

The Friends of Alkrington Woods

Annual General Meeting 7th March 2023 Minutes

Attending, Cliff Ivers, Jackie Christy, Clr Patricia Dale, Jack Bowen (RBC Ranger), Charlie White, Rita Gunson, Helen Fowell, Charlie Farrell, Boyd Taylor, Pam Taylor, Judd Beckett, Barbara Owens, John Chamberlain, Jack Christy, Dean Clapworthy, Jane Robinson, Cath Earl

Apologies, Rod McDonald, Jane Al-Attar, Margaret White, Colin Donald

Election of Committee

Existing holders were voted in unanimously.

Chairman	Cliff Ivers
Secretary and co signatory	Jackie Christy
Treasurer	Cliff Ivers

Annual Review

The 3 information boards (sponsored by the Township and Tesco) have now been installed and seem to be surviving well.

The Friends and RBC Green Volunteers have cleared half an acre of Rhododendron in the main woodland together with 5 sessions of Balsam bashing in targeted areas. In November we planted 450 tree saplings that were kindly provided by the Woodland Trust. We have cleared tons of litter plus a number of inflatable rafts, tents, bedding and of course, shopping trolleys. Colin and Cliff cleared out the 25 remaining bird boxes in January, all had been used.

The Friends worked with Middleton in Bloom to replace the hurdles around the Fusilier boat display and, following their guidance entered the RHS Britain in Bloom “Its your neighbourhood” competition In July. The judges were really impressed with the reserve as they are more used to judging urban environments. They liked the work being done by the Friends and the Council and we have received an Outstanding award. The judges made some suggestions for developing wildlife habitats and promoting biodiversity which we will take on board. The judging sheet is attached.

Financial Report

Cliff provided a financial report showing income and expenditure since the group was reformed in 2019. The previous treasurer resigned from the role so Cliff has been acting treasurer with Jackie as co-signatory on cheques.

We have £1,323.99 deposited in the group account and a statement of expenditure was circulated.

We received a community grant of £930 from Parklife and several donations totaling £200. This should cover anticipated running costs for several years and help fund volunteer equipment.

Special projects will be funded by the Township or external organisations. The group welcomes donations or legacies but has no need to collect subscriptions.

Art Exhibition

Following on from last year's exhibition in the library we are planning to run it again this year in Alkrington Community Center. The event will allow local artists and photographers to display or sell work inspired by Alkrington Woods and Rhodes Lodges. It will be held one evening in May with drinks and snacks available. Local schools will be invited to enter an art competition.

Any enquiries regarding the exhibition should be emailed to Jackie Christy at jackie1975christy@gmail.com

Environmental Action Group

It was agreed to form an action group to challenge polluters of the reserve. Mersey Rivers Trust may be able to help train volunteers to sample water quality and invertebrates sampling as well as undertaking surveys of plastic pollution, river obstacles and river bird surveys. Cliff is to arrange a meeting and potentially a walk about for those interested in taking action.

There was some discussion of the reported levels of storm sewage flows into the Wince, Boardman and Irk as well as the unmeasured effect of Motorway runoff into Boardman Brook and into the Irk at Boothroyden. Also the amount of rubbish on the Irk bed.

Activities and Projects

Jack Bowen confirmed that the Reserve has £80k of funding available as part of a Section 106 agreement with Elan Homes. They are looking at potential improvements and would like our views on what we think the money should be spent on.

There was general agreement that the pathways need substantial repairs and the external signage is poor. The wildlife pond at Riverside needs repair or replacement and there is potential to improve wildlife habitat and reduce flooding/erosion by installing leaky dams in the main woodland. A wetland area could be created alongside the Boardman Brook, again to create habitat and reduce erosion of the paths.

Jack has plans to get the green volunteers working on the hedge alongside the main lodge and to create wildflower areas here and alongside the Irk at McBrides.

The leaking drains at the bottom of the hill will be repaired within the next few months and we would ask that you keep children and dogs away from the holes.

Off Road Motorbikes

There has been a recent increase in the presence of off road motorbikes and Councillor Dale is raising the issue with the Police. Further discussion on the issue is excluded from the minutes to ensure confidentiality.

It is essential that all sightings are reported to Police to increase priority for action.

Date of next meeting

Volunteers are welcome to join in a clean up of Riverside Park at 10-12:30 AM on Saturday 25th March. Gloves/boots or wellies needed.