



Registered Charity number 1157820

Trustees Annual Report

01/04/2020 - 31/03/2021

The objectives of the Friends of Foundry Wood (FoFW) CIO are:

- 1) To promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the urban woodland resource that is Foundry Wood for the public benefit of current and future generations,
- and
- 2) To advance public education in the areas of wildlife, woodlands, environmental protection and traditional crafts

Foundry Wood is co-managed by FoFW and Achieving Results in Communities (ARC) CIC

Trustees: Dan Champion, Sue Deeley, Heather Haslett, Kristie Naimo, Katherine Pasteur

Steering Group: The Trustees, plus Matt Cox, Kate Haines, Gerald Haseldine (until Jan 2021)

Achievements for the year to April 2021

- The Trustees and Steering Group met regularly every two months.
- When permitted by the pandemic rules, kept the wood open both to the public and for use by groups.
- The wood also became an outdoor venue for several groups who were unable to meet indoors – including community choirs, toddler groups and for vulnerable adults.
- We continued to send a monthly e-newsletter to around 1400 supporters. During periods of lockdown, we included craft and nature-based activities for people to do at home.
- Awarded a fourth Green Flag Community Award in July 2020.
- Extended the outdoor classroom to provide a larger undercover space.

- Bought a new camera in November for more regular photographing of the wildlife in the wood.
- Ecotherapy Group continued with funding from the People's Health Trust.
- Discussions ongoing with Network Rail about leasing the disused sidings adjacent to the wood.
- Continued to have great support and publicity from local community.

Report on activities at the wood in the year to April 2021

Effect of the pandemic

In recent years, the activities and events at the wood have covered a wide range of areas – nature, crafts, and theatre, as well as education. Events are variously suitable for toddlers, school-age children, families and adults.

This year, however, group activities in the wood, and public access, were severely curtailed by the pandemic. A week before the beginning of this report year (23rd March 2020) a nationwide lockdown was imposed, and the wood was completely closed until mid-July.

The Ecotherapy Group moved its activities online in April, not returning to the wood until early August, and returning online in December. Muddy Puddles used their Facebook page to suggest activities.

We adapted our monthly newsletter content to include craft and nature activities that could be done at home.

We held our Trustees meetings and AGM online.

We adapted our proposed guided walk in June to Myton Pool to a self-guided walk.

In July, when some small groups were allowed to meet outdoors, we reopened the wood for the exclusive use (ie the wood was closed to the public at the time) of groups doing activities with children and vulnerable adults. Groups operated under risk assessments and limited numbers according to government guidelines.

We instituted a one-way route around the wood in July that remained in place until November.

Between Mid-July and early October more of our regular activities were able to return, and we were also able to host other local groups who were unable to meet indoors.

Local events at which we usually have a presence – Peace Festival, Ecofest – were cancelled, and none of our regular theatre events took place. In late autumn, we took the decision not to hold our usual Halloween event.

In the second national lockdown from early November only support groups for children and vulnerable adults were able to continue, but by March 2021 we were able to hold some Easter Holiday events, and to plan restarting regular events from April.

Our monthly volunteer days were cancelled from April – September and then resumed with a pre-booking system and limited numbers.

Overall, in the twelve months, we ran or hosted around 130 events. (In recent years, the number has been between 200 and 230.)

Annual General Meeting

At the AGM in May, Kristie Naimo, Kath Pasteur, Dan Champion and Sue Deeley were all re-elected for further three-year terms as Trustees.

Ensonglopedia project

Singer/songwriter John Hinton visited the wood at the beginning of September to talk to people about the effects of lockdown and the value of being in nature. From this he wrote a series of songs which were live streamed via Facebook on 2nd October, and also produced a CD.

Extending the classroom

In November, we made the decision to extend the classroom to give us more undercover space for groups. Co-management partner ARCCIC agreed to contribute £1000, we raised £700 in donations from a Christmas appeal, and agreed to contribute the balance from our reserves. Having received planning permission, work started in January 2021, and was completed in April.

Spark Ignite

In February 2021, we took part for the first time in a local online arts event SPARK IGNITE, with a virtual 'stall' to tell visitors about the wood. Friends of Foundry Wood Chair Kristie spoke in a session on Arts, Health and Happiness - showcasing some of the creative things that happen at the wood – including Choirs and a Body Percussion group!

Leasing the adjacent Network Rail Land

We continued our discussions with Network Rail (NR) to lease the disused sidings to the south of Foundry Wood.

Some progress on the legal aspects was made. A draft lease sent by NR in May 2020 was withdrawn as not appropriate. A meeting in March 2021 with more senior NR staff established a process for the next steps, and a lease of term of around 15 years.

Local NR staff worked on clearing the site of undergrowth, managing some of the trees, and removing some of the sidings.

In July, we received a grant (£16,000) from the Postcode Lottery to fund the fencing that we will need to install as a condition of the lease.

Nature activities

In November we purchased a new camera to record the wildlife in the wood, and now have this set up regularly.

A local fungi expert explored the wood and identified the wide range of fungi.

Species records continued to be collated and shared with Warwickshire County Council Ecological Services, and a member of the Steering Group reported to their annual meeting in March 2021.

Education project

Due to the pandemic we did not host any of the usual Educational or group visits held in previous years.

Friends of Foundry Wood – Annual Accounts to April 2021

Foundry Wood Accounts	
April 20 position	
Balance	£8,678.71
Income	
Grants	£16,000.00
Donations	£1,596.26
Ecotherapy Donation c/o F. Wood	£3,000.00
Bank interest	£0.00
Income	
	£20,596.26
Outgoings	
Local giving costs	£96.00
Live & Local costs	£0.00
Play area maintenance	£0.00
Tree Surgery	£0.00
Outdoor camera costs	£74.47
Leaflets & Printing costs	£0.00
Pond Costs	£0.00
Tools & padlocks	£0.00
Outdoor classroom extension	£1,500.00
Gravel, paint & signage costs	£0.00
Water Plus (Severn Trent)	£60.90
Outgoings	
	£1,731.37
April 21 position	
Bank Account	£27,527.41
Cash Float	£16.19
	£27,543.60
Profit/Loss	
	£18,864.89

Income in 2020-2021 included a grant of £16,000 received from the Postcode Lottery to fund the fencing of the Network Rail land. This will be spent once we have the lease. Donations include an anonymous donation of £3000 being held by FOFW for the Ecotherapy Group – to be paid to them in April 2021.

Costs of the outdoor classroom are a part payment. A further £2,200 will be paid on completion of the project.

Because of the pandemic, our general outgoings were lower than in previous years, and a number of line items have been shown at £0.00. Our annual outgoings are usually around £1100.

Sue Deeley
Secretary
Friends of Foundry Wood Trustees