

FRIENDS OF OAKFRITH WOOD
MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
23rd AUGUST 2022 commencing at 6.00pm
CONFERENCE ROOM, URCHFONT VILLAGE HALL

1. **Welcome:** MF, expressed his appreciation and thanks to both the audience members and Trustees for continuing to support the work of the Friends and for attending the AGM.
2. **Attendance:** Audience – Emma Bell, Simon Bell, Bob Ward, Joyce Organ, Linda Jennings, Paul Melhuish, Colin Whitehead. Trustees – Martin Follett – (Chairman) MF, Peter Newell – PN, Kevin Crofts – KC, Steve Russell – SR, Peter Winckley – PW, Robert Organ – RO, Maria Kemp – MK, Graham Creasey – GC. Apologies were received from Nick Prichard – NP and Ian Walker – IW.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting held on the 24th August 2021:**
The minutes were accepted and approved as a correct record of the meeting.
4. **Chairman's Report:** MF presented his report as follows - With COVID hopefully in retreat, it has been very good to get back to normal working. The two volunteer groups have returned to full working, subject to the limitations of the weather, and have dealt with storm damage and the logging and deliveries of firewood. The usual inspections have been carried out by Steve Russell, Bob Organ and Kevin Crofts and the necessary remedial work undertaken to keep the wood safe for its many visitors.

We have welcomed some new volunteers and three members of the Woodland Cooperative have completed their CS31 chainsaw qualification, so we now have a total of eight cutters. Two young people undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh awards successfully worked in the wood during the year. Geoff Potter kindly scraped the metalled rides, clearing them of mud and debris.

Chivers Stoves of Devizes kindly donated a number of oak saplings for planting in the wood and, in the hope of involving some of the children from the school, these have been planted in the school grounds with the intention that the children will replant them in the wood and elsewhere in a couple of years' time. The school has not been in a position to operate their Forest School for much of the year, but the intention is to revive it in future. The pre-school organised a sponsored walk in the wood. Urchfont Scouts have used the wood for their Foresters' badge and led by Steve Russell and

other volunteers, about a dozen scouts with helpers completed that in May.

Nick Pritchard has continued to write monthly articles for the Redhorn News on such diverse topics as tree management, the history of the wood and an explanation of our working parties. Two woodland walks were held in the summer, ably administered by Maria Kemp. One was led by Steve Russell entitled "A forester's tale" and the other by Malcolm Turner on "Little known plant life" and both were much appreciated by those who attended. A number of volunteers represented the wood in the Newcomers' Event in the parish hall in November, advertising to newcomers and longstanding residents our work and its importance to the community. We contributed to the Parish Council's environmental survey of the parish and the plan for improvement.

I would like to particularly thank Bob Organ for all of the work that he does for the charity, not only in organising the weekly Working Cooperative but also the immense amount of additional unseen work, such as dealing with the firewood sales, maintaining the truck and the equipment, monitoring the bird boxes and generally keeping an eye on the wood and its inhabitants, which keeps the charity working safely and effectively. Grateful thanks also go to Peter Winckley for managing the accounts and to Graham Creasey for keeping the minutes and to all of the other trustees who generously give up their time. Finally, thanks to Steve Russell for his care and expertise, without whom we would not function as a woodland charity.

5. **Treasurer's Report for the year ending 31st March 2022:** PW presented a copy of the accounts for the period which had been examined and approved as correct by our external inspector. PW explained that by comparing on a year by year basis it is clear our resources continue to steadily decline even though in the current year we have seen our income increase over the previous year. However, this increase has failed to keep pace with the significant rise in our expenditure and in particular rapidly increasing fuel costs for our vehicles and chainsaws. The Trustees have already agreed to increase the price of firewood from the start of this season for both customers and volunteers and keep the price under review. It was agreed that the rent for the Bird Plot which has remained static for many years would be investigated to get a better understanding if it is possible to seek an increase. PW expressed thanks on behalf of the Trustees to Gillian Hill for the audit of the accounts.
6. **Woodland Cooperative Report:** RO presented his report as follows - The group returned to its program of felling, logging and clearance at the beginning of August, to try and catch-up from the loss of working due to the Covid 29 pandemic. The felling of the

diseased ash trees continued along with other trees included in the tree safety survey. The four future chainsaw operators were involved with all the aspects of our tree work. Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd January saw our four new operators in the classroom undergoing their formal CS 30, Chainsaw Maintenance and Crosscutting training and all passing. CS 31, small tree felling with Mr Dave Grafton was completed for MF, IW and John Adlington at the end of April. Assessment of chainsaw operators is going to be a problem as the industry seems to have a lack of assessors! Richard Kemp will be CS31 tested this autumn.

During this training weekend, the opportunity was taken to try and sort the main ride. With the help of Mr Jeff Potter and his machinery the main ride was scraped back to the surface and the sides levelled off. A thank you to JP.

Felling, logging and training continued up to 15th February, from then on the wood was subjected to the damaging storms of Dudley and Eugene in the space of two days. These storms following on from Storm Malik at the start of February. The number of oak trees affected is sad. Yet again the work had to concentrate on clearing storm damage and to play catch-up with the felling program. To this end the group worked up until the end of April to extract and fit in with the CS31 tests. The group now has a further 3 chainsaw operators. A well done to MF, JA and IW. The number of loads of logs delivered was around 25 with another 6 to volunteers, There are 8 loads so far awaiting to be confirmed and delivered this coming season. As yet, there seems to be no reaction to use more wood due to other fuel prices.

There is also a requirement to carry out a risk assessment on the area before the school returns to its forest school. The MoU with the school is also up for review. IW to review with input from MF.

The Hi Lux has successfully gone through its MoT, has had a service and a cam-belt replacement, after 12 years since the last! Thanks to Jason and Tracy at Wildman Motors, Urchfont.

Due to concerns from within the group and being correct within the PUWER regulations the winching equipment has been inspected and certified fit to use, by Hutcheon Examination Services. Two slings were found to be not fit to use, so these will be replaced. Oakfrith is now on their data base for future use.

In July the whole of the green woodland work area was cleared away. Only the charcoal burner remains. The canvas awning is in a good condition so has been kept for future use; if needed.

The annual tree assessment of Oakfrith Wood was carried out this morning, the 23rd August with SR.

Paul Melhuish continues to be out of action and we send him our best wishes and get well soon.

Covid 19 again disrupted and affected our program of work. There has been no equipment failures to report. Saw #6 was sold and a replacement (#9) purchased. Saw #7 is about to be sold with a replacement waiting to be collected from Roses. There has been no accidents or incidents to report.

And lastly a big thank you to Mrs Pat Putland for all her help and generosity with the groups equipment.

7. **Working Party Report:** MF presented his report as follows – There have been six meetings of the working party over the year and two cancelled due to bad weather with up to 15 people attending on one session. Two young people have successfully attended sessions as part of their Duke of Edinburgh awards. We have undertaken coppicing, grass cutting and general tidying and completed the clearing of the metalled rides which had been scraped by Geoff Potter. The hardier members of the group enjoyed a chilly but wholesome barbecue in December.
8. **Election of Officers:** MF advised that PW and GC had agreed to continue in their present positions as Treasurer and Secretary respectively for another year, however GC advised that it is his intention to step down as Secretary at the next AGM.
9. **Trustees 2021 – 2022:** MF advised that RO, PN, NP and himself would continue for a further term as Trustees.
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:** None

The meeting closed 6.27pm.

Friends of Oakfrith Wood

Accounts for Period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

Income				
	Chain saw sales		200.00	
	Donations		355.00	
	Grants			
	Bird Plot Rent		119.00	
	Firewood Sales - public		2,505.00	
	Firewood sales - volunteers		255.00	3,434.00
Expenditure				
	Trustee & General Insurance		506.82	
	Fuel and oil		229.97	
	Safety Equipment		446.19	
	Chainsaw R and R (less £590 for new saw)		182.57	
	Vehicles Tax and Insurance		1,084.00	
	Vehicles maintenance		702.00	
	Materials & tools		274.98	
	Training		0.00	
	Tree surgery at high level		300.00	
	less UPC grant			
	Printing and stationery		0.00	
	Sign boards refurbishment			
	Sundry		155.67	3,882.20
		Trading surplus		-448.20
Depreciation				
	Quad		167.88	
	Trailer		38.74	
	Truck		62.76	
	Chain saws		376.97	646.35
		Operating surplus		-1,094.55
	Add surplus brought forward			23,961.76
		Accumulated surplus		22,867.21
Represented by				
	Cash in bank			20,191.42
	Quad	Cost	3,900.00	
		Less depreciatio	2,389.06	1,510.94
	Trailer	Cost	900.00	
		Less depreciatio	551.32	348.68
	Toyota	Initial value	2,000.00	
		less depreciatio	1,435.14	564.86
	Chainsaws	Cost	3,661.00	
		less depreciatio	3,409.69	251.31
				2,675.79
				22,867.21