Friends of Stara Wood Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Chairperson's Annual Report 2023 Simon Humphreys

We had good intentions to undertake several events and activities this year but have struggled to maintain volunteer numbers in a year when understandably, many of us have returned with gusto to travelling or seeing friends and family. We were then caught off guard when the steel abutment on the footbridge developed cracks and needed urgent repairs. Most surprising was the response from friends (and non-friends alike) for funds to pay for the repairs. Support was far more generous and much faster than we could have anticipated. To date we have raised nearly £3000 and I would like to thank all of those who have donated. This clearly demonstrates the importance of Stara to so many people in the local community. Thank you to Anne and Laurence for dealing with the appeal so efficiently.

The welding work has been completed, and the bridge has been unofficially re-opened, though the path to Treovis wood remains blocked by a fallen tree. This should all be clear within a few days.

Volunteers

Thanks to Piers, we have been able to mobilize a good turnout of volunteers almost every month this year, so many thanks to all who managed to lend a hand. Woodland management is very often hard and heavy work, and it is not always easy to set up tasks that everyone can manage. Hopefully with a bit more planning we will be able to improve this in 2024.

Tree Issues

Every year we seem to lose several mature trees along the riverbank due to undercutting of their roots by flood water. This seems to be happening more frequently which may be due to more flooding events on the Lynher combined with the riparian trees reaching their maturity. Several large trees have also blown down during the summer storms. These are too large for working party volunteers to deal with, so we are contracting someone in to make these safe and reopen the paths.

The Link and Stara Newsletter

Every month we make an effort to put together a newsletter for Friends, which is also published more widely in the Link magazine. I must thank Jen, Piers, Anne, and Fran for all the work they put into this month in and month out. I am frequently asked detailed questions from Stara visitors who clearly pour over these articles in detail, so they seem to be well read.

Membership Secretary

After many years maintaining our membership list and keeping subscriptions coming in, Fran Jones has announced her retirement. On behalf of all the friends

I would like to thank her for all her hard work which has been much appreciated. We are still searching for a new replacement.

Dai is also stepping down from our committee, having been a key volunteer at Stara since its inception as a community woodland. Working Party leader for many years, builder of the disabled path and much more. There is much to see at Stara which bears his hallmark, and we are in his gratitude.

Looking Ahead

We are currently putting together new management plan for the woods which we will be submitting to the Forestry Commission next spring. The plan is being put together by Dan Cuillin and will provide us with some grant aid as well as permission to fell trees as and when required. We have been undertaking surveys right across the woods to identify all the different habitat types and ranges of vegetation. This information is really useful in deciding how we manage the woods in the future. The survey data will also help us to see how the woods change over time. We know that currently the woods are becoming shadier as conifer trees become larger. Reducing the number of conifers and replacing them with native broadleaf trees and shrubs will benefit wildlife over time.

In the New Year we will be hosting some volunteer sessions with people referred by Cornwall Mind (the mental health charity). These will be people struggling with anxiety issues, in particular climate anxiety and concerns about rapid environmental change. We hope that working as a group at Stara will help them to feel more directly connected to the world around them.

FRIENDS OF STARA WOODS C.I.O.

TREASURER'S REPORT 2023

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 19th November 2023

TOTAL FUNDS AS AT 31/10/2022 BROUGHT FORWARD **£6,780.28**

EXPENDITURE

		This year 01/11/2022 to 31/10/23	*Previous year 01/11/2021 to 31/10/22*	Breakdown in 2022/23
(a)	Project work	£2,381.82	*£480.00*	(a) Payment to Shaw Welding for bridge repair and strengthening work
(b)	Purchase of tools and equipment	£63.85	*£129.58*	(a) £37.90 reimbursement to Jen for purchase of two tree-measuring tapes (b) £25.95 reimbursement to Pete for purchase of paint for bridge
(c)	Running costs	£258.20	*£260.54*	(a) £18.40 reimbursement to Laurence for purchase of coffees at AGM (b) £239.80 payment to Insurance Experts Ltd for renewal of annual employer's and public liability insurance
	TOTAL	**£2,703.87**	***£870.12***	

INCOME

		This year 01/11/2022 to 31/10/23	*Previous year 01/11/2021 to 31/10/22*	Breakdown in 2022/23
(a)	Grants	£0.00	*£0.00*	
(b)	Donations - general	£378.75	*£0.00*	(a) £30 from Anne's W.I. talk (b) £198.75 from Anne's Facebook birthday appeal (c) £50 from Pete for timber (d) £100 from someone who also donated £200 to the bridge appeal
	Donations - bridge	£2,320.00	*£0.00*	(a) £1709.80 directly into bank account (b) £591.00 via PayPal Giving (c) £19.20 via collecting tin at Upton Cross Apple Day
(c)	Subscriptions	£1,280.00	*£1,259.50*	(a) Monthly order = £568.00 *(last year £481.50* (b) Annual order = £687.00 *(last year £753.00)* (c) Annual cash/cheque = £25.00 *(last year £25.00)*
(d)	Sales	£0.00	*£0.00*	
(e)	Gift Aid	£0.00	*£201.49*	
	TOTAL	**£3,978.75**	***£1,460.99***	

TOTAL FUNDS AS AT 31/10/2023	**£7,860.27**