

Fairfield Association – Chairman’s Report 2019

I will give a general summary of our activities over the past year. There will also be brief reports from those who deal with particular aspects of the FA.

It has, in general been a good year. Our trustees have continued to work well together and our committees have got things done.

This year I am finally able to report and celebrate the fact that the Pony Wood Path is in place. We promised the path in 2013 when the FA added the Flora Fields to the Nature Reserve. Clearly we had to raise the money. A massive thank you to all the members who provided nearly £4000 to unlock the LEF grant of £30,000, the University Community Fund which provided the money for the benches and the Garfield Weston Trust who gave us £7,500 to spend on the project. I also need to thank our dedicated volunteers for planting the new hedgerows and trees under the supervision of Ian Procter – and the Woodland Trust for supplying them. The whole project cost around £65,000 and included the upgrading of many of our existing paths. The Fairfield Association contributed £18,616 from general funds

Unfortunately, Storm Gareth brought down a beech tree which delayed the opening of the path by a further 2 months. It was finally open at the end of May and so far we have had very positive feedback.

In addition to the new path, there have also been much needed improvements to the existing paths. The surface and in some cases the drainage has been improved. We also managed to make parts of the Nature Reserve wetter and fill the existing scrape in West Field with water. The new ‘pond’ has already attracted birds as well as providing somewhere for the White Park to drink.

The FA is not just about the Nature Reserve and things on the ground. Our Queen’s Award in 2017 recognised us our work as a community of volunteers (current membership 379) and most of us contribute

something . We come together regularly at fun and fundraising events. At this time last year Fun Day was just a few weeks away and, as usual it was a great day enjoyed by hundreds of people. For the second time, it included a Fun Run. This was one for the brave on what was a very hot day. By contrast on a remarkably cold Christmas Eve, our Carol Singing raised £272. This gives me the opportunity to say a huge thank you to Stephen Hoyland who has led us through the rude winds wild lament for 20 years years and is now handing over to Tim Evans. We owe him a huge vote of thanks for creating this enjoyable event. I also want to thank all those who contributed to Fun Day, particularly Andrew Brennand who organised it and Lauren Van Tattenhove and her partner, Billy, who organised our Fun Run.

This year it has been wonderful to see the return of Wassailing in the Community Orchard and I want to thank the people who made this possible. Mark Reynolds who took on the daunting task of leading the celebration, Julia Salmon who made the wassail and Sing Gladly Sound who provided the music – and unexpected daffodils. Also all those people who came forward and helped in different ways as well as providing an embarrassment of raffle prizes. We expect that Wassailing will once again be on the agenda in January 2020 and as a result our trees will continue to fruit!

The Easter Egg Hunt enjoyed wonderful weather and was a triumph this year. It was a glorious sunny day and in addition to raising £370 we had wonderful feedback from families including people from every generation: We are very grateful to Tony and Jaci Finn who have run this event for some years and also to all the other people who in true Fairfield style made it a success, acting as wardens, serving tea and cakes and providing cakes! If Napoleon's army marched on it's stomach we have always run on our cakes – I can never quite believe how many cakes suddenly appear!

We do and will always need to raise money if we are to continue to provide if only because our roots lie in a play area! The safety surface was repaired today, the swings will be back up by the

weekend and we expect to have a football goal by the summer. We owe a big vote of thanks to Ken Capewell who keeps everything in a good state of repair.

I also need to record those things which we have worked hard on but still not quite achieved. We get ever closer to LNR status and we are still working to get our footpaths recognised as concessionary. A more recent project to get a handrail along the small ginnel which leads from Towneley Close into the Orchard is also ongoing.

We would have liked to have done more and for that reason – we will be back here next year and hope you will continue to support us.