

Holders Woods Conservation

Minutes of the 2021 AGM

July 11th 2021, 2pm

1. Attendees and apologies

Attendees: Helen Harvey, Ian Harvey, Fiona Tyson, Kevin Doig, Ruth Peaker, Jenny Daniels, Liz Matey, Paul Williams, Anne Snell, Sophie Hatchwell, Andrew Wadsworth, (Catherine Lee, Observing)

Apologies: Eva Hyde, Peter Searle, Pete Tyson, George Fleming, Claire Smith, Andy McBride, Barry Wood

2. Minutes of last meeting

Our last AGM was held on 6th December 2020. The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. **Fiona will pass a copy to Helen to sign. This will then be scanned and saved.**

3. Membership

A) Election of Chair (Helen), Committee member (Ian), Secretary (Fiona), Treasurer (Eva). Pete Tyson has proposed the existing committee members be appointed for a further year. This has been seconded by Ruth Peaker. There being no other nominations, the existing committee is appointed for a further year.

B) A member is defined as anyone who has attended 3 meet ups in any one year. We currently have 20 full members of Holders Woods Conservation. A fantastic number. We also have 3 attendees who we hope will become full members soon and at least 3 new enquiries. Now things are opening up (we hope) it will be much easier to manage a growing group. We look forward to maintaining the great membership we currently have and welcoming any new people keen to join us. Unfortunately our insurance does not cover those under 18.

C) Covid concerns: We must not forget that the virus is still out there and we will continue to make sure we consider all current guidelines. If you are feeling unwell, have been advised to self-isolate or have tested positive for Covid, do not attend.

4. Activity Report

The Activity Report summary for Dec 20 to June 21 shows that since the last AGM we have already volunteered 120 hours between us in only 4 sessions (number of people x 2hrs a session). Sadly, we didn't meet for the first three months due to Covid restrictions. This figure does not include all the behind the scenes work on research for funding, admin, tool maintenance, sanitising, buying new tools and making cakes! A small number of us are trialling an app that allows us to record all the things we do to contribute. It makes a huge difference to the area and local people do appreciate our efforts, not just the rangers. So well done everyone – what you do really adds up.

An activity just begun, for development over next year, is mapping Holders Woods and Brockley Grove. We have some old maps and a species record from a number of years ago. We plan to remap the woods for:

- i) Trees eg to check if we have any ancient woodland trees left. This will be recorded on a shared Google account. **Helen and Sophie to action.**
- ii) Species indicators – flora and fauna that tell us about the location
- iii) Record of what we have today, to compare and use to look forward and plan what the wood needs. For example, should the big sycamores be removed?
- iv) Encouraging local interest with, for example, guided walks and tree trails.

5. Treasurer's report

A) Income and Expenditure

The accounts for the last year indicate a balance of £1514.10. Of this £1283.30 is from the National Lottery Grant.

B) Lottery Grant. We have now bought almost all the items we planned to buy. From the list provided in the original bid only the limestone aggregate and tool store are still to be purchased. We have lots of tools now! A mix of brand new and donated, including spare blades and sharpeners. In summary we have:

Bowsaws	9	Grass hooks	2
Loppers	8	Scythettes	3
Secateurs	6	Waders	2
Shears	9	Hard hats	6
Forks	6	Brooms	1
Pruning saws	4	Wheelbarrow	1
Spades	5	2 handed tree saw	1
Rakes (various)	9	Tool bags	2
Pick axe	1	Gloves	20 pairs
Bill hooks	2	First aid kit	1

In the Autumn Helen and Ian would welcome help prepping the site for the tool store and building it. **Please contact Helen or Ian if you can help.** Once we have a secure, separate place to house tools members were happy to allow sharing with other formal friends groups. **A loans record will be set up by Helen.** Meanwhile if any member wants to borrow any of the tools please just ask.

6. Insurance

As in previous years, our insurance is covered by BOSF (Birmingham Open Spaces Forum). This is an agency 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 £150 per year. Note: we cannot work with under 18s. However, we can signpost them to other groups that specialise in family and young person activities, such as Highbury Orchard.

7. Woodland Management Plan

A Woodland Management Plan has been drawn up by Fiona to replace the previous version from 2000. The Rangers and the Committee commented on draft versions. A final draft has been circulated to all members for comment. Comments received were incorporated and the AGM attendees accepted the plan as a working document to guide activity into the future. **Fiona will send the ratified plan to the local councillors Kerry Jenkins and Martin**

Straker-Welds and the lead Council Member for Street Scene and Parks, Cllr John O'Shea.
We hope this will inform and engage them in protecting and developing Holders Woods and Brockley Grove. The plan will be updated as needed and a version sent out to members each year if there are significant changes.

8. Health & Safety Policy Review

We have reviewed the policy and added a note about following covid guidelines. The review mechanism has also been clarified. The policy will be formally reviewed every other year with amendments made more often if required. The updated policy was formally accepted at the meeting.

9. Plans for next year

This item was an open discussion. The coming year's activities will hopefully include:

- Following the Management Plan for activities each month, adding / amending as we go.
- Continuing to re-establish our meadow, pushing and keeping the brambles back.
- Tree mapping and discussing how to promote once achieved.
- First aid training – **Helen is looking into free courses for friends' groups.**
- Tool store – coming together to build it!
- Keep the Himalayan Balsam at bay in the areas we have identified.
- Report sightings of Japanese Knotweed to the responsible council officer.
- Maintain the willow arch.
- Keep paths in good order for all to access as much as possible.
- Gradually, over the years, coppice through the woods as required and under Ranger guidance.
- Keep up the biennial coppicing of willow and hazel along the path up from the doctors' entrance.
- Under Ranger guidance, protect / re-establish plants, e.g. wood anemone etc.
- Do some recording of plants and animals that visit / reside and update Ecorecord.
- Keep on top of litter and fly tipping.
- Promote working with the group as a positive and enjoyable experience.
- Encourage Park users to take care and appreciate what they have.

10. AOB

- The @HoldersWoods Instagram account now has almost 500 followers
- Members agreed for paperwork to be shared with a new friends group being established in Dawberry Fields. We are happy to have them visit our sessions if that would help them.
- All agreed a website would be a helpful addition to our work, perhaps like the one that Highbury Park Friends have. **Kevin agreed to look into the practicalities.**

Signed by Chair

Date