

Minutes of the Fairfield Association Annual General Meeting held on 20th June 2018 at the Friends Meeting House.

Hilary Short, Chair, David Austin, Clare Austin, Mandy Bannon, Andrew Brennand, Dave Brookes, Margaret Burtonwood, Patricia Clarke, Tim Dant, Roger Frankland, Ian Fraser, Helen French, Ruth Haigh, Henry Hicks, David Mottram, Sue Neiduszynska, Jane Parker, John Roff, Michael Sheppard, Mick Short, Pat Waters, Pamela White, Shirley Rawsthorne, Secretary.

1. Welcome

Hilary welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Oliver Fulton, Tony Finn, Helen Hicks, Ian Procter, Suzanne Procter, Liz Hartley and Carole Martin.

3. Minutes of 2017 AGM

The minutes were agreed.

4. Matters Arising

The 'Local Memories' project is ongoing. Thanks were extended to Ruth Haigh.

It was confirmed that Julia McDowell would continue as webmaster.

Due to changes in the constitution, there will be no request for a membership fee, however there is a strong funding stream from the 'Friends' scheme which currently brings in about £5k per year.

4. Chair's Annual Report

Hilary delivered the Chair's report:

- The weather has been a challenge: haymaking was impossible during summer 2017, so hay was purchased at a cost of £900. The installation of the new footpath was delayed, the Easter Egg Hunt was cancelled due to rain, and the ponds dried up after a prolonged heatwave.
- The FA has experienced some vandalism: the Towneley Close wall was repaired following wanton damage, and the shed doors in the Triangle were replaced at a cost of £2.5k.
- Thanks were extended to Ken Capewell for his work in the playground; to the volunteers for their work all year, especially the planting of saplings in Pony Wood; to Carole Martin for cards and calendars; to Ian Procter for leading the volunteers, and to Alan Burton (our auditor) Mandy Bannon, Jonathan Tansley and Julia Salmon.

See full report at Appendix A

There was a discussion about the poor state of some of the birch trees in the orchard, and Mick confirmed that the tree surgeon was monitoring this, and the apple trees, some of which have canker.

5. Imminent Events

- Fun Day: all rotas are now full, and Andrew requested raffle prizes.
- Pond dipping: plans are under review, due to low water levels.

6. Treasurer's Report

Jane explained the accounts and advised that examiner's report revealed no problems.

Highlights were:

- There have been two insurance payments in one year, due to slippage, but premiums are now reduced.
- The Rural Payments Agency is behind with payments and currently owes £2.5k to the Association for 2017. Payment is predicted in early 2019.
- Profit from the sales of calendars reached £1k.
- Jane said that she continues to investigate whether General Funds could be safely invested somewhere.
- She confirmed that she had investigated alternative banking arrangements, and we had decided to stay with the Co-op.

The accounts were adopted.

See Appendix B for full report.

7. Election of Trustees and Officers

Hilary advised that advance notice of the election of trustees and officers had been given in the most recent newsletter and the website.

Trustees Andrew Brennand, Dave Brookes, Michael Sheppard, Hilary Short, Mick Short and Sue Nieduszynska continue to serve as a trustee.

Hilary was re-elected as Chair, and Jane and Shirley were re-elected as Treasurer and Secretary respectively.

8. Standing Item for Notification of third parties of change to trustees.

Nothing to report.

9. Items for Discussion – Aspirational Cycle Path

Hilary explained that Lancaster City Council have identified the Longs Pads footpath as an aspirational cycle path, linking Willow Lane and the canal towpath on Aldcliffe Road. After discussion, it was agreed that the Fairfield Association would not support the aspirational cycle path on the grounds that:

- The Long Pads path would have to be significantly wider and this would necessitate the removal of wildflower banks and hedges.
- It was unlikely that Natural England would approve a project which would involve the removal of hedgerow and hence be likely to adversely affect our ability to attract birds into the area.
- A tarmacked cycle track would not be in keeping with the character of the area.
- Visibility along the proposed track is poor and the use by cyclists would pose a risk to walkers.

- There were also fears that an official cycle track might be used by motorcycles, as occasionally happens on the Fauna path.
- It was noted that any negotiations with the City Council would have to involve the Charity Commission.

The meeting voted unanimously to reject the proposal for a cycle track along any of the footpaths which cross the Fairfield Association's nature reserve.

10. Short Flora, Fauna and FA report

- Poor weather last summer prevented us from taking a crop from the Hay Meadow. Because the grass was too wet to harvest as hay, the cattle were allowed to graze the Hay Meadow.
- Our winter flush counts revealed a dip in snipe numbers, possible as a result of waterlogged ground, especially around School Pond. The wet conditions were also bad for the cattle.
- Three members attended a course on reed-bed management at Leighton Moss. Subsequently RSPB staff joined FA volunteers to clear a channel in Upper Sowerholme.
- Jon Carter, from the RSPB, has new work commitments and is no longer able to lead the bird-walks. A request was made for information about anyone who could replace Jon. Ideally, we would like a leader who recognises bird calls.
- It was agreed that the hedge-trimming along the Long Pads footpath, carried out by LGGS in preparation for their fun-run, had been too severe this year.
- The floral margins of the arable field have been reseeded. The bird-friendly margin has produced winter bird-seed.
- A three-stem sycamore tree in the orchard was under observation, with a view to being braced rather than felled.
- There was an appeal to dog owners to keep their pets on leads throughout the reserve; dogs scare birds and will deter them from nesting.
- The nature reserve volunteers were thanked.

12. Short FOTT Update

Praise was received for the completed landscaping project.

There have been two art exhibitions, which had raised funds.

Dave requested ideas for the use of the workshop, which has recently been vacated by a cycle repair scheme.

13. Any Other Business

Hilary thanked everyone for attending.