

# Holders Woods Conservation

## Minutes of the AGM

1<sup>st</sup> September 2024, 2pm

### I. Present / Apologies

- a) Those attending: Helen Harvey (Chair), Fiona Tyson (Sec), Ian Harvey (Committee), Eva Hyde (Treasurer), Barry Woods, Kevin Doig, Pete Tyson, Anne Snell. Ryan and Isaac (Observers)
- b) Apologies received from: Jenny Daniels, George Montgomery-Fleming, Andy McBride, Sophie Hatchwell, Mike Scott, Peter Searle, Andrew Wadsworth, Martin Mence

### 2. Minutes of the last meeting July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023

Ratified by members attending

### 3. Matters arising from 2023 minutes not covered below

- We have been invited to join Lukas Large and the West Midlands Fungi group as they explore Holders Woods on December 8<sup>th</sup> 2024. Fiona will send round details nearer the time.
- Helen has met with a pond expert who advises that rejuvenating the long pond will be a three-year task. A separate bid is to be made in the future to see if we can get a grant to enable this.
- The Forest School with Bracken appears to have had only one session and we haven't seen them again.
- Helen will contact Birmingham Tree People to see where they are up to with their interactive tree map.
- One cherry tree by the willow arch has been saved but needs to be tidied in the Autumn. One has been removed as it was not saveable.
- Laminated identification sheets were purchased and are available each session.
- Sarah Moss is still selling her prints of Holders Woods and we have already had £25.

#### 4. Membership

- a) Election of committee members.

Barry Wood has proposed that the current committee be re-elected. This was seconded by Kevin Doig. The current committee members are pleased to serve for a further year and thanks were given by members for the work of the committee.

- b) Current member numbers. We currently have 23 members who are regularly active with us.

#### 5. Activity Report

Below is our Activity Report summary for July 2023 – June 2024.

Date of Activity	No. of attendees	Brief description of activity	No. of hours group working
2 July 23	10	Himalayan Balsam pulling and AGM.	20
6 Aug 23	8	Cutting back along Brockley Grove and litter picking.	16
1 Sept 23	10	Cutting back the meadow that the mower missed and litter picking.	20
1 Oct 23	11	Bramble cutting back, top right corner and litter picking	22
5 Nov 23	13	Finishing the meadow and seed planting, plus clearing drains and litter picking.	26
3 Dec 23	10	Willow arch and litter picking, plus Christmas cheer!	20
7 Jan 24	15	Willow arch, fallen bough and litter picking	30
4 Feb 24	11	Cherry tree thinning, litter picking and moving dumped tree waste	22
3 March 24	15	Cherry tree thinning, litter picking, trimming brambles, trim around willow, drain clearing on car park, wood anemone, seeds on meadow	30
7 April 24	0	Cancelled due to high winds	0
12 May 24	7	Raking the early cut meadow and sowing additional seeds. Plus litter picking	14
2 June 24	13	Cutting back paths through the woods and Brockley Grove and litter picking. We also collected the fallen Holders Wood sign to remove graffiti and put on new legs and return to site hopefully next month.	26
		<b>TOTAL VOLUNTEERING HOURS:</b>	<b>246 HOURS</b>

This shows that since the last AGM we have volunteered 246 hours between us in 11 sessions (April being cancelled due to inclement weather). This is calculated by the

number of people x 2 hours a session. These are just the hours as a group and don't include the set up / clean up after sessions; admin behind the scenes; additional meetings; time people spend extra on the site between sessions. Many thanks for all the extra time people spend on our woods!

## **6. Treasurer's report (full detail at the end of these notes)**

- a) We started this year with a balance of £ 1,123 of which almost £600 came from a lottery grant awarded in October 2022. During these 13 months, we were given £180 from BOSF (14 x £10 monthly payment and 1 x £40 from holding a coffee morning) and £25 from the sale of Sarah Moss' prints. We spent £320: £30 on each of 2 Bat walks and a Fungus walk, £52 for insurance for the tools and shed\*, £100 for wildflowers and wildflower cards, £30 for a first aid refill\*, £30 for materials for a new signpost\* and £10 for laminating sheets for signs. (Items with \* [£110] were related to the ones requested in the lottery grant).
  
- b) Congratulations to Helen on obtaining a new Lottery funded grant for £3190 for further work, including the scything course, scythes, drain covers, bird boxes, more wildflower seeds and path repair materials. This was awarded in mid-June 2024. With this new grant, we ended July with an overall balance of £4517. At the date of the AGM we had £2400, of which £900 was not part of the Lottery Grant.

## **7. Insurance**

As in previous years, our insurance is covered by BOSF (Birmingham Open Spaces Forum). This is an incorporated organisation that supports small volunteer groups, like us, to function safely. We will stay with them as long as we are allowed, as minimum insurance for us is approximately £190 per year. Note: we cannot work at height or with powered tools. Nor can we work with under 18s. However, we can signpost them to other groups that specialise in family and young person activities, such as Highbury Orchard.

We also now have insurance for our tool shed and tools. There is a £100 excess for any claim, but in expensive loss times this will still be good to have. Cost this year was £80.

Note we do try to make sure we can see all our tools where we are working and count out and in during the session.

## **8. Ranger Support**

This year has seen the Ranger presence pretty much removed, except for advice by email and telephone. Yet we have still managed to keep on top of all our usual activities. We will be contacting them for advice on autumn and winter coppice work soon – once the meadow has been sorted.

## 9. Registering the Woods as an Asset of Community Value (ACV)

When Birmingham City Council announced its serious financial difficulties there was some concern as to whether they would be scouting around for places to sell: land, buildings, potential housing plots etc. In the main this hasn't happened, except for derelict land that is unused and some parts of the NEC. However an organisation called Save Birmingham helped and encouraged many organisations to register their community assets to 'protect' as much as possible. In reality this means we need to be consulted before they bulldoze – but also that as a much loved and used site, we make it far too hard to consider making money from our site.

Thanks to everyone who helped with this process.

## 10. Plans for next year

This is an open discussion. Not expecting to make decisions on the spot, but to make notes of ideas and thoughts for future activities.

- Fungi walk. This is arranged for 8<sup>th</sup> December.
- First aid courses – six of us are Emergency First Aid at Work and Forest First Aid trained. We will run a further course late in 2025 before renewal is required.
- Scything workshop – 4 Holders Woods and 2 people from neighbouring groups now have the knowledge to share on how to properly use a scythe. There will be a short update at the October conservation session.
- Continuing to develop the meadow area. Slow progress, but will start to see more wild flowers over next couple of years, we hope. Consider signage so walkers can understand the development. Fiona will do a poster for the notice boards.
- Keep the brambles back from certain areas, for example where there is wood anemone and on the meadow.
- Keep on at the Himalayan Balsam in the areas we have identified.
- Reporting Japanese Knotweed / Giant Hogweed and any other issues to the council / parks on discovery.
- Maintain the willow arch – possibly start afresh? Still growing and doing very well!
- Keep main paths in good order for all to access as much as possible.
- Gradually, over the years, continue to coppice through the woods as required and under ranger guidance.
- Keep up the coppicing of willow and hazel along the path up from the doctors' entrance. Helen to discuss with Rangers as we need a bit of guidance here.
- Under Ranger guidance, protect / re-establish plants, e.g. wood anemone, primrose, bluebells, oak seedlings.
- Do some recording of plants and animals that visit / reside.
- Keeping on top of litter and the den area etc.
- Promote working with the group as a positive and enjoyable experience.

- Encourage Park users to take care and appreciate what they have.
- Tree mapping and how to promote once achieved. Still on the 'to do' list at present. But at some point we hope to have a tree trail to share online. Helen will chase Birmingham Tree People.
- Control holly as it is spreading and limits biodiversity. This will be a winter activity as our planned session in Spring had to be cancelled due to high winds.
- Keep a close eye on the bulbs along the allotment edge. These may have been damaged or disturbed by the erection of a new fence. We will plant more if there is a poor show in Spring 2025. A long handled bulb planter may be purchased to make this an easier task.
- Plan a session along the woodland edge by Holders Gardens to include litter clearing, keeping the verge clear and planting some trees. It is hoped this will encourage support and perhaps participation from those living very near.
- Plan a session on the strip between the surgery and the next house in Moor Green Lane. This needs a general tidy up and, as it is such a public part of our area, we hope to make it look better.

**11. AOB**

No further items raised

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....

Date	Item	Credit	Debit
<b>01 06 2024</b>	<b>Balance</b>	<b>1,122.96</b>	
22 06 2023	BOSF	10	
24 07 2023	BOSF	10	
05 09 2023	Bat Walk		30
11 09 2023	BOSF	20	
21 09 2023	Primula seeds-just seed wrexham		8.55
25 09 2023	BOSF (coffee morning)	40	
04 10 2023	Fungus walk (Bham museum)		30.38
04 10 2023	wild life cards (field studies council)		28
01 10 2023	BOSF	10	
07 11 2023	landlife wildflowers (anemones etc.)		42.99
04 12 2023	BOSF	10	
28 12 2023	BOSF	10	
09 01 2024	Sarah Moss - prints	25	
16 01 2024	BOSF	20	
12 03 2024	BOSF	10	
19 04 2024	Bat and Black Country		30
24 04 2024	BOSF	20	
10 05 2024	Unity Insurance Services (tools)		52.1
14 05 2024	Wildflower seed (Ian Harvey)		29.5
31 05 2024	Selco- wood and postcrete for sign		27.68
05 06 2024	Laminating sheets-Amazon		9.99
08 06 2024	First aid kit refill- St John's ambulance		30.54
<b>14 06 2024</b>	<b>New grant</b>	<b>3,190.00</b>	
26 06 2024	BOSF	10.00	
17 07 2024	BOSF	10.00	
	credit/expenditure	4,517.96	319.73
	<b>New balance</b>	<b>4198.23</b>	