

DRAFT

Friends of Oakley Wood

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON  
11 MARCH 2020 AT THE BARFORD MEMORIAL HALL  
AT 7.30 PM**

Present: Liz Sheehan (Chairman) Wendy Barlow  
Rod Scott Judy Cooper  
Cathy Kennedy Graham Leeke  
Susan Watt Keith Wellsted  
Karl Curtis (WWT) Kat Reay (WWT)  
and 8 members of the public

Apologies: Chris Wood Cll Robert Margrave  
Matt Weston MP Cllr Andrew Day

Minutes of the AGM held on 18 March 2019 were approved and adopted.  
Proposed by Dan Sheehan and seconded by Cathy Kennedy.

Chairman's report:

Good evening everyone and welcome to the 12 th AGM of the Friends of Oakley Wood. Thank you for coming and thanks to Barford for allowing us to use their village hall.

The committee has met quarterly to discuss matters of interest or conflict and future plans for Oakley Wood. For your information Warwickshire Wild Life Trust are responsible for the woodland management in partnership with Warwick District Council. We are fortunate to have Karl Curtis from WWT attending most of our meetings. He keeps us abreast of their ideas and plans and enters into our discussions without prejudice. Karl's colleague Nick Feledziak has also attended a meeting.

WWT Woodland Management plan is available for all to read on FOW website. We are also represented on Facebook. I would urge you to look at the gallery of photographs on our website and to feel free to offer photographs, comments or poetry inspired by the Woods. Aptly named Chris Wood will help with this as our Website Manager. We would welcome suggestions from members about future events.

The Wood has again won the Green Flag award. The award emphasises that the Wood is a green space of the highest quality. WDC have graciously acknowledged the contribution of volunteers who work in all weathers to restore, maintain and improve the native wood for wildlife and people. To explain further the Green Flag award is a non-profit international accreditation scheme to reward well managed green spaces.

We do spend much time discussing the implementation of the management plan and how adverse weather and heavy plant may cause damage to footpaths. We also take a keen interest in the future replanting of the Wood with native British species and understand that it is vital to procure healthy trees and species which

are unaffected by fungal disease. Fortunately extractions planned for last autumn were postponed for obvious reasons!

Some other topics discussed have been as follows. The Wood is increasingly being used by dog walkers which impinges on the wildlife. The main pond is popular with dogs and ducks, which don't really mix. Therefore the work parties are considering laying brash and making a dead hedge around the pond if it becomes necessary to discourage dogs, rather than putting up obtrusive signage.

We have been successful in our request to place a waste bin in the public car park.

We always discuss the membership numbers and the amount of money in our treasury, which is precarious as we are a non-subscription organisation. We would welcome any donations towards tonight's refreshments into the bucket provided on the bar.

We discuss future events which may take place in the Wood or at our AGM, for example, tonight's quiz, brilliantly compiled by committee member Susan Watt.

We obviously discuss matters arising on the website from the general public or through direct contact.

I would like to thank the committee, namely our very efficient secretary Judy Cooper, Wendy Barlow, Cathy Kennedy, Graham Leeke, Rod Scott, Susan Watt, Keith Wellsted, Chris Wood and of course Karl Curtis. Our meetings are generally held in a pub. They are friendly and not teetotal and we would welcome any new members to either the committee or the Friends.

In conclusion I suppose our core purpose is protecting our unique asset, Oakley Wood, and in doing that we are providing a space which is open to everyone at all times. It allows people to reconnect with the sort of environment that our ancestors enjoyed. I would refer you to the Japanese concept of Shinrin Yoku or nature therapy, literally forest bathing. They recommend time spent in woods as a natural health programme to reduce blood pressure, stress and to improve concentration, memory, fitness, wellbeing and happiness. Recently I was fortunate to stand in the field on the south west corner of the Wood, looking in at the trees in bright sunlight at approximately 4 pm, and to see a pair of nuthatches, a tree creeper, a pair of mistle thrushes working the edge of the field and to hear ravens. It does not happen often but it was magical.

After the reports by the committee members we will have a presentation by Kat Reay, Leamington Green Connections Officer.

I will now ask our Treasurer, Rod to report.

Treasurer's report: There had been very little activity in the Accounts this year. Last year's AGM brought in £35 and £59 was spent. The Accounts were approved and adopted. Proposed by Graham Leeke and seconded by Susan Watt.

Membership Secretary's report: No events were held and therefore no opportunity to sign up new members. We now have 487 members and 331 members who regularly receive emails. We are active on Facebook.

Web Manager's report: In Chris' absence he sent the following report:

Access statistics:- Background level of access is around 50 visits per week, this is mostly to look at our maps and to find out where Oakley Wood is.

Spikes of access result from the news emails we send, the most recent spike (250 visits) was to the post about responsible dog walking - this in response to a dog getting into the grounds of one of the cottages on the Banbury Road and attacking their livestock. This level of interest suggests that many if not most of our members are dog walkers.

Historically the highest visitor spikes have been to view the trailcam video footage. I've not posted any for some while, as it does tend to be much of the same. However, I will make an effort to put something together soon.

Also, seeing as there continues to be an interest in our maps, I intend to update them to show the current paths, which have changed quite a bit over time (I have put our updated mapping of the paths into OpenStreetMap so it's already there). I also intend to grid the map using GPS coordinates (rather than Ordnance Survey) as this is what the technology in our pockets uses.

Election of Officers: The list of nominations as presented to the meeting (copy attached) was voted en bloc. Proposed by Susan Watt and seconded by Fizz Forbes-McGlen.

Update on the Wood by Karl Curtis

The winter thinning did not take place. Having had the wettest winter in many years it was decided to delay in order not to sacrifice the soil and therefore impeding access. The work will commence this September. Volunteer work with George Green (WWT) has continued and produces positive results. Kat Reay will nurture volunteers via her programme which she will elaborate on later.

A member of the public, Fizz Forbes McGlen said she welcomed the new fencing along the Banbury Road and the brush on the inside of the fencing but questioned why the fencing stopped short rather than continuing up to the entrance to the Wood. Karl replied that he would look into the matter.

Presentation by Kat Reay, Leamington Green Connections Officer for WWT:

Kat is 2 months into a new project which has been funded for 2 years by the National Lottery Community fund across 2 sites, Oakley Wood and Leam Valley. With social prescribing GPs will refer people to the project which will take some pressure off the NHS. The project focuses on reducing isolation and connecting people with their local green spaces and each other. There will be a fortnightly volunteering session at each site with aims of creating and delivering a range of engaging events to connect the local community to the sites. At least one in four people will experience a mental health problem at some point in their lives and one in six adults have a mental health problem at any one time. Obesity is increasing in both adults and children with 67% of adult men, 57% of adult women and 28% of children now overweight or obese. Exposure to, access to and connection with nature provides a buffer against mental ill-health and acts

as an enhancer of wellbeing. To encourage participation Kat will run a 5 week course entitled 'wellbeing in the woods' and also conservations taster mornings. The legacy of the project will be to set up ongoing volunteer work parties with the skills and knowledge to self-manage, a local community that is more connected to their wood and a reduction in social isolation and therefore and increase in mental wellbeing.

It was questioned whether schools will be included but Kat informed the meeting that educating children is delivered by a separate team.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

Friends of Oakley Wood AGM 2020

**Election of Officers**

Nominations have been received for the following Officers:

Chairman	Liz Sheehan
Vice Chairman	Wendy Barlow
Secretary	Judy Cooper
Treasurer	Rod Scott
Membership Secretary	Cathy Kennedy
Website Manager	Chris Wood

Other committee members:

Graham Leeke  
Susan Watt  
Keith Wellsted

## FRIENDS OF OAKLEY WOOD

Receipts & Payments Account - Year ended 31st January 2020

	2019 - 2020	2018 - 2019
Opening balances - 1st February 2019		
BANK	£304.66	£351.21
PETTY CASH	£0.00	£0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£304.66</b>	<b>£351.21</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Horse Logging Grant	£0.00	£0.00
Membership -ordinary	£0.00	£0.00
Membership - additional donations	£0.00	£0.00
Membership - group 1 at £5	£0.00	£0.00
Events	£0.00	£0.00
Woodland Craft Day	£0.00	£0.00
Grants	£0.00	£0.00
AGM	£35.00	£32.23
Bank Interest	£0.00	£0.00
Miscellaneous	£0.00	£0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£35.00</b>	<b>£32.23</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>		
Horse Logging	£0.00	£0.00
Woodland Craft Day	£0.00	£0.00
Insurance	£0.00	£0.00
Website	£0.00	£23.98
Publicity	£0.00	£0.00
Events expenses	£0.00	£0.00
Secretarial	£0.00	£0.00
AGM costs	£59.00	£54.80
Miscellaneous	£0.00	£0.00
Bank Charges	£0.00	£0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£59.00</b>	<b>£78.78</b>
Surplus / deficit for year	<b>-£24.00</b>	<b>-£46.55</b>
OPENING BALANCE less DEFICIT	<b>£280.66</b>	<b>£304.66</b>
Closing balances - 31st January 2020		
BANK	£280.66	£304.66
PETTY CASH	£0.00	£0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£280.66</b>	<b>£304.66</b>