

Fairfield Association AGM Minutes: 17 October 2023

Present

Ann Woodfine, Andrew Brennand, Clare Whittaker, Claire Austin, David Austin, David Dawson, Grace Naylor, Helena Murphy, Hilary Short (Chair), Ian Procter, John Whittaker, Katherine Woodfine, Mark Tanner, Michael Sheppard, Mick Short, Mollie Foxall, Patricia Clarke, Phil Watson, Phyllidia Singh, Rebecca Procter, Rebekah Mulligan, Robin Jackson, Shirley Rawsthorne, Sue Nieduszynska, Sue Pope (Secretary), Suzanne Procter, Tim Dant, Todd Guiton, Wendy Nakanishi

1. Apologies

Dave Brookes, Hilary Smith, Ian Diffenthal, Jane Parker, Mike Stevens, Oliver Fulton, Pavlos Pavli, Sharon Diffenthal, Tony Finn

2. Minutes from the last meeting

Accepted

3. Matters Arising

The shed roof has been replaced

4. Chair's report (Hilary)

Thanks to everybody for coming and to all those who have supported the FA, in whatever way, throughout the year. We wouldn't have a story to tell without you.

We have had a full calendar of events including popular traditional events such as Carol Singing, Wassailing, the Easter Egg Hunt and most recently Apple Day.

Pizza in the Park was organised by Jon Hill (who provided the pizzas), Andrew Brennand and Mike Stevens was a new and highly successful venture that raised over £8000 towards the new equipment for the play area a. We hope to repeat it next year. The Friends of Fairfield Play Area, a group of parents - rather than grandparents - have worked hard to raise funds to refurbish the play area. Last year, we were aiming to raise at least half the money needed and take the rest from FA funds. This year, it looks as if less than £10,000 will need to come from our funds and possibly nothing at all. This is a stunning achievement and particular thanks to Pavlos and Andrew.

Members of the Friends of Fairfield Play Area are helping with the newsletter and the Wonderful Website, which enables anybody at any time to donate via our website.

Younger people are also taking over the work of Ian Procter in organising our outdoor volunteers. Rebekah Key, is now organising the Wednesday Working Group and Pavlos Pavli has taken over the job of putting up and taking down our marquees and gazebos for events.

Our webmaster Julia McDowell continues to work on our website and has helped with other technical matters, Mark Tanner is working alongside her.

Geoff Oliver organises Fairfield Friends, which brings in around £5000 pa making a big difference to our financial situation. Many thanks to Geoff and all who contribute.

Tony Finn continues to organise visits into the Nature Reserve by local schools. Several classes from Dallas Road Primary School have been to the Orchard to participate in various activities. Scotforth Rainbows group made an early evening visit. Unfortunately, the very wet weather in July meant that one or two visits had to be postponed or cancelled. A letter will go out in the spring to remind local schools of the activities we offer.

Future Items for your diary include our calendar that will go on sale at the Green Fair on 18 November. Full details of how to get your copy are on your seat. Thanks to Sue Nieduszynzka for organising this.

I end by saying thank you to those people who I work with on a daily basis. My new Secretary (hopefully to be elected at this meeting); Jane, our treasurer who is currently in Japan, without whom I would find life very much more difficult and my fellow trustees who are always there to give advice.

5. Treasurer's Report

Questions were asked about the funds raised and spent on the playground refurbishment and the reserves policy. The report was adopted, and thanks extended to Jane.

In future, the draft report will be made available along with the AGM papers in advance of the meeting.

6. The Playground update

The equipment is all paid for. Lancaster City Council will do the installation, saving substantial money, starting in November. The delay in starting the work means we can continue to raise funds. The launch event will be Pizza in the Park in 2024.

7. Fairfield Association Flora and Fauna Nature Reserve update (Sue N)

Last year our High Level Stewardship (HLS) funding was extended while the replacement Countryside Stewardship scheme, which subsidises farmers and other landowners for caring for the environment, was rolled out. This is now available. Our initial management plan was written in 2011 by Richard Storton, of the RSPB. The local RSPB is still able to offer us support. An experienced ecologist with a thorough knowledge of funding, Calum Booth lives locally and knows the reserve well. He is currently mapping the area and exploring how we can maximise benefit to wildlife in a way that is manageable for a voluntary organisation. The overall structure of the reserve with its footpaths, open access orchard etc. will remain, but how the fields are managed will be different and look different. We will consult extensively on the plans. Our current HLS funding will continue to 2027, when we will need to move to Countryside Stewardship, which will mean reduced funding.

Last year the grazier said there would be no new calves. However, he failed to tell the bull and we do have three calves – two females and a male.

Managing the reserve continues, with volunteers keeping paths clear, hedges trimmed, grass mown, and the playground weed free. Dedicated teams are skilled in hedge laying, scything and fruit tree management. I'd like to especially mention the orchard team who keep the orchard looking lovely at all times of year.

Wildlife and flower surveys are on the website.

We have a new project in West Field. The far hedge is to be thickened by planting a second row on the inside, part conventional hedge, part informal shrubs. This will create a diverse hedgerow, both in species and structure providing habitat for small birds, and other wildlife. We hope to involve the wider community in planting about 1000 saplings on Saturday, 13 January 2024. Look out for further details.

Ian Procter has stepped down as Wednesday volunteer organiser, a role he's done for at least ten years. During his tenure he has increased the quantity and quality of work done. We now have 5km of quality laid hedges – huge thanks to Ian. Ian was presented with a picture of wheelbarrows in the orchard.

8. Aldcliffe Road Triangle update

The team of volunteers would appreciate new blood.

9. Election of trustees and officers

The following were duly elected

Office	Trustee	Proposer	Secunder
New trustee	Sue Pope	Hilary	Andrew
Chair	Hilary Short	Michael	Andrew
Secretary	Sue Pope	Hilary	Andrew
Treasurer	Jane Parker*	Sue N	Mick

* not a trustee

10. Standing item for notification of third parties of change to trustees

The Charity Commission and Entrust need to be notified

11. Changes to Charitable Objects agreed by the Fairfield Association

22 voted in favour of

a) to promote the conservation of the natural environment and improvement of the physical environment, for the benefit of the public.

b) to preserve, enhance and maintain public areas and amenities in the city of Lancaster, in particular the Fairfield area.

c) areas and amenities referred to in (b) include but are not limited to Fairfield Green and Playground, The Fairfield Millennium Green and Community Orchard, Fairfield Fauna and Flora Nature Reserves, and the Aldcliffe Road Triangle

12. AOB

- Todd Guiton introduced Neighbourhood Watch in Marsh and Castle wards. The link is <https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/scheme/172693/lancaster-marsh-castle-ward> where you can find out more and sign up to alerts if desired. Once logged in, you can choose to receive notices from several local watch schemes including canal watch, dog watch, community speed watch, street watch, pub

watch and dozens of others. Find these under the <https://members.ourwatchmember.org.uk/> page after you've created the login and verified the account.

- Friends of the Storey Gardens is crowd funding to recreate the Tasting Garden with stone sculptures <https://www.spacehive.com/recreating-the-tasting-garden-artwork>

13. Date of next AGM

To be decided at a future FA meeting.