

The Friends of Alkrington Woods

Annual General Meeting 20th March 2024 Minutes

Attending, Cliff Ivers, Jackie Christy, Jane Al-Attar, Jack Bowen & Michael Pomroy (RBC Rangers), Margaret White, Colin Donald, Dean Clapworthy, Christine Clapworthy, Max Rawlings, Miriam Turner, Ben Turner

Apologies, Liz Harris, Margaret White Rod McDonald, Clr Patricia Dale,

Election of Committee

Existing holders were voted in unanimously.

Chairman Cliff Ivers

Secretary and co signatory Jackie Christy

Treasurer Cliff Ivers

Annual Review

Our Art Exhibition at the Community Centre was very popular with local artists and well attended by the public. However it was agreed to be very stressful for the organisers and we felt it did not necessarily promote the nature reserve well enough. The associated litter poster competition was really popular with local schoolchildren and the winning designs are posted around the main entrances.

The Friends group won an outstanding award again in the RHS 'It's your neighbourhood' competition. We had a very enjoyable dawn chorus bird walk which we would like to repeat if any of the Friends would like to run one?

We planted 450 saplings again in November (which should be well watered by now), carried out several maintenance days and litter picks and had a session maintaining the orchard. Alkrington Primary painted 25 Fairy doors for us which were fitted to Fairy Wood in March. We have also revived the Elf Door/Tree ID trail alongside the river paths.

In June Mersey River Trust trained our newly formed Environmental Group to chemically sample our watercourses as well as monitor Riverfly. We have several sessions and will continue this during the summer.

Financial Report

We have £976.69 deposited in the group account and a statement of expenditure was circulated. The group received a legacy from the family of one of our Friends and Volunteers, Peter Burrows who sadly died last year.

We have applied to Parklife Community Fund again for the sum of £1,000 to maintain our running expenses.

Activities and Projects

Jack Bowen has now taken a supervisory role in Environmental Services with Michael taking over Alkrington Woods, Wince Brook and Hopwood reserves. They explained that an order has now been placed to repair the main footpaths along the Irk and Boardman Brook. There is considerable work to be done to pollard the trees on the dam at Big Lodge following an inspectors report. You may have noticed clearance of the smaller trees and bushes by the Green Volunteers already.

Further work is to be carried out repairing the overflow from the top lake and hopefully something will be done to repair the leaking rainwater drain on the grassed slope in front of the hall. The Ranger service will be planting a wildflower meadow in the orchard area this year.

Jackie and Ben have expressed an interest in holding a Forage Festival in Riverside park this year. We will have Gazebos offering samples of foraged food dishes and perhaps a touch of Balsam Gin.

We are facilitating a big litter pick on 20th April for Middleton Rotary and hope as many Friends as possible can join in.

We hope to organise a Baslam Pulling event on Saturday 10th June as part of the national Big Help Out and Volunteers Week.

It has been suggested that we hold a photography competition this year with the idea of producing a fundraising calendar if anybody would like to help out? Our Facebook group has some amazing wildlife photographs.

Off Road Motorbikes

There has been a recent meeting and walk around organised by Manchester Council. The Friends, Councillors Dale and Williams, RBC Ranger, and GMP Police attended. Following this both councils have agreed to repair the gates and fences. Again we would ask that Friends report any off road bikes to the Police as soon as you see them and identify the access point. Do not challenge them directly.

Any Other Business

It was noted that UU are planning to build a storm water tank at Boothroyden Bridge to reduce sewage spills. The committee agreed that this work would be of more value to our river health if it was upstream of the reserve. It was suggested that we review the planning application when it is issued.

Also we should invite a representative of UU to our next meeting.