**The Friends of Littleheath Woods**

**Minutes of Committee Meeting of 19th March 2024, 42 Farley Road.**

**1 Welcome and Apologies.**

Present: Ian Leggatt, Chris Hyde, Shirley Shepherd, Brian Stone, John Gallagher and Jeff Bayton. Also in attendance Brian Flynn

Apologies: Sean Walsh and Peter Underwood.

**2 Minutes of Last Meeting.**

The minutes of the last Committee meeting, 24th January 2024, were agreed.

**3 Treasurer’s Report and Finances.**

a Chris reported the current balance as £4,836.51 and noted that we are due £195 from TCV for Peter Underwoods Chainsaw Course. Discussion ensued and it was agreed that our reserves should be at a minimum of £2,000.

b It was noted that we are now the owners of an electric powered wheelbarrow which had its inaugural outing today. There will be a ‘small’ uplift in our insurance premium with Zurich (who have waived any increase for this year) PM Note: Xabier (Croydon Council) has given specific permission for its use in Littleheath Woods.

c Chainsaw courses are booked. Brian S to self fund, Peters costs to be reimbursed by TCV. Brian F enquired about Chainsaw Certification. PM Note: Chris advises that a 3 day course is £550 and that the first suitable date is 17th - 19th June.

d Cyril has reclaimed his personal Battery Chainsaw which leaves FoLW with only petrol devices. Battery saws are considered superior. We should consider upgrading our equipment to include another Battery Chainsaw for our use. The potential to sell off one of our unused petrol chainsaws was discussed.

**Action: PU to chase TCV for reimbursement. IL to investigate 2nd hand value of Petrol Chainsaw.**

**4 Health & Safety.**

Nothing to report.

**5 Website / Facebook.**

Ian outlined current issues with our Yola website: ‘cookies’ are not adequately dealt with and the site dos not ‘Rescale’ when used on smaller devices than a desktop / laptop. Ian explained that Selsdon Wood use Yola and have solved the problem. He offered to attempt to fix our issues using the instructions used by FoSW. Ian advised that he had the February Diary to upload to the website

**Action: Ian to upload February Diary to website. Ian to fix Website.**

**6** **Membership**

Noted that membership subs stands at around £120. Our financial health is mainly the result of donations for logs.

**7 Any Other Business:**

a) **5 Year Plan**

We will shortly carry out our review to our 5 year management plan. Ian reported that he had emailed Xabier to enquire who the appropriate officer is at Croydon Council that will sign off our plan proposals.

**Action: IL to chase Xabier re appropriate Council sign-off.**

b) **Information Boards for Displays**

i Chris advised that she is awaiting better weather before carrying out a mock up frame to assess the stability and to decide on pegging requirements

**Action: Carry out a mock up, in due course.**

ii It was suggested that we could organise a quiz or competition to ‘Identify the Leaf / Tree / Butterfly / Plant.

**Action: CH and SS**

**c) Future Open Days**

i Selsdon Wood Open Day is scheduled for Sunday 8th September.

ii Croydon Library will be holding a Green Spaces open Day, venue and date to be advised.

**Action: All to note.**

d) **Bird Surveys:** Shirley advised the need for a knowledgeable bird enthusiast to carry out surveys of birds in the woods. Shirley offered to write an appeal for the Selsdon Gazette.

**Action: SS as above. Ian to consult John Birkett and post a request on Facebook.**

**e) Logs:**

i) It was agreed to continue with log production and, for this coming log sales season in recognition of bagged log prices generally, to increase our suggested donation to £7.50.

**Action: All**

ii) It was noted that bags of logs in store need to have their identifying tags (Chestnut / Other) clearly visible and the bags ideally kept separate.

**Action: All**

f) **Seats / Tree Survey**

I It was agreed to review the various seats within the woods and produce a condition survey together with location map and to agree which seats need maintenance or renewing and where additional seats would be beneficial. Brian S suggested any new seats be treated with preservative during the construction process.

Ii It was noted that our ‘Veteran’ trees probably fall into the category of ‘Notable’ trees when using the nationally accepted Woodland Trust definitions. It was agreed to carry out a general survey, probably as part of a Tuesday Workparty activity and after the Bluebells have died down to assess Seats and Notable Trees.

**Action: Chris to schedule in to a workparty.**

g) **Spring Flower Walk**

Shirley intends to carry out our annual Spring Flower Walk on Saturday 13th April. Chris offered to be backup.

**Action SS / CH**

**h) Grass Cutting**

Shirley referred to the minutes of the last Green Spaces Forum and the reported purchase of additional grass cutting equipment which would collect the arisings. She advised that this is the method which we want for our fields.

**Action: Ian to confirm our request for Meadow Cut to Xabier**

i) **Insurance**

Chris has reviewed our Personal Accident cover. Our insurers Zurich impose restrictions on Personal Accident (PA) cover for those age 75 and over and withdraw PA cover for those 90 and over. Chris has communicated to volunteers so that they fully understand their reduced cover. It was noted that levels of financial cover within the Zurich policy generally are low. Chris agreed to investigate and to circulate details of cover generally and to consult Zurich on enhanced levels of cover, including any additional premium cost, and to report back to the committee to enable a cost / benefit analysis to be carried out and a committee decision made.

**Action: CH to prepare consult Zurich re enhanced financial levels of cover and potention increase in premium cost.**

**j) AGM**

Ian reminded the Committee that we have arranged our AGM for 22nd May. Notice will be going in to the April Gazette. All of the current Committee are willing to stand for another year and it is proposed to offer them for re-election en bloc. Brian F is kindly willing to join us on the Committee and his nomination can be from the floor. Ian advised he want to continue to include Sean Walsh as a member of the Committee.

**Action: All to note AGM in The Garden Room at St Johns, 22nd May, 7.30 pm for 8pm start.**

k) **Redundant Tools**

Ian pointed out that we have many tools in the shed which are no longer used – Scythes, Billhooks and Slashers etc. It was agreed that we offer any redundant tools and equipment to TCV / any start up groups. Peter suggested TCV group is likely to interested in the scythes. Chris offered to contact Jane Hymas re these. A tool survey of the shed stock needs to be carried out.

**Action: CH and IL**

**8 Meetings:**

Ian advised that the next Green Spaces Forum is expected to be around June time. Probably via ‘Teams’ and Ian will attend if able.

**Action: IL**

Date of next Committee meeting: Thursday 16th May.

Ian thanked Shirley for her hospitality. Mtg closed @ 21.00