

PRIORY PARK FRIENDS' GROUP

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting



Held: Wednesday 21st May 2014 at 7.30 pm.

Venue: St Neots Football Pavilion, Loves Farm, St Neots

Present:

Ian Jackson	Ron Jones	
Francisca Shaw	Carol Hurrell	+ 21 members
Ian Toyne	Nick Tracken	
Anna van der Hart		

Apologies for Absence: Were received from former Chairman Paul Davies whose letter was read out and he was thanked for all his hard work over the past four years.

Apologies were also received from Dr and Mrs Turner, Mr and Mrs Lewis, Mr and Mrs Eyles, Dr and Mrs Hill, Mr and Mrs Wilson, Pat Sumner, Mr and Mrs Wilson and Carolyn Eadie.

1. Introduction

Ian Jackson as acting Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, and especially the guest speaker, Simon Marsh from the RSPB.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

Minutes of the last AGM held on 8th May 2013, which have been on the website, were approved and accepted as a correct record by the meeting. Proposer Richard van der Hart, seconder by Gill Jackson.

3. Chairman's Report for the Previous Year

- Ian Jackson as acting Chairman reported on the work achieved over the past year. 450 crocus bulbs were planted at the southern and eastern sides of the Park and 1000 bluebells in the eastern spinney, these were now beginning to show. Poppy seeds had been sown to mark the centenary of World War 1 and Ian Toyne had planted poppies on the northern side of the Park at his own cost. The meadow mix planted last year had been very disappointing and this would not be repeated this year. The District Council had been asked not to mow some areas of grass where the whips had been planted, but to leave the grass long thereby encouraging wildlife and wildflowers. This had been successful and, apart from the usual daisies, buttercups and dandelions, some blue plantains and even a wild orchid have flowered.
- 50 whips were planted to replace those that were stolen. 105 free whips have been ordered from the Woodland Trust to be planted in November. These will include oak, hazel, silver birch and assorted hedging to replace losses. A special disease resistant Elm sapling has been planted as part of the Great British Elm Experiment. This is now registered with the Conservation Foundation and will be regularly monitored to see if it remains disease free.

Sadly, several oaks have had to be felled in the eastern spinney, and it is hoped no more. The District Council has not planted any trees this year due to the

financial situation. To date 20 different species of tree has been tagged with the English and Latin names and this will be continued during the year. This will help everyone to identify them correctly.

- Wood-chipping continues in the eastern spinney and we wish to thank everyone who has helped with this. If anyone wishes to volunteer, please contact Ian Toye.
- The Annual Litter pick held in March was well supported and 30 large bags of rubbish were collected. The District Council will be providing new litter bins, as the current ones are rusted through.
- The birdboxes have showed a good occupancy rate, including the owl box, and half of them were cleaned out in the Autumn.
- Regarding funds, St Neots Town Council kindly gave a grant of £500 this year, and Luminus a grant of £100 which was used to buy bluebells.
- We were pleased to learn that the Technical College site has been purchased by Cambridgeshire County Council and will therefore continue to be used for educational purposes.
- There is no up-to-date news about plans for the old swimming pool site.
- On the advice of the District Council we have had to take out a Public Liability Insurance at a cost of £190 to cover any accidents that might occur during volunteer work parties.
- The Committee were thanked for all their hard work over the past year and it was hoped that 2 new members, Carol Hurrell and Nick Tracken, would shortly be voted on to the Committee to make it up to 7.
- Thanks, were also given to Colin Anderson who had audited the accounts for the second year running, at no cost to the group.

4. Treasurer's Report

Francisca Shaw reported that the bank balance at the end of the financial year was £825.47. The audited accounts were accepted by the meeting, proposer David Smith, seconder Chris West.

5. Election of the Committee

The Committee was re-elected on bloc plus 2 new members, Carol Hurrell and Nick Tracken.

6. Any Other Business

Chris Low was disappointed there was no photograph of children at the Annual Litter Pick, despite the fact that some young footballers had helped. This was unfortunate as the photo was taken before they had arrived.

Ian Jackson thanked St Neots Football Club for the use of the premises. There were no further questions from the floor.

Richard van der Hart gave a vote of thanks to the Committee.

Meeting ended at 8.00 p.m. and was followed by an excellent talk given by Simon Marsh on "Birdsong and the birds in your garden".