

FRIENDS OF OAKFRITH WOOD
MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
24TH AUGUST 2021 commencing at 6.00pm
CONFERENCE ROOM, URCHFONT VILLAGE HALL

1. **Welcome:** MF, expressed his appreciation and thanks to both the members of the audience and the Trustees for continuing to support the work of the Friends and attending the AGM.
2. **Attendance:** Audience – Paul Melhuish, Linda Jennings & Joyce Organ. Trustees – Martin Follett – (Chairman) MF, Peter Newell – PN, Kevin Crofts – KC, Steve Russell – SR, Peter Winckley – PW, Robert Organ – RO, Colin Whitehead – CW, Nick Prichard – NP, Graham Creasey – GC. There were no apologies from the Trustees, Paul Bancroft and Ian Maidment sent their apologies.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting held on the 17th November 2020:** The minutes were accepted and approved as a correct record of the meeting.
4. **Chairman's Report:** MF presented his report as follows – There is said to be an ancient Chinese curse 'May you live in interesting times' and recently the times have certainly been interesting. For most of the period since the last AGM the country has been in lockdown which has meant that no work could take place in the wood. As a result our faithful bands of volunteers have been frustrated and we have been unable to fulfil orders to regular customers. As the rules have been relaxed we have been able to complete extraction and recently to start delivering logs but obviously our income has been affected. It is not all bad news however. The wood has been much used by local people enjoying its beauty, walking the dog, entertaining small children and generally relieving their isolation and stress. I'm in the wood regularly and I cannot remember an occasion when I have not bumped into someone wandering around. To see the wood being enjoyed has been very satisfying, although there are, of course, the downsides of muddy paths and on New Year's Eve, partygoers who braved freezing temperatures and left empty bottles and mess, resulting in minor outrage on the village Facebook page. We have also taken the opportunity of the lockdown to review where we are as a charity, to remind ourselves of its history and to collect together the various documents that have made the charity work. We have made plans to raise the profile of Oakfrith in the community through use of local media and Nick Prichard has already made a cracking start to this, and we also have plans to revive a bit of an educational programme.

The hope is that we will attract more volunteers and to enlist the support of the next generation in running the charity. Thanks are due particularly to Colin Whitehead who has indicated that he will be stepping down as a trustee and as the organiser of the Saturday working parties. I am grateful for his wisdom and experience and his ability to make the Saturday sessions such fun. Thanks are also due to Bob Organ who it seems has borne the brunt of the issues that have arisen from day to day and also to him, Steve Russell and Kevin Crofts who have undertaken the safety inspection in March and the ash dieback inspection in June so that we can be sure the wood is safe for the public. Thanks also to Peter Winckley who has kept our finances in order and to Graham Creasey who has kept the minutes in order. Finally, thanks to Steve Russell for his care and expertise without whom we would not cope as a woodland charity.

5. Treasurer's Report for the financial year ending 31st March

2021: PW presented his report as follows - Compared to the previous year (2020) our funds are down. Unsurprisingly this is largely due to the period bearing the brunt of the Covid-19 Pandemic which had only just arisen at the end of the previous financial year. The lockdowns badly interrupted our felling and processing work which resulted in a drop in firewood sales income from the general public. Despite this we were still able to adapt our working periods and the income shortfall compared with this previous period was £305, so not too bad considering the circumstances. Donations and grants for this period were minimal again. The combined Trustee and General Insurance with Zurich came down a bit but the vehicle insurance rose by £143. The good news is that for the current financial period (i.e. year end 31 March 2022) the combined Trustee and General Insurance has remained frozen and we managed via Calder Valley Insurance Services to get a reduction in the vehicle insurance, albeit by £63. For the year end 2021 we delivered 27.5 loads to the general public and volunteers, compared to 25 in the previous year which were just to the general public, thus generating slightly more income. At our last trustees meeting we decided that the firewood prices would continue at the previous rate, so at £85 per load. We have already started delivering this month at this rate so one would assume that this will continue over this coming winter – TBC. Finally I would like to express our thanks to Gillian Hill who kindly audits our accounts now and who completed the audit for the year end 2021 on the 20th April 2021. Gillian has kindly agreed to continue this for the current year. Accounts attached.

6. Woodland Cooperative Report: RO presented his report as follows - As we all know this season has again been a very disrupted and awkward year and some very bad weather to hinder our operations. On 8th December, the team reassembled working to the

Covid protocols of Rule of Six, Hands Face and Space and dividing into small working groups of 3 or 4. We were able to extract and deliver a couple of loads of logs. The same was done on the 15th with up to 8 people attending. The tree inspection was carried out with SR, RO and KC on March 2nd 2021. From the inspection there was no immediate work to carry out. However, there was climbing work to be carried out in 4 locations. The end of March brought relief from the lockdown and it was decided that the most pressing work was the extraction of the felled timber off of the wood floor and onto stacks. So on 31st March and 6th April the teams worked extended days well into the late afternoons extracting 15 loads on each day. Very hard work which I would not like to do on a regular timetable. RO met with William Warden to discuss the climbing work required as per the tree inspection. Agreed that the work would be on an ad hoc basis as previous. The 4 items of climbing work required (tree assessment items 9, 10, 11 and 12) were carried out on the 20th July successfully. It was decided that before it's MoT, the hi-lux should have some bodywork repair carried out on both rear sides. The work was carried out at a previously used body workshop in Stockley near Calne, by Image Cars. Incurring a cost of £650. However the planned maintenance on the truck has not been carried out due to unforeseen circumstances and future maintenance on the hi-lux will need to be arranged at another location. The MoT was successfully re-arranged without any failures. An Ash tree assessment was carried out with SR on Thursday 15th July. Approximately 15/18 trees have been identified and marked as needing felling due to ash dieback. A large Oak was also found in need of felling sooner than later. These trees will be felled as part of our programmed work for the 2021/22 season. August 3rd saw the Co-operative back in the wood to fulfil outstanding firewood orders. This will continue through the month to try and catch-up. However, this work is being hampered due to low attendance and other tasks eg. dangerous trees, item 7 a silver birch identified in the March tree assessment and a large ash leaning in a dangerous position. Large ash trees are becoming unstable throughout the year and need attention. Firewood. There are 9 outstanding orders on the book, plus 2 for the Ellis's and another 8 for ourselves. Orders have been lost due to the pandemic. The low numbers of helpers is causing concern in being able to carry out the tasks needed to maintain Oakfrith in the condition that we would like. It is with much sadness that I have to report the passing of Mathew G, who for many years maintained and advised the group on our hi-lux truck. His vast knowledge and skill, helpfulness and approachable nature will be very much missed. A sympathy card has been sent to Serena on behalf of the Trustees and Friends of Oakfrith. A donation will also be contributed to the collection towards the Wiltshire Air Ambulance and the Dyson Cancer Research Centre at the RUH. Other news to report. Unfortunately, two of our elder helpers are not very well.

Fabian and Derek are both having to have hospital treatment. We wish them well and a speedy return to good health.

7. **Working Party Report:** CW advised that he had nothing to report as there had been no Saturday sessions due to lockdown.
8. **Election of Officers:** MF advised that PW and GC had agreed to continue in their positions as Treasurer and Secretary respectively for another year.
9. **Trustees 2021 - 2022:** MF advised that SR and RO will continue for a further term as Trustees. MF also wished to formally record that CW had stepped down as a Trustee with immediate effect.
10. **Appointment of Independent Accounts Inspector:** PW advised that Gillian Hill will continue in this role.
11. **Points from anyone in the audience:** None.
12. **Any other business:** Item 5 above, it was agreed that in future when the accounts are presented the previous year's figures would be shown in the report for comparison purposes. Item 6 above, it was agreed that the donations referred to in the report would be made. The meeting closed at 6.40pm.

GC Sept 2021.

Friends of Oakfrith Wood
Accounts for Period 1 April 2020 to 31 March
2021

Income

Chain saw sales		
Donations	5.00	
Grants		
Bird Plot		
Rent	119.00	
Firewood Sales - public	1570.00	
Firewood sales - volunteers	245.00	1,939.00

Expenditure

Trustee & General Insurance	506.82	
Fuel and oil	126.97	
Safety Equipment	314.47	
Chainsaw repairs and renewals	44.91	
Vehicles Tax and Insurance	1,137.62	
Vehicles maintenance	449.72	
Materials & tools		
Training		
Tree surgery at high level		
less UPC grant		
Printing and stationery		
Sign boards refurbishment		
Sundry	36.49	2,617.00

Trading surplus -678.00

Depreciation

Quad	186.54	
Trailer	43.05	
Truck	69.74	
Chain saws	57.41	356.74

Operating surplus -1,034.74

Add surplus brought forward 24,996.50

Accumulated surplus 23,961.76

Represented by

Cash in bank			21,229.62
Quad	Cost	3,900.00	
	Less depreciation	<u>2,221.18</u>	1,678.82
Trailer	Cost	900.00	
	Less depreciation	<u>512.58</u>	387.42
Toyota	Initial value	2,000.00	
	less depreciation	<u>1,372.38</u>	627.62
Chainsaws	Cost	3,071.00	
	less depreciation	<u>3,032.72</u>	38.28
			<u>2,732.14</u>
			<u>23,961.76</u>