Friends of Stara Wood

Chairman's Report 2020 – 2021

I am sorry that yet again we are unable to meet for our AGM, so I hope some of you will be able to join us on the evening of the 24th online. This will be our first AGM as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, so to all intense and purposes Stara Wood now operates as a charity for the conservation of the woodland and the benefit of local people.

Through lock-down in particular we have welcomed record numbers of visitors to Stara as well as local people unable to travel further afield. Stara has become so important for so many people during these extraordinary times, and people have been so grateful for this.

Having lots of visitors does mean that we have had a lot more wear and tear on paths, the car park and the bridge. We have some area of erosion alongside the river where people like to congregate, and we have an ongoing problem with dogs disturbing salmon spawning gravels in the stretch of river above the wear. Despite repeated requests and notices, many dog owners are not getting the message to protect the river and wildlife by keeping their dogs on leads. We have therefor had to take action to restrict access to parts of the riverbank by diverting significant sections of the riverside footpath. This has not gone down well universally but we will not be bullied into compromising our stand on wildlife protection. If problems persist, we will have no option but to close whole sections of the wood for months at a time.

We have continued to battle with the affects of Ash Dieback disease which has become severe in a number of ash trees in particular along the side of the river. We had to fell a number of trees in the early autumn which had become a risk to the public. Wherever possible we are leaving the trees standing but we must take action if we think that dead branches could fall onto footpaths. There will be more trees to come down next year but hopefully we are now over the worst.

I would like to give a big thankyou to Piers Freeman for valiantly organising the monthly Working Parties which have been well attended through all the chicanery of lockdowns, weather and illness. Our volunteers have repeatedly cleared bracken around the young trees in Broad Wood, they have helped block unofficial paths which have appeared from nowhere and moved other paths all together. They have thinned out conifer trees and cut out birch around young oak trees, they have moved all the tops from the felled ash trees. A great effort all around and many thanks to you all for your time and energy.

We held three guided walks through the woods during the summer each with a different theme, and these were generally well attended so we will do something similar next year as well.

Jen has continued to monitor dormice with her team of helpers. This information tells us so much about the health of the woodland habitat and its overall level of diversity. Not only are dormice a protected species, but they are also an excellent barometer of just how good Stara is for wildlife. We are very fortunate.

Most of all I would like to thank all the Friends for their continued generosity and enthusiasm for supporting Stara and helping to keep it such a beautiful and tranquil place.

Simon Humphreys

Trustee

FRIENDS OF STARA WOODS C.I.O.

TREASURER'S REPORT 2021

Prepared for the Trustees of the Friends of Stara Woods C.I.O. by Laurence Smith, Treasurer, and presented at the Annual General Meeting on 24th November 2021

TOTAL FUNDS AS AT 31/10/2020 BROUGHT FORWARD **£10,379.43**

EXPENDITURE

		This year 01/11/2020 to 31/10/21	*Previous year 01/11/2019 to 31/10/20*	Breakdown in 2020/21
(a)	Project work	£5,002.85	*£532.50*	(a) £740.00 payment to Heartwood Creations for construction and installation of new entrance gates and fencing (b) £2,480.00 payment to Bees Trees for felling work (c) £329.00 payment to Thompson & Jackson for conveyancing work re transfer of woods from Stara Community Woodland Limited to the CIO (d) £13.85 reimbursement to Mike Todd for purchase of plywood for bridge closure notice (e) £1440.00 payment to Happy Habitats for ash felling work
(b)	Purchase of tools and equipment	£0.00	*£119.54*	N.B. £71.00 reimbursement to Jen Bousfield for purchase of tools still pending - cheque not yet cashed
(c)	Running costs	£1,062.93	*£44.60*	(a) £62.63 reimbursement to Mike Todd for payment of Fasthosts biennial website fee (b) 24.70 reimbursement to Fran Jones for monthly newsletter mailing expenses (c) £229.80 reimbursement to Laurence for payment of annual insurance renewal 2020/21 (d) £39.00 reimbursement to Anne Hughes for payment of Companies House annual fee in 2018, 2019 and 2020 for Stara Community Woodland Limited (e) £186.00 payment to Wills Bingley for preparation of annual HMRC and Companies House returns for 2019/20 for Stara Community Woodland Limited (f) £229.80 reimbursement to Laurence for payment of annual insurance renewal 2021/22 (g) £186.00 payment to Wills Bingley for preparation of final HMRC and Companies House returns for Stara Community Woodland Limited (h) £10.00 payment of Companies House fee to strike Stara Community Woodland Limited from the register (i) £95.00 payment to Webcube Media for website annual hosting fee
	TOTAL	**£6,065.78**	***£696.64***	

INCOME

		This year 01/11/2020 to 31/10/21	*Previous year 01/11/2019 to 31/10/20*	Breakdown in 2020/21
(a)	Grants	£0.00	*£0.00*	
(b)	Donations	£377.50	*£100.00*	(a) £35.00 historic donations over the last 2/3 years - cashbox float excess paid into account (b) £60.00 donations from Simon's woodland walks (c) £75.00 donations following Anne's birthday appeal (d) £207.50 donations following Anne's birthday appeal - via Facebook/PayPal Giving
(c)	Subscriptions	£1,152.50	*£868.00*	(a) Monthly order = £454.50 *(last year £240.00)* (b) Annual order = £673.00 *(last year £608.00)* (c) Annual cash/cheque = £25.00 *(last year £20.00)*
(d)	Sales	£0.00	*£0.00*	
(e)	Transfer in of closing balance from Stara Community Woodland Limited account	£345.76	*£0.00*	
	TOTAL	**£1,875.76**	***£968.00***	

TOTAL FUNDS AS AT 31/10/2021 **£6,189.41**