

FRIENDS OF THERFIELD HEATH & GREENS



ANNUAL
REPORT-
UPDATED

2024/2025



CHAIR'S REPORT

Since taking on the role as interim Chair a year ago, I have continued to be amazed at how much we have managed to achieve over the past twelve months. This is testament to our small dedicated Committee and all of the volunteers and supporters who have generously given their time and donations to further our aims.

This year we have sought to develop and grow opportunities to work in partnership with other local organisations, with proceeds being shared and benefits for all those involved. For example, we engaged with Royston Museum and Royston Environmental Group in their Great Big Green Week Festival in June, with the Herts and Middlesex Bat Group who led a Bat Walk on the Heath in September, and with Yoga with Aline who ran restorative yoga sessions to mark the changing of the seasons. I am also really excited about working more closely with our local schools to enhance their visits to the Heath and help the younger generations to increase awareness of Therfield Heath and the importance of looking after it.

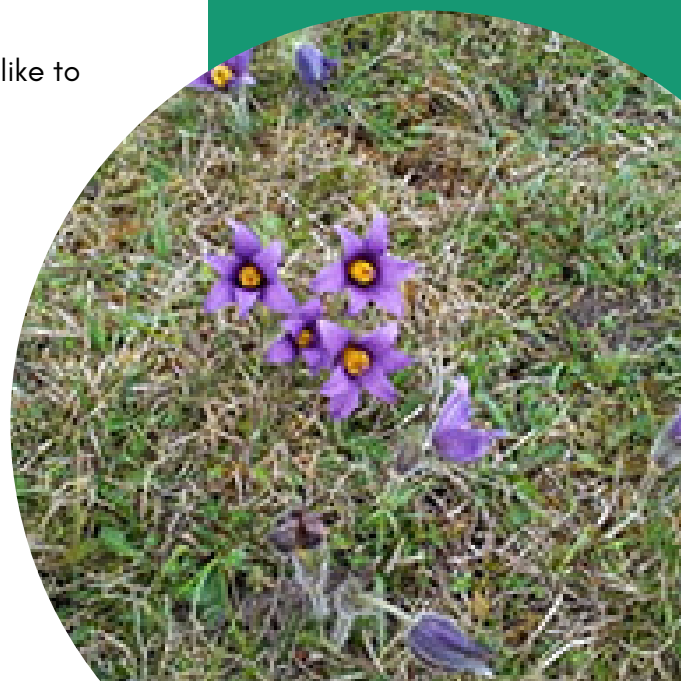
It has been especially wonderful to see the growing success of the Royston Wildlife Group talks, with a marked increase in audience numbers, which has led to greater donations being made to charities of the speaker's choice as well as additional income for the Friends. The subsequent spin-off project to install swift boxes in collaboration with the Hertford Swift Group has also seen more than 80 new swift boxes installed across Royston and neighbouring villages, with the Friends also funding the installation of a further four boxes on Royston Methodist Church.

All in all it has been another very successful year and I would like to thank everyone who has supported us.

Bryony May

Chair (Interim)

In this updated version of
the report, corrigenda are
indicated in red



2024/2025 IN REVIEW

Throughout the year, the Friends have organised a wide array of events designed to engage the local community with Therfield Heath and raise funds to help safeguard its rich biodiversity and ancient landscape.

This year saw a deepening of the RWG/FOTH partnership and the RWG season opened in September 2024 with Paul Wright's engaging talk on wildlife photography. He recounted his evolution from being an entomophobe to a master of insect photography and inspired the audience with his stunning images.

In October 2024, Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews, archaeologist and curator of North Hertfordshire Museum enthralled a full house at Royston Museum on the archaeology of the Heath. Keith's descriptions of the landscape features, including scheduled monuments, ancient trackways and medieval stock pens, expertly conveyed the importance of the Heath to our predecessors.

In the RWG talk of January 2025, Elizabeth Hamilton, a longstanding Campaign for the Protection of Rural England volunteer, recounted her 58-mile trek along the River Lea. Her narrative provided a rich tapestry of the river's path through Luton, historic towns, nature reserves, and past landmarks, ultimately joining the Thames.

In February 2025, a collaboration with Tannery Drift First School resulted in the development of materials for Year 4 children to identify the flora and fauna of the Heath. This resulted in a school visit to the Heath in early May of two classes of Year 4 pupils and staff. Led by Heath Ranger Ellie Nadin, the group used the worksheets to identify the different species they found. Tannery Drift are happy to share these materials with other local schools.

Also in February 2025, Clive Fleming from the Hertford Swift Group gave the RWG talk on the biology and conservation of swifts. Clive described their unique airborne lifestyle—spending years in flight, sleeping on the wing, and consuming up to 20,000 insects daily. His expert presentation highlighted the worrying UK population decline of 60% in the past 25 years, likely due to the loss of nesting sites. This prompted FOTH to lead a highly successful community project to help protect these remarkable migratory birds. FOTH facilitated the installation of 82 new swift boxes. Almost all were erected on private houses (52 in Royston and 26 in Therfield) and the Friends funded the installation of four boxes on Royston Methodist Church.

FRIENDS EVENTS IN 2024/2025



July-Sept 2024
En Plein Air Art

Sept 2024
Bat Walk

Oct 2024
Archaeology
of the Heath
talk

Sept-Nov
2024
Royston
Wildlife Group

March 2025
Annual Quiz
&
Easter Egg
Hunt
&
Yoga on the
Heath

Jan-Feb 2025
Royston
Wildlife Group
&
Fundraising
Meal at Thai
Rack

June 2025
Meadfleet
Nature
Walk
&
Yoga on
the Heath
&
Big Green
Week

April-June
2025 En Plein
Air Art
&
May 2025
Swift Box
Initiative



In June 2025, FOTH members joined a walk across the Heath led by ecologists Paul Cassidy and Grace Brady from Meadfleet Open Space Management, which manages the open space at Ivy Farm opposite the Heath. Paul and Grace shared their love of nature during a lively and informative guided walk.

Great Big Green Week is the UK's biggest annual celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature. In partnership with Royston Environmental Group, Royston Museum hosted the town's first Great Big Green Week Festival in June 2025. FOTH contributed with a Build A Bug Hotel activity for children and a well-attended talk on the Environment and History of Therfield Heath by Committee Member, Jane Dottridge.

FOTH's regular events continued to engage the local community. The Annual Quiz hosted by the inimitable Tom Downie proved highly popular and was sponsored by Ensum Brown. This year's Easter Egg Hunt was a hit with both parents and children. Those seeking a more meditative appreciation of the Heath had the options of equinox Yoga on the Heath, led by Aline Lemos and the En Plein Air Art Group, hosted by amateur artist Joan Munden.

We continued our commitment to protecting the natural environment through ongoing initiatives like the Monthly Litter Picks. These efforts, supported by dedicated volunteers, ensure the Heath remains pristine for all to enjoy.

WITH THANKS

The continued success of FOTH is due to the commitment and enthusiasm of our volunteers. We salute everyone who has contributed: our steadfast Committee Members, both past and present; the energetic litter pickers; the insightful guides of our educational events; and all who have given so generously in goods and services. Each act of kindness has shaped our community for the better, and we are grateful for your unwavering support.

Last but definitely not least, we bade farewell to committee member Dave Bubbins and former chair of FOTH, Janet Rossignol-Bubbins. We thank them for all their hard work over the previous 6 years to ensure the success of FOTH.

THE FUTURE

The Friends have an exciting roadmap for the future, encompassing the following goals:

- We are steadfast in our commitment to providing a diverse range of opportunities for learning, engagement, and active involvement with the Heath.
- We aspire to expand and diversify our Membership, fostering a vibrant community of individuals who share a deep appreciation for the Heath.
- We aim to increase both the quantity and regularity of grants for the Heath. Working with the Conservators, we aim to enhance the resources they may need to continue their valuable work of safeguarding and nurturing the Heath.

THANK YOU

The Friends of Therfield Heath
and Greens Committee:

Bryony May, Chair
Ray Munden, Treasurer
Ann Smith, Secretary
Dave Bubbins
Jane Dottridge
Sally Marchant
Sarah Ramsay

Every litter picker who has come
along on Sundays to help keep
the Heath litter-free.



And all the individuals and
organisations who donated
their time, goods and services:

Abi May
Bury Lane Farm
Chantal Helm & Herts and Middlesex
Bat Group
Clive Fleming & Hertford Swift Group
Doug Radford
Elizabeth Hamilton
Ellie Nadin
Ensum Brown
Holly Christie
Janet Rossignol-Bubbins
Joan Munden
Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews
Ladds
Pam Wright
Paul Cassidy and Grace Brady &
Meadfleet Open Space Management
Paul Wright
Prep World
Royston Environmental Group
Royston Museum
Tannery Drift First School
Tesco
Thai Rack Restaurant
Heath Café
Old Bull Inn
Thai Rack
Tom Downie
Yoga with Aline



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Corrigenda are
indicated in red

Treasurer's Report

Total income for the year dropped to **£5672** from the previous year's £6608, although much of this decrease was accounted for by last year's exceptional incorporation of £809 from the Royston Wildlife Group. There were, however, also decreases in both income from membership and associated donations to **£2033** (from £2168) and also from events to £2983 (from £3464).

For the first time a Gift Aid tax rebate, £162.47, was received from HMRC. This could be far greater if more members signed up for Gift Aid, so please take note and if you are a tax payer do sign up for Gift Aid if you haven't already.

A substantial sum from the balance was moved into a Lloyds interest bearing account, but the interest rate promptly dropped and consequently alternatives that might offer better rates are being investigated.

The income from events was still very impressive and once again represents the very hard work of a small committee and, of course, the support of the events by our members. One noteworthy success was the improvement in numbers attending at RWG meetings, and consequently in income. This was likely due the extra publicity generated by FOTH.

Profits actually increased due to a fall in operating costs, which were skewed high last year by the purchase of a gazebo and some significant costs for printing brochures. Additionally, no donations were requested by the Conservators of Therfield Heath and Greens. This was because of the loss of key conservator staff during the year, which hampered discussions. Hopefully this will change now that new, enthusiastic staff are in place. The most significant operating costs were the annual licence fees for the membership software (£95) and for public liability insurance (£134.40).

Donations were made to the Herts Swift Group for the supply and installation of four swift nest boxes on the Royston Methodist Church, £160, and also to the Campaign for Rural England, £100.

FOTH now has a cash balance of **£15,100**, which means that we will be able to provide substantial help whenever the Conservators request it.



Accounts for year 01.07.2024 – 30.06.2025

Corrigenda are
indicated in red

INCOME	£
Membership and associated donations	2033.00
Events	2983.20
Grants and donations	446.00
Interest from bank	47.88
Gift Aid reclaimed for 2023/24	162.47
TOTAL INCOME	5672.55

EXPENDITURE	£
Operating costs	282.87
Fundraising costs	1104.68
Grants and projects	310.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1697.55

Profit for year	3975.00
Balance brought forward	11,127.66
Cash balance	15,102.66
Balance in Lloyds current a/c at 30.06.2025	2503.96
Balance in Lloyds interest a/c at 30.06.2025	11,812.82
Balance in PayPal a/c at 30.06.2025	690.05
Cash float	95.83
TOTAL	15,102.66

General Funds – The Committee require the Friends to maintain readily accessible assets sufficient to fund not less than 6 months of running costs at all times. In 2024/2025 this equated to £750.



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Registered charity number 1192972

