Friends of Stara Wood

Chairman's Annual Report 2024

It has not been an easy year at Stara as most of our plans for the woods had to be put on hold. In response to a series of unforeseen events, our volunteers and supporters have gone above and beyond anything we might have expected, so on reflection I think that, although not easy, we have had a most exceptional 12 months.

The steel frame of the bridge required specialist repair, and then subsequently the steel support cables needed to be replaced. An amazing fund-raising exercise paid for the welding work, while an equally amazing volunteer effort replaced the main bridge cables. Thanks to so many people for making all this happen but with a particular shout out for Piers and Pete.

If this wasn't enough, we have managed to resurface much of the car park and to deal with the drainage on entering the woodland. We have built a section of boardwalk on the approach to Broad Wood, and contractors have cleared fallen trees along the river.

Looking back, these are extraordinary achievements and so the Trustees would like to extend their thanks to members of the committee, volunteers and all the donors who have all worked so hard to keep the paths and the bridge open.

With the bridge opening and closing through the year, we have had little time for organising events, but a recent Bioluminescence Walk held jointly with Cornwall Wildlife Trust was a great success and could be a model for future events.

We also need to say a special thank you to Piers for his sterling work leading our working Bees, which is hard enough under normal circumstances but has been exceptionally demanding this year. Thankfully Piers is returning to the ranks of ordinary volunteer, but we now need to recruit a new organiser as quickly as we can.

Other Issues and planning for the future

The Lynher seems to be flooding more frequently in response to climate change which is leading to erosion and undercutting of the riverbank. This is resulting in more tree failures along both banks of the river so we may need to revisit how these trees are managed in the long term.

In the background Dan has been busy looking into funding possibilities with the Woodland Trust and Forestry Commission (FC) and a new plan of operations is currently awaiting approval with the FC. This will allow us to look at removing a section of large Douglas Fir from Colquite Wood thus restoring another section of the woodland to its natural vegetation.

We continue to lose ash trees to Ash Dieback disease and each year we will continue to need to spend money on having trees assessed for their safety and then removed if necessary. We currently have a situation on the path up to Treovis where 11 mature ash trees have been assessed as being dangerous. The cost of remedial work is more than we can currently afford so we may have to temporarily close this path to walkers or make a new path to reduce the risk of an accident.

More ash trees will become dangerous in the future as the disease progresses, so we need to consider the likely cost of keeping the paths open.

Given the design of the bridge, its location and level of use, we need to allow more resources for its upkeep and repair. Our volunteers have been truly amazing this year, but we might require

more paid assistance in the future. We note also the relative increase in the cost of specialist support for engineering or tree works.

Back in the spring when we needed to raise money for the bridge, we were able to raise over £3000 within a 3-week period. This not only shows local people's generosity but how much they value Stara as part of their lives. This is enormously encouraging for those of us struggling to keep the woods going. As costs rise, we need to explore new ways of ensuring a sustainable future for the woods so we must engage with our supporters to look at ways of achieving this.

On top of all that has gone on at Stara this year, we are continuing to come to terms with the loss of Mike Todd who was pivotal in his help and support to Stara since its inception as a community wood. All those involved with looking after Stara are acutely aware of a 'Mike sized hole' which has been very difficult to fill. We continue to consider a suitable legacy for Mike in the woods.

Simon

FRIENDS OF STARA WOODS C.I.O.

TREASURER'S REPORT 2024

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 17th November 2024

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

EXPENDITURE

		This year 01/11/2023 to 31/10/24	*Previous year 01/11/2022 to 31/10/23*	Breakdown in 2023/24
(a)	Project work	£3,110.18	*£2,381.82*	(a) £382.45 reimbursement to Laurence for purchase of stone and hessian for car park (b) £156.00 reimbursement to Laurence for purchase of aggregate for car park (c) £162.00 reimbursement to Laurence for purchase of aggregate for car park (d) £1,056.00 to Woodlands and Wetlands for felling and thinning work (e) £27.12 reimbursement to Laurence for purchase of drainage pipe for car park (f) £375.24 to Steel Wire Rope for new bridge cables (g) £51.73 reimbursement to Laurence for purchase of hook-bolts and timber for bridge (h) £144.36 reimbursement to Laurence for purchase of boardwalk timber (i) £35.28 reimbursement to Laurence for purchase of boardwalk timber (j) £720.00 to Woodlands and Wetlands for ash tree survey
(b)	Purchase of tools and equipment	£287.09	*£63.85*	(a) £25.95 reimbursement to Pete for purchase of bridge paint * (b) £37.90 reimbursement to Jen for purchase of tree tapes ** (c) £114.68 reimbursement to Simon for purchase of PPE (d) £29.97 reimbursement to Anne for purchase of Citrox (e) £78.59 to Lifebuoys Direct for lifebuoy and throwline * shown within last year's Finance Report because cheque issued in October - but not cleared until 1st November ** shown within last year's Finance Report. However, cheque not cashed - subsequently cancelled and paid this year by transfer
(c)	Running costs	£262.05	*£258.20*	(a) £22.25 reimbursement to Anne for purchase of AGM coffees (b) £239.80 renewal of annual public and employer liability insurance
	TOTAL	**£3,659.32**	***£2,703.87***	

INCOME

		This year 01/11/2023 to 31/10/24	*Previous year 01/11/2022 to 31/10/23*	Breakdown in 2023/24
(a)	Grants	£200.00	*£0.00*	Linkinhorne Parish Council for improvements to area beyond car park gates
(b)	Donations - general	£487.90	*£378.75*	£465.40 from Kaleido fund-raising concert
	Donations - bridge	£1,152.20	*£2,320.00 **	£982.25 from PayPal Giving ** Last year's figure should have read £2,220.00 - a £100 donation turned out to be a subscription*
(c)	Subscriptions	£1,343.50	*£1,280.00*	(a) Monthly order = £455.50 *(last year £568.00) ** (b) Annual order = £863.00 *(last year £687.00) *** (c) Annual cash/cheque = £25.00 *(last year £25.00)* ** Last year's figure should have read £468.00 (SP)* *** Last year's figure should have read £787.00*
(d)	Sales	£0.00	*£0.00*	
(e)	Gift Aid	£441.25	*£0.00*	(a) £206.52 for 2022 (delayed submission) (b) £234.73 for 2023
	TOTAL	**£3,624.85**	***£3,978.75***	

TOTAL FUNDS AS AT 31/10/2024 **£7,825.80**

£455.50

£863.00