



## FRIENDS OF STORETON WOODS



REGISTERED CHARITY No.1001472

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CHAIR- Eric Forsyth

WORKING WITH THE WOODLAND TRUST FOR THE BENEFIT OF STORETON WOODS

### **MINUTES OF THE 21<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FRIENDS OF STORETON WOODS HELD TUESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> April 2011. VICTORIA HALL BEBINGTON.**

**Present:** The Chairman, 11 Committee members, Tim Kirwin (Woodland Trust), 18 members and 3 guests.

**1. Apologies:** Received from Matt Adams, Rochelle Mclean, Beryl Nelson, Gordon Plumb and Dorothy Plumb.

#### **2. Minutes of 20<sup>th</sup> AGM dated 13/04/10 and Matters Arising.**

2.1 Minutes were distributed at the meeting and had been available on the website. After a short period they were accepted as a true record following a proposal by Doreen Whiston and seconded by Joanne Shennan.

2.2 With reference to item 12.2 (AOB) the chairman stated that the committee had considered the suggestion over a calendar but came to the conclusion that it was not a viable cost effective option. However, it was stated that a member had produced 2011 calendars from his own photographic collection of the woods and had donated £2 to the FOSW for each one sold.

#### **3. Chairman Report.**

3.1 Eric mentioned about the ivy being cut back from around the bottom sections of the tree trunks so that the condition of the tree could be readily examined for disease or rot.

3.2 During the year 45 saplings (various species) have been donated and planted in various parts of the woods.

3.3 Storm damage during the year accounted for the loss of 12 trees, mainly silver birch.

3.4 Contact has been maintained with the Land Agent for Leverhulme Estates regarding Hancock's Wood with no further news of the Trustees releasing the woods at present. However, they are aware of our interest.

3.5 Eric spoke about his tour of the woods today with Tim Kirwin and it has been noted about a leaning tree over the road wall. The WT will arrange for their contractor to deal with it.

3.6 Japanese Knotweed located in parts of the woods will be dealt with by the contractor during this year.

3.7 Rubbish bins situated at each of the entrances have been regularly emptied by WBC but recently they have altered their route for bin collections. If members see that the bins are overflowing please contact WBC street scene and not FOSW committee members.

3.8 Eric ended his report by thanking the committee for their support during the year and a special thanks to member David Casement for the talks, and donations received from items sold, that he has carried out over the year. Thanks given to those attending the workdays, in particular, Linda Tilston for her support.

#### **4. Treasurer Report.**

4.01 Peter explained the summary of the 2010 accounts that had been attached to the minutes. Receipts were £4849.45; expenditure was £1845.83 therefore showing a surplus of £3003.62 for the year.

4.02 We have a healthy balance in the total account held of £72,576.51 although the membership has dipped below the 700 mark

4.03 There was a slight decrease in the subscriptions and donations as a result of this "dipping". Gift Aid claims refunded a healthy £604.07 over the 12 months period which is slightly up from the previous year.

4.04 Our main expenditure last year was £ 955.83 on Woodland Management. This was split between tree safety work and repairs to gates and signs plus materials for new benches that have replaced some of the old ones.

4.05 Peter highlighted that our invested monies, like everyone else's, suffered a further downturn in the interest paid on the accounts held.

4.06 Peter also mentioned that, as a result of government rule changes on the guaranteed protection limit, we have been able to increase our deposit amount in the higher interest account.

4.07 Peter concluded that our financial position remains healthy.

4.08 At the end of Peter's report, a member queried that no mention of a monetary figure is given for the reserves policy. The answer given was that it is difficult to quantify an actual amount for the accounts but that the statement on the reserves policy agreed by the committee is in line with the recommendations laid down by the Charity Commission.

4.09 There were no further queries.

#### **5. Election to the Committee.**

5.1 Eric Forsyth, George Nelson, Dennis Clarke, Matt Adams and Jean Whittle were re-elected 'en bloc' on a show of hands.

5.2 There were no further nominations for the remaining vacancy on the committee.

## **6. The Woodland Trust Report. – Tim Kirwin**

6.1. Tim commenced his brief report by stating that it had been a quiet year for the woods as far as the WT were concerned with only tree safety work and inspections being carried out.

6.2 The Bat walk in September proved successful for those who had attended, in that a number of species were identified as well as being seen near to the Rest Hill road entrance.

6.3 Comment was made about the erosion of the Mount Road wall roadside base due to the constant splashing from traffic. This will be inspected and repairs will be carried out during this year (2011).

6.4 Tim briefly discussed the recent incident reported of a man being bitten by a dog whilst on the Tramway path. This person was riding a cycle when the animal bit him. However no further action will be taken.

6.5 During a Q&A following his report, Tim was able to answer a question about dealing with the wintergreen (contractor will be dealing with it safely), and another one regarding tree preservation orders when our trees have to be felled; in that he ensures contact is always made with the WBC TPO officer when this happens.

## **7. Constitution Changes.**

7.1 None tabled.

## **8. Independent Examiner Ratification.**

8.1 Eric asked the members for approval to re-appoint Mr. Alan White as the Independent Examiner of the FOSW accounts for 2011. It was carried on a show of hands.

## **9. Annual Subscription.**

9.1 Based on the healthy financial accounts, 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 There was no correspondence for discussion.

## **11. Website Report 2010/11**

11.1 The Secretary, on behalf of Matt Adams, read out the prepared report. This stated that 2010 was disappointing as far as the development of the new website was concerned. This was due to the long term illness that the developer has suffered and as he is providing his services and expertise at a reduced rate normally charged, his priorities are not high. However, it is hoped that during 2011 we will see the new site coming on line.

11.2 During 2010 the FOSW website has attracted 3114 different visitors with 5497 visits to the site and this is slightly up on the 2009 figures.

11.3 The months of April & May gave us the highest monthly figures and July the lowest.

11.4 The report states that an article on the Storeton Tramway is the most popular followed by "Our Woods" information page along with Memories of Storeton .

11.5 During 2010 most of the visitors to the site came from Great Britain with the USA coming second and Finland third.

11.6 Matt ended his report by stating that our website is linked into a number of others as a measure of success in terms of being a source of information and requests members to support the site with more articles, stories and photographs etc.

## **12. Any Other Business.**

12.1. The proposal for the FOSW to become a Corporate Member of the Wirral Society was explained to the members by the Chairman. As the WGBC is no longer in existence, it was felt that the FOSW should support the Wirral Society as the aims and objectives were similar. On a show of hands the motion was passed for the committee to proceed with our application.

12.2 The next AGM of the FOSW will be held in the Victoria Hall during April 2012. Confirmed date will be announced in Newsleaf in due course.

12.3 As there were no further questions, the AGM came to a close at 20.13hrs with an invitation to remain for refreshments followed by a presentation given by Tim Kirwin.

After the break, Tim gave an illustrated presentation on the way the Woodland Trust has developed since they became involved in the Friends of Storeton Woods 21 years ago. Their core aims are the protection of woodland and in particular ancient woodlands, although under Tim's patch (Cheshire), he has none of the latter.

The WT ambitions are to double the woodland cover by the year 2050 and this is being done by targeting landowners to develop woodland from existing grasslands with their help and various grants that are available for such projects.

Tim stated that of the 70 woodlands in his area, 40 are what they term urban woodland and Storeton is one of them. He mentioned that the FOSW is one of the largest special groups they have in the UK.

At the end of the presentation, there was a brief Q&A session.