

Minutes of the 27th Annual General Meeting of
THE FRIENDS OF LITTLEHEATH WOODS

St Johns, Garden Room Suite , Selsdon,
Wednesday 22nd May 2024 at 8.00pm.

Those Present:

Chris & Adrian Hyde, Brian Stone, Shirley Shephard, Kathy & Ian Leggatt, Pierre Weill-Tessier, Chris Struthers, Mr A & Joyce Atkinson, Keith and Linda Sinclair, Valerie & Jeff Bayton, Cyril Watmore, Peter Underwood, John Gallagher, Richard Morley-Smith, Fiona Stas, Brian Flynn and Sheila Childs.

Apologies for absence:

Sean Walsh, Micky Wheeler, Trevor Stotten, Cllrs Robert Ward and Joseph Lee.

Item 1, Welcome.

Ian Leggatt thanked everyone for coming and explained the agenda. He noted that, as a 'Friends of' group we were formed in 1995 and that we were in our 29th year but, owing to Covid, this was our 27th AGM.

Item 2. Minutes of the Last Meeting.

The adoption of the minutes of the 2023 AGM was proposed by Kathy Leggatt, seconded by Cyril Watmore and agreed by vote.

Item 3, Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Item 4. Chairman's Report.

Ian referred to his 2024 Newsletter which accompanied the invitation to the AGM.

Item 5. Treasurers Report.

Chris distributed copies and explained the accounts for year ending 9th April 2024 which showed we will carry forward a balance of £5,101.51. It was noted that our level of donations was significantly increased over last year due to an increase in personal donations and Easyfundraising. It was noted that Croydon Council had eventually refunded our full insurance premium costs for 3rd Party, Personal Accident and Tool Cover although that this may not continue. Chris explained that the increased expenditure on Equipment and Tools related to the purchase of an electric Powered Wheelbarrow. She explained that this has transformed our ability to move tools and heavy kit around the Woods. The balance being carried forward was viewed as prudent financial management bearing in mind Croydon Council budgetary issues and that we are considering training another Chainsaw operative. The accounts were proposed for adoption by Peter Underwood, seconded by Jeff Bayton and carried unanimously. A vote of thanks was passed to Marc Stas for his review of the accounts.

Item 6. Election of Committee.

Ian reported that the current Committee were all willing to stand again. There were no nominations from the floor for their positions and their re-election en-bloc was proposed by Keith Sinclair seconded by Fiona Stas and carried unanimously. It was noted that Brian Flynn was willing to join the Committee. He was elected unanimously. Your committee comprises, Ian Leggatt (Chair) Chris Hyde (Treasurer), Brian Stone, Peter Underwood (Secretary), Sean Walsh, Shirley Shephard (Membership & Flora / Fauna Surveys), Jeff Bayton, Brian Flynn and John Gallagher.

Item 7. Annual Subscription.

Ian noted that Friends of Selsdon Wood and Friends of Croham Hurst both set their membership at £10. It was suggested that ours should remain at £5 per family per year. Proposed by Jeff Bayton, seconded by Kathy Leggatt, and agreed by vote.

Item 8 AOB

- a) Richard Morley-Smith raised the issue of Woodland Creep with bramble and vegetation slowly taking over the edges of the fields and noted that this was something which the Council traditionally dealt with. It was considered very unlikely that the Council would ever, in its current financial situation, resume this work and that there was little point in pursuing this with Croydon Council. It was confirmed that we use a powered brushcutter to deal with the bramble and encroaching vegetation trees and devote many workpartys to cutting back and clearing the Field edges.
- b) Peter Underwood noted the forthcoming Vanguard Way Walk which is scheduled for Sunday June 2nd which will see groups of walkers passing through Littleheath Woods from East Croydon on their way to the Bull Inn at Chelsham. Peter pointed out that an excellent opportunity offered itself for us to raise our profile with a follow up article in Inside Croydon (IC). Peter agreed to prepare copy for an article which we could submit to IC.

Action – Peter Underwood / Chris Hyde

- c) Chris Hyde reported on our current progress on the next iteration of our 5 year Management Plan which we will soon have to agree with Croydon Council. Discussion ensued on the detail of our proposals. It was noted that the current overarching 20 year Plan runs to 2028 so we will soon have to commence a revision to this document as well.

Action – Chris Hyde / FoLW

- d) Brian Flynn raised the poor condition of various woodland paths and the effect this was having on access for mobility vehicle users. Many paths have very muddy sections and the current surge in bordering vegetation growth is making access difficult. It was recognised that Croydon Council are supposed to cut the edges of woodland paths in June / July and September / October but this does not appear to have happened for some years. (PM Note: according to our records 2018) It was confirmed that The Friends undertake to control path vegetation encroachment on an 'as needed' basis. Peter Underwood suggested that funding may be available to improve access generally within the woods. He advised us to put together a list of paths and where, which we would like to see improved, and he offered to explore opportunities to seek funding for improvement works. It was clarified that paths would not be tarmacked over rather that remedial resurfacing with stone chippings would be employed.

Action – FoLW / Peter Underwood

- e) Peter Underwood queried whether we surveyed Fauna in the Woods, specifically Badgers, Deer, Birds and Bats. How do we know if our work is improving biodiversity of the Woods if we do not monitor these species? Peter offered to investigate suitable candidates for these monitoring exercises,

Action – Peter Underwood

Item 9. Close

Ian Leggatt again thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting closed at approximately 9.0 pm.

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<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk>

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