

Minutes of the 15th Annual General Meeting of Friends of Anderton and Marbury

Comberbach Memorial Hall

Monday 19 May 2014

The Chair of FoAM, Mary Jeeves, opened the meeting at 7.30pm and welcomed 40 attendees.

1. Apologies for Absence

The Chair had received apologies from Chris Moseley

2. Minutes of the Last meeting

Minutes of the 14th AGM held on Monday, 20th May, 2013, had been posted on FoAM's web site as previously agreed, instead of issuing paper copies to members. The Chair asked if anyone had any concerns or issues about last year's Minutes. No concerns were raised and the Minutes of the 14th AGM were approved as a true statement.

3. Matters Arising from 2013 AGM Minutes

No matters were arising from last year's Minutes.

4. Chair's Report

It was with great sadness that earlier this year we learned of the sudden death of Noel Woodhead, a founder member of FoAM, who served on the committee until moving out of the area four years ago.

More recently, we were stunned when Ian Booth died suddenly over the Easter weekend. Ian had worked as a volunteer in Northwich Woodlands for almost eight years. He had been a member, helping out at FoAM events for about seven years and he served on the committee as treasurer following the last AGM. He was working hard volunteering as usual the previous Wednesday and Thursday. It has come as a great shock to those of us who worked alongside him and he will be sorely missed. A large group representing FoAM, volunteers and rangers attended his funeral. The committee hopes to commemorate Ian's work in the woodlands in some way.

In a busy programme of events during the year, last year's AGM, Quiz and Supper was a very successful evening.

Over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend FoAM members and other friends donated vegetable, herb and herbaceous border plants for the Bring & Buy Plant Sale, which raised more than £250.

After a very late spring, nature was catching up by the end of June and at least 70 species of wildflowers were blooming for the Summer Walk at Anderton.

About twenty people enjoyed butties and orange juice after viewing the species identified in the moth trap at Breakfast with Moths in Marbury Lodge.

Barbecues were lit at 5 pm for the Picnic in the Park in July. FoAM was delighted with the entertainment provided by Northwich Folk Club for between 250 and 300 people of all ages.

In August about 70 children attended the Teddy Bears' Picnic with 50 accompanying adults. The children listened to a story while some were still finishing their picnics before the activities began. These included a Bear Trail, Sculptures using materials in the woods, Treasure Hunt and some imaginative play using equipment rescued from Northwich Memorial Hall. After two hours of fun, refreshments were welcome. The efforts of the organisers were appreciated as much by the adults as by the children.

Fungalpunk Dave led the two Fungal Foray sessions in September with his usual enthusiasm. There was concern that, because of the weather, there might not be any fungi, but Dave listed more than 70 species on the day.

A dozen people set out on the Autumn Walk to see the spectacular colours in the trees in Marbury Park. The trees were heavily laden with seeds, nuts and berries.

There were even some to spare for the Christmas Decorations Workshop without depriving the wildlife of food. Strong winds brought down a silver birch clothed in ivy with berries near the play area in early December. The birch twigs and the ivy would otherwise have been out of reach, but they added to the other natural materials for the workshop. FoAM members did some baking and made hot drinks to feed and warm more than 60 people.

Participants in January's Bird Walk in Big Wood braved thunder, lightning and hailstones before sheltering in the bird hide with telescopes and binoculars, hoping, in vain, to spot the bittern. However they did see pochard, siskin, redpoll, kingfisher and bullfinch.

Curiosity about Marbury's past has continued following presentations to FoAM and Northwich Soroptimists last year. In January, FoAM's talk for Northwich and District Heritage Society attracted an audience of more than 200 people.

On the guided walk in February exploring the History of Marbury Park, being able to look at historic pictures at the points where they were created was much appreciated.

There was a magnificent display of bluebells and other spring flowers last month for Spring Time in Marbury Park.

The Dawn Chorus and Spring Bird Walks at the beginning of this month attracted nearly 40 enthusiasts; the early risers were rewarded with a hot drink and bacon butties on a frosty morning.

Unfortunately the dire weather played a significant part in the first Northwich Pedal Power Festival and very few people took advantage of the facilities that FoAM provided. A stand was positioned in the town centre and the caravan was in Marbury Lane close to Haydn's Pool, where members were stationed with telescopes.

Thanks to all those who contributed to the running of all of these events: Greg Baker, Robin Baker, Dave Bedford, Liz Bentham, Martin & Lorraine Brannan, Anna Cooper, Trevor Davies, Pascal de Feyter, Frances Findlay, Alan Garner, John Gilbody, Elna Harrison, Sandra Head, Dave James, Jim Jeeves, Mike Lees, Vernon Lundy, Chris Moseley, Alan & Joanne Redley, Mark Risk, Diana Whipp and Brenda Yates.

Following the success of the wild bird seed fields, FoAM bought more seed last year for a repeat sowing. This spring the amount of seed has been doubled so that the area sown has been increased.

FoAM also purchased more wildflower seed, which volunteers sowed to try to reinvigorate the Scrape Meadow and the Horse Jump Field with cornfield annuals.

Although the Marbury Hall project was completed with the installation of the new interpretation panel on the site of the hall in June, FoAM member Clive Brookes is continuing to research into Marbury during World War II. He has unearthed stories about troop movements and prisoners of war and this new information is gradually being put onto the FoAM website.

The inauguration ceremony for the hall panel included the bird identification panels for the Mere and Woodland Bird Hides, which were part-funded by the local ward Councillors.

The paths to Marbury Lodge were finished a week later. Gifts from an anonymous donor paid for the contractor to dig trenches and lay foundations. Volunteers used setts reclaimed from the regeneration work in Witton Street, Northwich to improve access for wheelchairs, mobility scooters and buggies.

In July FoAM accepted a silver Community Woodlands award and a cheque for £500 on behalf of Northwich Woodlands in the Royal Forestry Society's Excellence in Forestry Awards. Judges were particularly impressed by the cooperative approach to the management of the woodland by Cheshire West and Chester Council, Forestry Commission and FoAM.

At the end of October, the application for the Saltscape Project was submitted in the Landscape Partnership Scheme funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Saltscape is the unique landscape modified by industry, stretching from Frodsham to Middlewich and Winsford and taking in the River Weaver and the Trent and Mersey Canal. FoAM and the Rangers hope to establish a waymarked trail through Northwich Woodlands between the Lion Salt Works and Anderton Boat Lift showing the impact of the salt industry on the landscape and wildlife.

The Arboretum Project, funded by Ineos Enterprises Ltd, is progressing well. Discussions are taking place with Shelley Signs for a new interpretation panel and replacement identification posts. The first visible signs of the project came in April when contractors started work on the new path leading from the main drive into Marbury's main collection of specimen trees. The path will be similar to those leading to The Lodge and will again be completed by volunteers using recycled blocks from Northwich town centre.

Members have been generous in their response to the request for woodworking tools, adding to those recently purchased by FoAM. This means that volunteers can undertake more work like the creation of the impressive sculptures, which are based on the salt industry, along the route of the new paths at Anderton.

5. Treasurer and Membership Secretary's Reports

Acting Treasurer, Jim Jeeves, presented the Treasurer's Report and the associated Income and Expenditure Report. A copy of this Report and the Income and Expenditure Report are attached for information. The Chair thanked Jim for presenting the Financial Reports, which had been written by Ian Booth. Steve Penwill was thanked for auditing the accounts.

Jim informed the meeting that FoAM currently has 251 members

7. Election of Officers and Committee for 2015-15

Frances Findlay has completed her three year term as Secretary.

The Chair proposed 3 resolutions:

- Jim to act as Treasurer temporarily
- The position of Secretary to be left open
- The re-election of existing officers and Additional Committee members

The proposals were nominated and seconded and the Resolutions were unanimously accepted.

Any Other Business

None. The Chair closed the Meeting at 7,55pm.

FoAM Acting Treasurer's Report 2013 – 2014

Net Income for the year was £960.79

Events gave us an overall profit of £338.43, the bulk of the profits were from Plant Sales and the Christmas Decorations Workshop. Other events were generally covered by donations given on the day of the events.

Projects included the annual day's hire of the Woodmiser. The sale of nest boxes and income from furniture made from the wood more than covers the hire cost. Seed was purchased to boost the wild flower meadows and to sow the fields on Marbury Lane and Dairy House Meadows to attract various species of meadowland birds. The Marbury Lodge footpath provision was taken to pay for the cost of materials for the paths needed to prevent damage to the grass between the roadway and the Lodge.

Income from subscriptions has stayed the same and we have, at present 55 Household members (110 individuals), 110 Individual memberships, 21 Life members, and 10 complimentary members, giving a grand total of 251 members. Numbers have stayed basically the same with the number joining balancing the number leaving.

Grants are given as zero but some are in the pipeline and some projects are paid directly to those doing the work.

Donations for talks and walks come from FoAM History Talks and the rangers' activities. Visitors to the park are often generous in feeding the donation box and we have had very generous anonymous donations this year.

Sales of logs and charcoal has been good but charcoal sales have got off to a slow start for some reason this year.

A Royal Forestry Award was awarded to FoAM for work done in conservation by rangers and volunteers.

Other expenditure is line with previous years except that we have obtained some tools essential for the continued production of furniture for sale and for use in the park. Barbecues were needed to replace the ones which have been used for many years and were now unusable.

In total we have an increased asset total of £24 577.14 of which liabilities are £6,142.03 leaving us with net assets of £18,435.11.

Funding seems fairly adequate and we can proceed with confidence provided we remain thrifty and careful.

Finally I would like thank Steve Penwill for auditing the accounts in what could have been a difficult situation if the accounts were not kept so efficiently by Ian who will be so sadly missed.

Friends of Anderton & Marbury
Treasurers Report, 5th April 2013 – 31st March 2014

Income & Expenditure	2013-14	2012-13
Events and projects:		
Events		
Income	930.03	1,181.47
Costs	(591.60)	(817.03)
	<u>338.43</u>	<u>364.44</u>
Projects		
Wood Mizer	(396.00)	(396.00)
Marbury Hall footpaths (provision)	(1,000.00)	
Barn Owl Box	0.00	(80.00)
Wild flower seed	(445.20)	0.00
Wild Bird Seed	(94.00)	0.00
	<u>(1,935.20)</u>	<u>(476.00)</u>
Other Income:		
Subscriptions (net)	1,300.00	1,300.00
Grants	0.00	400.00
Donations from talks and walks	460.00	269.10
Donations	729.78	1,788.04
Sales (Logs, charcoal etc)	1,285.00	1,500.50
FOAM Workwear	8.00	72.00
Royal Forestry Society Award	500.00	0.00
Miscellaneous Income	220.00	85.00
Provision release	0.00	215.00
	<u>4,502.78</u>	<u>5,629.64</u>
Other Expenditure:		
Meeting room hire	(97.60)	(62.40)
BTCV membership & Insurance	(196.76)	(140.38)
Costs - publicity	(466.00)	(565.00)
Postage, Stationery	(153.75)	(193.06)
Bird food, Barn Owl Group	(64.99)	(83.47)
FOAM Workwear	0.00	(199.50)
Trail Camera	0.00	(215.00)
Woodworking tools materials	(425.45)	
Gas barbecues & bottles	(242.99)	0.00
General	(297.68)	(138.68)
	<u>(1,945.22)</u>	<u>(1,597.49)</u>
Net Income	960.79	3,920.59

Assets & Liabilities	1 Apr-2014	31-Mar-13	movement
Assets			
Bank account - General	24484.24	22,556.44	1,927.80
Bank Account - Heritage	60.16	58.47	1.69
Bank Account - Other	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash	32.74	1.02	31.72
	<u>24,577.14</u>	<u>22,615.93</u>	<u>1,961.21</u>
Liabilities/Provisions			
Unpresented cheques	(14.40)	(99.67)	85.27
Provision for Educational Pack	(500.00)	(500.00)	0.00
Provision for Heritage costs	(60.16)	(58.47)	(1.69)
NCWES Grant	(1,783.47)	(1,783.47)	0.00
Provision for Life Membership	(1,284.00)	(1,200.00)	(84.00)
Footpaths	(1,000.00)	0.00	(1,000.00)
Councillors' Grant	(1,500.00)	(1,500.00)	0.00
Total Liabilities	(8,142.03)	(5,141.61)	(1,000.42)
	<u>18,435.11</u>	<u>17,474.32</u>	<u>960.79</u>
Funding			
Prior year net funding	17,474.32	13,553.73	3,920.59
Current year net income	960.79	3,920.59	(2,959.80)
	<u>18,435.11</u>	<u>17,474.32</u>	<u>960.79</u>

Signed (Treasurer):

Date:

Signed (Auditor):

Date: