

PRIORY PARK FRIENDS' GROUP

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held: Wednesday 11th May 2016 at 7.30pm

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

Present: Ian Jackson (Acting Chair) Francisa Shaw
Anna van der Hart Ron Jones
Carol Hurrell Nick Tracken
Ian Toye + 20 members

Cllrs Barry Chapman & John Dunford for item 6

Apologies: Members - Michael Drury, Lilly Cuthbert, Carrolyn Eadie, Alison Pearson, Jane Gustafsson, Maureen & David Smith, Liz & Rob Murray and Cllr. Ian Gardener.

1. Introduction

Ian Jackson, as acting Chairman, introduced the Committee. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and especially the guest speaker for the evening, Nick Steiger from Huntingdonshire Beekeeping Association who would give an illustrated talk on "The life of honeybees".

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the last AGM held on 4th June 2015, which have been on the website, were approved as a correct copy and signed.

3. Chairman's Report for the Previous Year

- The Committee purchased a couple of standard trees. A Holm Oak to replace the Jubilee Oak tree, which had died, and an Indian Chestnut to replace the memorial tree, which was stolen from Priory Hill. The canes and guards were removed from all the hedging whips and the tops were clipped to try to create a good hedge along the Priory Hill boundary. The Woodland Trust gives away free trees and whips, and next year it would be good to fill in the gaps along that boundary.
- The bird boxes had been inspected and about half need replacing, but they have shown a good occupancy rate.
- The Annual Litter pick was held on 12th March, with a good turn-out and about 25 bags of rubbish were collected. This is a very worthwhile event, giving the Park a good annual spring clean. This year purple bags were issued by the District Council to mark the Queen's birthday!
- Wood-chipping continues in the eastern spinney where a new venture, "The Forest School" takes place two or three times a week. This is run by Linda Rowley at the Infants School, who brings children into the Park to encourage an interest in nature.

- Concern over the new craze for drones had been reported to HDC, and they are in the process of “considering a policy” about them.
- Also reported was the mess left after running races in the Park on wet days.
- Due to lack of funds, a new bench could not be purchased but a new memorial bench is soon to be installed by HDC.
- The new traffic calming measures in Huntingdon Road are a great improvement and make crossing the road much safer
- Work is in progress on the old Technical College site and this will be used for educational purposes not housing.
- HDC has purchased a larger grass cutting machine, to replace the smaller mowers, as the number of cuts per season has been reduced.
- The Chairman thanked Colin Anderson, who had audited the books again this year, at no charge. Thanks also to the Football Club for allowing use of the building also at no charge. He thanked the Committee for all their work over the year and Ron Jones for looking after the web site, keeping it up-to-date with photographs and news.

4. Treasurer’s Report

Francisca Shaw reported that the accounts had been audited and that the bank balance at the end of the financial year was £643.14. There had been expenditure for trees, insurance and the web page. There was very little income, only £19, and no grant money had been received from the Town Council. It was hoped to receive a grant this year.

5. Election of the Committee

Three Committee members were standing down this year, Ian Jackson, Carol Hurrell and Anna van der Hart. Four members, Francisca Shaw, Ron Jones, Nick Tracken and Ian Toye were re-elected and two new members, Helen Lucas and Linda Rowley elected. Proposed by Richard van der Hart and seconded by Pat Jones.

6. Any Other Business

Councillors Barry Chapman and John Dunford attended unexpectedly and Cllr. Barry Chapman answered questions regarding the old swimming pool site. He said the Town Council had set up a Trust and it was hoped to build a splash pool on a site adjoining the Park. This could mean some building development on Huntingdon Road to fund it, but talks were still on-going.

The Town Council was applying to contract for grass cutting as HDC was reducing the number of cuts. It was also planning to increase litter and street cleaning.

He said that last year the Town Council had no money for community groups, but this year standard amounts would be given out and hopefully PPFG would receive a small grant. The Chairman thanked him for attending and up-dating the meeting.