The Friends of Alkrington Woods
Annual General Meeting 25th March 2025 Minutes

Attending, Cliff Ivers, Jackie Christy, Jane Al-Attar, Jack Bowen& Michael Pomroy (RBC), Colin Donald, Christine Clapworthy, Max Rawlings, Paul Stockton, Boyd Taylor, Pat Proctor, Adeline Dallman, Foluke Campbell

Apologies, Margaret White, Clr Patricia Dale, Clr Peter Williams, Miraim Turner, Ben Turner, Clare Fitzpatrick

Election of Committee

Existing holders were voted in unanimously.

Chairman Cliff Ivers

Secretary and co signatory Jackie Christy

Treasurer Cliff Ivers

Annual Review by Cliff

Another busy year for the Friends started with Jackies foraging event in front of the Hall, the amazing foraged food and medicine was very popular, as was the drink and music. It was hard work to prepare for but definitely worth doing again. We carried out 2 litter picks with our friends at Middleton Rotary but continue to find the area near Rhodes Layby an issue. The rangers have requested that a bin be fitted here.

The RHS judges visited us and the MIB Fusilier flower bed in July and awarded us an outstanding status again in the 'Its Your Neighbourhood' competition.They were very impressed with the range of wild flowers blooming and inspired Ranger Mike, Jackie and myself to design a Wild Garden. The concept of displaying native plants and trees in a sustainable way kicked off with a major clearance and dead hedge construction by the Green Volunteers. It has gone from strength to strength with both the Friends and the GV's having regular sessions making the Hugelkultur and wattle beds using recycled materials. We have added a bed of Osier Willow (traditionally used for basket making, there was an Osiery at the site of nearby Sainsburys in the 19th century) We have also built a living willow and dog rose arch at the entrance.

Sadly we sustained a lot of path erosion and riverbank pollution during the new year storms, possibly the worst since 2019. We are hoping the UU rangers will be able to help us clear some of the mess this year.

The GV's and Mike have done an amazing job at clearing Fairy Wood and Year 2 of Alkrington Primary provided another 30 painted Fairy Doors to entertain young visitors. With support from the Township, we hope to fit a woodland play area in Fairy Wood next year. The Rangers have dug a number of small ponds on the adjacent meadow to support wildlife, these should also create opportunities for organised pond dipping with the schools.

Despite many objections from Friends and Councilors Dale and Williams, planning permission was granted for a housing estate at Manchester Golf Club. Sadly this will close off our last remaining wildlife corridor into the reserve and will affect the migration of deer and badger.

Treasurers Report

We have £1,091.99 deposited in the group account and a statement of expenditure was circulated.

Our largest single expenses were insurance and web hosting and we have spent over £400 on materials for the Wild Garden and Fairy doors. We received a grant of gardening tools from the UU Community Fund which leaves us very well equiped to offer volunteer sessions.

We have applied to Parklife Community Fund again for the sum of £400 to maintain our running expenses for the next year.

Activities and Projects

There was some discussion about coppicing our Hazel stands which are quite overgrown and using the timber to make leaky dams in the Boardman Valley. Also potentially transplanting willow cuttings to reinforce the riverbanks.

Mike is going to have a go at controlling the invasive bamboo that's taking over a pond next to the Woodside border. Knotweed and Balsam will be tackled as often as resources allow.

Some repairs are being carried out on the off road bike deterrents following damage. It was noted that GMP are having some success with seizing bikes. The Friends need to continue reporting incidents

Cliff hopes to continue organising volunteer sessions in the Wild Garden every two weeks.

Colin updated the meeting with information about wildlife within the reserve. Invasive species were discussed.

Pat Procter told us about Middletons inclusion into the RHS Town competition and that the Judges will commence their tour at our Riverside Park entrance. We hope to get UU rangers in before then to organise a river clear up and have asked the Ranger to cut back the bracken on the riverbanks to make them accessible. The visit is on Weds 13th August and Jackie has offered to run a Foraging event that morning. RBC may be able to organise a pond dipping session at the event and we can look at other Friends activities to support the Middleton in Bloom team.