Friends of Worts Meadow

Minutes of Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 19th May 2021 7.30 pm

Present: Frances Dipper (Chairman), David Pell (Treasurer), Robert Humphrey (Secretary), Claire Perrott, Robert Stripe, Guy Warren, Neville Diver, Anna Bilton, Deborah Ahmad, Carol Middleton, Elizabeth Swift.

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies, notification of fire procedures, emergency exits and Covid-19 protocols.
FD welcomed everyone attending this year's AGM. She introduced those new to our meetings and outlined the emergency exit routes and the Covid-19 rules of the Village Hall. She thanked RS for setting up and sanitising surfaces.
Apologies for absence had been received from:-
Ray Gambell, Steve Robertson, Julia Popp and Anne Bullman.

2. Agreeing the minutes of the 2019 AGM.
No AGM was held in 2020. Therefore the 2019 minutes were agreed and then signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising from those minutes.
None.

4. Chairman's report on the activities of the Friends of Worts Meadow over the last year.
We did not hold an AGM in May 2020 and for obvious reasons our activities were curtailed last year. But a little thing like a pandemic was not going to stop FOWM members from doing their best to keep Worts Meadow and its wildlife in the best condition possible. In fact the reserve became very important to Landbeach residents and others from further afield – for exercise and a good dose of outdoor green space.
Public events
Sadly our usual programme of planned public events could not go ahead. Our last such event was in March 2020, just before lockdown, an annual torchlight survey of the ponds for Great Crested Newts (GCNs) and other amphibians. The newts are still thriving, but as in other parts of the country toads and frogs are now worryingly scarce. This year, all being well, we have two dates for your diary: a dawn chorus walk on June 5th (very successful in 2019) and a pond dipping session on August 28th.
Management
This year (and last) we have continued to do our best to help with the management of Worts Meadow. In particular and when permitted, individuals and work parties have kept the paths useable throughout the 20/21 winter flooding, by obtaining and spreading wood chippings and cutting overhanging vegetation. The broken bench in the orchid clearing was replaced in September 2020 by a renovated bench donated by Landbeach W.I., which was moved from its position outside the Village Hall. Access to the wildlife pond area has been maintained by selective clearance of encroaching blackthorn, Prickly Oxtongue and brambles.
There has been an unprecedented level of flooding this past winter, both within the first meadow and the edge of the wood. We are currently helping the county council flood risk and biodiversity team and Historic England to plan remediation works on the moat edge and ditch drain to alleviate the meadow flooding. Over the years the moat bank has been 'poached' by cows in the corner nearest the road. This month we are due to erect temporary electric fencing around the moat and the main field pond, provided by CCC.

CCC County Farms Estate have been made aware of the significant problems with cows encountered last summer (2020) by some people, when walking in Worts meadow. This is now being dealt with directly by them.

Wildlife

As well as yearly counts of GCNs we maintain an ongoing record of any other wildlife, via a waterproof recording folder hung on the Bourne Wood gate. Sadly we decided this had to be removed last year for Covid safety sake but it has now been reinstated. Nevertheless some interesting sightings reached our eyes and ears. A great find was a group of 11 beautiful bee orchids in the wildlife pond area, in mid-June 2020. A Turtle Dove was heard 'purring' from the moat island in early July 2020. The bird boxes were well used last season, with 7 pairs each of breeding Great Tits and Blue Tits. We are currently doing this year's 'silent watches'.

5. Treasurer's report on the finances of the Friends of Worts Meadow.

DP handed out statements showing our income and outgoings since our formation. We currently have £795 in the bank.

AB proposed that the accounts be accepted, RS seconded this and all were in favour.

6. Election of the Management Committee for the coming year.

Nominations for the following committee members and posts had been received and all were duly elected:-

Chairman	Frances Dipper
Treasurer	David Pell
Secretary	Robert Humphrey
Ordinary members	Anna Bilton
	Deborah Ahmad
	Robert Stripe
	Claire Perrott

7. Amendments to the Constitution.

None.

8. Any other business appropriate to the AGM.

- CM and ES gave a presentation on their organization Huathe (Celtic for hawthorn). They explained that they gave a training course to teachers on running Forest Schools. They were both teachers who were trained in running Forest Schools and then set up their own business. They give teachers a comprehensive course with the aim that they can then in turn take children, mainly early years, out into the countryside to let them play and explore nature in a safe environment.

  In Cambridgeshire they currently run their courses at the Somersham nature reserve but, having seen Bourne Wood, they would like our agreement to run courses here. The courses run for 9 days but are spread out over a period. They would leave the area they used such that we would not know they had been there.

  FD asked whether we approved their request and by a show of hands this was granted.

  FD said she would like Landbeach children to benefit from any future courses so could local schools be advised that these courses were available for their teachers.

- FD said that 2022 was the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and there was a scheme to plant trees to mark the occasion so perhaps we could do something. It was agreed to discuss this at a future meeting.

- CP asked whether the AGM minutes should be agreed at the next committee meeting rather than in 12 months' time at the next AGM. FD said her other organisations always agreed the AGM minutes at the next AGM. However they could be agreed by the committee and then ratified at the next AGM.

- ND asked whether anything had been decided about the suggestion that FOWM takes over the allotment he previously rented as suggested at our last committee meeting. FD said it had proved too complicated.

9. Date of the next meeting Friends Group committee meeting and date of 2022 AGM.
Our next committee meeting will be on Wednesday 28th July commencing at 7.30 pm. The date of the next AGM was set as May 22nd 2022 at the committee meeting held on April 28th.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm.