

DRAFT

Friends of Oakley Wood

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 26 APRIL 2022
AT THE BARFORD MEMORIAL HALL
AT 7.30 PM**

Present: Wendy Barlow (Vice Chairman)
Judy Cooper (Secretary)
Rod Scott (Treasurer)
Susan Watt
Graham Leeke

And 10 members of the public

Apologies: Liz Sheehan (Chairman)
Chris Wood (Website Manager)
Keith Wellsted
Cathy Kennedy

Adoption of the Minutes of the AGM held on 11.3.20: Proposed by Susan Watt and seconded by Graham Leeke

Chairman's report: In the absence of Liz Sheehan her report was presented by Wendy Barlow: Good evening everyone and welcome to our AGM postponed from 2021 due to Covid 19. I apologise that I'm not here in person and thank whoever for delivering the following words. I am detained in Devon following my husband falling off his bike and damaging his hip and awaiting a new one in Plymouth Hospital.

We have achieved three committee meetings since the AGM of March 2020. I will briefly summarise our topics of discussion.

During our March meeting this year we reiterated our concern about the hazardous state of the paths, particularly those parallel to the B4100 and therefore leisure lines are being created and impinging on the wild wood. Nick Feledziac from WWT has inspected all the paths and is well aware of the problems and hopes to find a solution. There will be no more thinning taking place for the next 2 years so now would be the ideal time to carry out remedial work. Karl may be able to help us out on that when he talks to us later.

Our group intend to put a poster on our information boards explaining to the public what the respective roles are of Friends of Oakley Wood, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Warwick District Council. We would invite suggestions from the public and guidance on protecting the Wood and its wildlife.

We are planning to hold some events which will be publicised once the dates are fixed.

We commend Warwickshire Wildlife for the swift tree planting which took place in 2021 and February 2022 and hope the current prolonged dry spell has not affected the young trees. Last year's planting programme appears to have been

successful. The absence of tree planting has been an issue regularly raised at our meetings as we felt none had taken place since thinning began a number of years ago and so we are pleased to see this now taking place.

I thank all my fellow committee members for their valued and varied input and Karl for attending our meetings whenever he is able to and swiftly responding to our emails. I particularly thank scribe Judy, without whose labours we could not exist.

In conclusion I would like to emphasise a little fact about the wonderful show of wood anemones in Oakley Wood, particularly on the south side. The species spread slowly, only 6 feet in 100 years which is another indicator of how ancient is our lovely wood.

Thank you everyone.

Treasurer's report and adoption of Accounts: Rod Scott presented the accounts showing a balance of £157.00. The miscellaneous payment of £173.97 related to the purchase of a camera and box for the Wood to replace a previous unit. The £89.49 income is a grant from WWT for half of the cost towards this. Adoption of the Accounts proposed by Graham Leeke and seconded by Judy Cooper. Graham suggested looking ahead to future events and costs that we should approach the local parish councils for a donation of, say, £50, from Section 137.

Membership Secretary's report: No report presented but other than Facebook postings and comments, the members are catered for under the Web Manager's role.

Web Manager's report: In the absence of Chris Wood his report was presented by Judy Cooper:

Please accept my apologies for my absence but I had a previous engagement which could not be altered. These are the stats for the last year (23 April 2021 – 22 April 2022):

User visits continue at a fairly level rate. The most visited pages are the maps and information on finding the Wood, and also the information on the walking routes (the latter which were created in the absence of information being provided by WWT or WDC). There is always a spike of extra activity when new posts are put on the website, particularly videos.

Some figures: On average 543 page views from 236 users per month over the last year, or roughly 18 page hits per day. 49% of visits are from mobiles, 46% desktops and 5% tablets. Mobile access was split between 60% android (mostly Samsung) and 40% iPhone. And perhaps surprisingly nearly 5% of visitors were from USA and Canada and 6% of visitors were Chinese.

With my video camera hat on: Apologies for the relatively small number of video postings. Unfortunate side effects of increased numbers of visitors during COVID and woodland thinning – both good things in their own right – have resulted in noticeably less video captures of the larger animals, few roe deer have been seen, and no fallow at all. To put this on a more 'scientific' footing I'm now keeping a log of sightings to put actual figures on it which might be of interest in

the future (Chris Packham eat your heart out!). I promise to post some new video soon!

And my wildlife reporting hat on: My overall impression is that there is less bird life in the Wood this spring (comment really about the southern part which I visit most) – perhaps not surprising after all the thinning that’s been done. And it’s not just the reduction in trees but the flattening of the undergrowth by the machinery which could affect nesting sites. Hopefully next year will be improved. On the positive side, when I visited a few days ago I saw a male sparrowhawk flying through the trees carrying prey (unidentified) and pursued by a female. So probably nesting.

Election of Officers: The list of nominations as presented to the meeting (copy attached) was voted en bloc. Proposed by Sean Deeley and seconded by Andrew Day.

Following a break for refreshments Karl Curtis gave us a talk on WWT past, present and future:

Talk by Karl Curtis, Director of Nature Reserves at the Friends of Oakley Wood AGM
Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT)
The last 50 years and the Future to come

Before establishing a separate charity in Warwickshire, WWT was part of West Midlands Nature Conservation Trust (WARNACT). By the end of the 1970s WWT had 2000 members and there are now 25,000 members. In 1992 its first headquarters was set up at Brandon Marsh which was opened by Sir David Attenborough. There are currently 66 reserves covering over 1,000 hectares and safeguarding the county’s rarest wildlife. WWT provides advice and support to landowners who manage a further 10,000 hectares. Education is vital and WWT provides environmental experiences for 23,000 young people every year encouraging the next generation of naturalists. It influences local, regional and national policy and gives nature a voice. It works in partnership with statutory agencies, local authorities and the private sector to deliver more through collaboration.

WWT has now had 50 years of impact but more needs to be done to address the decline of wildlife. The UK’s biodiversity is declining due to farming methods, (the use of insecticides, destruction of hedgerows etc) climate change, urbanisation, pollution, invasive established non-native species, woodland management. Warwickshire is one of the least wooded areas of the country. One species of plant becomes extinct every 3 years in Warwickshire. Species at risk in Warwickshire with 2 degrees of warming: 15% of mammals, 17% of birds, 20% of plants, 3-% of amphibians, 31% of arachnids, 33% of reptiles, 49% of millipedes, 37% of insects and 37% of centipedes. On the subject of farmers and land managers there is a lot they can and already do but there is a significant proportion of land use under farming and pressures on production and profit, not to mention the questionable policies and funding mechanisms that sometimes make it tough to make space for nature. A robust Environment Bill and new policies and funding to support environmental enhancements are the only way to

ensure that happens. We need farmers on our side (they certainly are not the enemy) and nature friendly farming is an approach we support. To this end WWT are recruiting an agricultural land advisor who will focus on this entirely, supporting our existing work.

The future aim of WWT is to restore 30% of land for nature by 2030. To do this the Trust will continue to work together with local authorities, landowners, farmers, businesses and communities to protect our most precious sites and create new, connected habitats. These new sites will focus on acquiring land of low ecological value and improving it, for example golf courses which are struggling to be viable, farmland which is difficult to grow food on and land use which has been impacted by development. Some of the changes already taking place are the creation of woodland at Bubbenhall, a pond next to the River Sherbourne and a wild flower meadow at Dunchurch to name a few. There is also a role for natural regeneration or 'rewilding'.

WWT's target by 2030 is considerable and to enable it to be achieved a fundraising appeal was launched on 30 March 2021. There exists £1.5 million through legacies and some generous corporate donations but double that is needed to fund nature's recovery. With that fund WWT will acquire and buy land and double the size of the area the Trust manages for nature conservation.

WWT would like everyone's help to spread the word. If you have a platform, please use your influence to talk about the appeal and the Trust's vision of 30by30. If your company supports charities, put WWT forward. If you are part of a club or organisation, invite WWT to give a talk on 30by30 and the appeal. You can help by donating and pledging a monthly gift to its Nature Recovery Fund or do some fundraising. Convert 30% of your land for wildlife, whether that's a widow box, a garden, or a large estate. Inspire your village, town or community to make space for nature. Talk to WWT if you own land and want to manage it more effectively for wildlife.

The future of WWT is exciting; the management of land, helping others managing their land and creating new habitat. Organisations like the Trust need to involve people and the community as without everyone's help conservation efforts will be unsustainable.

There followed a question and answer session:

Q Do WWT work with HS2 developers?

A This has proved difficult but may happen in the future.

Q How do you go about achieving your 30by30 goal with farmers?

A 3 years ago WWT set up the Arden Partnership was set up to bring farmers together. The aim is to ask farmers what they know, what they need to know, what they should do. So WWT's aim is to steer and guide but farmers are still in control.

Q Are incentives still available to farmers?

A Now there is an environmental stewardship scheme which is more targeted to environmental outcomes.

Friends of Oakley Wood AGM 2022

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 2022

	<u>2021 - 2022</u>	<u>2020 - 2021</u>	<u>2019 - 2020</u>
Opening balances - 1st February 2021			
BANK	£241.48	£280.66	£304.66
PETTY CASH	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
TOTAL	£241.48	£280.66	£304.66
INCOME			
Membership - group 1 at £5	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Events	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Grants	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
AGM	£0.00	£50.00	£35.00
Bank Interest	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Miscellaneous	£89.49	£0.00	£0.00
TOTAL	£89.49	£50.00	£35.00
PAYMENTS			
Insurance	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Website	£0.00	£28.78	£0.00
Secretarial	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
AGM costs	£0.00	£40.40	£59.00
Miscellaneous	£173.97	£20.00	£0.00
Bank Charges	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
TOTAL	£173.97	£89.18	£59.00
Surplus / deficit for year	-£84.48	-£39.18	-£24.00
OPENING BALANCE less DEFICIT	£157.00	£241.48	£280.66
Closing balances - 31st January 2022			
BANK	£157.00	£241.48	£280.66
PETTY CASH	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
TOTAL	£157.00	£241.48	£280.66