaf items keeps the news and items of interest up to date and therefore his report would not repeat those items.

3.2 Workdays are well attended and he paid special thanks to the unnamed volunteers who pick up the litter as they walk through the woods during the week.

3.3 The recent storm damage brought a number of large trees down and the WT contractor has managed to remove them and also repair some fencing which had suffered from the storm.

3.4 Ken gave thanks to the efforts of the committee over the past year and also to David Casement for his support to the FOSW through the many talks given to the community.

4. Treasurer Report.

4.1 Peter explained the summary of the 2006 accounts which were attached to the minutes. Receipts were £7896.72; expenditure was £9027.09 therefore showing a deficit of £1130.37.

4.2 We have a healthy balance in the total account held of £53,122.91

4.3 Our income included over £4705 in subscriptions and donations, Gift aid rebate was £630.95 and thanks was given to those members who had completed the necessary box on our form.

4.4 Our main expenditure last year was £ 7,324.99 on Woodland management involving repairs due to vandalism, sowing and planting of wildflower seeds and plants during the autumn and general tree safety work and maintenance during the year.

4.5 Following the treasurers report there were no questions from the members.

5. Election to the Committee.

5.1 George Bowler, Valerie Old and Barrie Old were re-elected 'en bloc' after being proposed by Gordon Plumb and seconded by Eric Forsyth.

5.2 There were no nominees for the 2 vacancies open and they remain available.

6. The Woodland Trust Report.

6.1 Tim made reference to the various acts of vandalism that had occurred within or impacted onto the woods such as stolen cars being burnt in the gateways and in another instance colliding with the fence and gates causing extensive damage.

6.2 On a positive note, the wild flower plants planted in September were surviving and hopefully give a good show in the coming year.

6.3 The recent storms experienced in the area did not cause as much damage in the woods as some of the other Woodland Trust woods in the UK suffered.

6.4 Looking forward in 2007, it will be a quieter year for the management of the woods. No major works are envisaged although towards the end of 2007 plans are in hand to carry out a tree planting day as part of the replanting programme. Details will be announced in Newsleaf later in the year.

6.5 Tim mentioned that following the success of the Prenton High School event in the Woods last June, plans are in hand to hold another one this year involving a local school.

6.6 Following his report, a member asked Tim about the WT sites in Cheshire and Lancashire. Tim replied naming some, such as, Runcorn, Frodsham etc. A list can be obtained from the WT website.

7. Constitution Changes.

7.1 There were no changes tabled.

8. Independent Examiner Ratification.

8.1 Peter asked the members for approval to re-appoint Mr. Alan White as the Independent Examiner of the FOSW accounts for 2007. This was approved 'en-bloc'.

9. Annual Subscription.

9.1 Based on the healthy financial account, the management committee had decided to maintain the annual subscription at £3 per person. Members ratified this decision on a show of hands.

10. Correspondence Received.

10.1 A letter from a member had been received for the attention of the AGM relating to "unruly dogs and at times their owners" using the woods. He was looking for general members and the management committee suggestions on a solution to this problem.

10.2 The Chairman asked the members to comment or offer a solution other than what has already been put in place such as the WT notice on the 3 main notice boards and advice given in Newsleaf recently. Tim Kirwin, for the Woodland Trust, explained the Trust's position and explained the wording of the notices. In the end, no one could offer any further solutions apart from the fact that those in charge of dogs must be held responsible for them and their actions.

11. Any Other Business.

11.1 David Casement handed over to the Chairman a cheque for £500 from an anonymous benefactor as a result of the many talks David has given. Ken, on behalf of the committee and members of FOSW, thanked David and the donor and stated that this will be used for the purchase of young trees later in the year.

11.2 A member asked Peter about the Gift aid scheme and donations. Peter replied that he was able to reclaim on both the subscription and donation element where members were taxpayers and had completed the gift aid form.

11.3 Len Moore asked if more could be done to recruit more members in view of the constant membership numbers. Gordon Plumb stated that we have over 700 members and appeals are on the notice boards for new members. Another member suggested that all entrances should have a notice board erected. Ken and the committee will discuss this suggestion in the coming months.

11.4 Web page update- The secretary read out part of a report submitted by Matt Adams, our Webmaster, on the success of the website. During 2006, there were 4894 visits to the site with highest recorded figure of 512 in March and lowest of 347 during November. The success of the site can be measured by the fact that other sites are linking into ours for sources of information. The website has recently been refurbished making sending material to it easier for contributors.

11.5 Tim Kirwin gave thanks to the FOSW for their support over the past year and look forward to maintaining it.

11.6 Before closing the AGM, Ken on behalf of the committee and members presented Edith Forsyth a flower basket in recognition of the catering organisation during the year.

After the refreshment break, there was an interesting and informative presentation on the water industry given by Mr. Jeff Denton of United Utilities.

The presentation started with a short video of how our water in the North West of England reaches our homes and taps. Most of it originates in the Lake District, although areas of the Wirral are sourced from the River Dee. There are over 100 water treatment works in the NW where the natural water is treated to drinkable standards. The water is tested daily at these plants with strict monitoring procedures in place. Additional tests are carried out at the UU labs in Warrington. The video also touched upon the waste water treatment procedure prior to being discharged into rivers and streams via the 600 waste water treatment works in the United Utilities area.

United Utilities operate education centres for schools to attend to be taught about the water industry.

Continuing with the presentation, Jeff discussed the advantages and disadvantages relating to water meters. They are fitted free if requested and the householder at present can revert back to the original form of billing if they feel it is expensive. However, if the meter is fitted and the house is sold the next occupier will incur metered water charges. With the aid of a chart, Jeff explained the cost of water we use in everyday usage. E.g. Toilet flushing = 2-3p per flush; car washing by hose = 11-24p.

Other services available to the householder are Braille billing and information sheets, large print facility, talking billing and info booklets.

United Utilities have reservoirs and areas of interest available for the walker and visitor with Bunbury Watermill in Cheshire being cited as one feature.

Jeff concluded his presentation by stating that water prices are set by Ofwat, the water industry regulator, until 2010 when the system will be reviewed. He also mentioned that within the Bebington / Birkenhead area, 38Km of pipe has or is being renewed to improve supplies and pressure.

There followed a question and answer session covering subjects from lead pipes to fluoride.