

AGM February 23rd 2025

AGM standing business

Present: Paul Bailey, Steve Ambler, Alan Fleming, Ian Vandepeear, Brian Smith, Barbara Richardson, Alastair Bruce, Margaret Bruce, Brian Barron, plus 7 non-committee members.

Apologies: Arthur Trew, David Rimer, Penny Barron.

The meeting was quorate.

Welcome and Introduction of Committee:

Paul Bailey, Chair, introduced the committee members and described their roles.

Minutes of the AGM of 2024 and matters arising:

- The Rowan Tree Bridge had been condemned, but there has been no action on repair/replacement for lack of Council funding.
- The idea of tokens for Tea in the Park had been set aside.

The 2024 minutes were accepted.

Committee:

The following committee members were reaffirmed for 2025, noting any specific roles:

- Paul Bailey – Chair
- Steve Ambler - Treasurer
- Margaret Bruce – Minutes Secretary
- Alan Fleming – Tree Warden
- Brian Smith – Volunteer Co-ordinator
- Alastair Bruce – Membership Secretary and website
- Arthur Trew
- Ian Vandepeear
- Barbara Richardson.

Local organisations' representative on the Management Committee

- Brian Barron – Greenbank Church

Chair's report

Paul Bailey noted that the full formal report is online and had been circulated to members. He noted appreciation of the wonderful work Brian Smith has done in co-ordinating volunteers for tasks. These have included members of FOBVP, and also Duke of Edinburgh Volunteers, and a class from Kaimes School amongst other groups. Work has been made easier by the addition of a

secure metal shed with equipment near the main entrance, accessible to several groups. The shed was paid for through a Council grant scheme. Compost bins were also purchased and installed.

The area outside the main entrance had become an eyesore over the years; a local garden designer had offered her services free, and after the area was cleared by the Dirty Weekenders (a student group who offer services via the Council officer) her recommended plants were installed, and later Spring bulbs, all funded by FOBVP. Ongoing weeding is required here as in Dianne's Garden.

The Committee started to explore play equipment, and were directed to the Council Play Officer, who discussed possibilities and his source of funding. Eventually two large structures were installed, one for pre-school and one for older children. Both have proved very popular! FOBVP funded a picnic table (cost around £1000) near the former.

A bug hotel had been suggested: Andrew Swann, former chair, offered to construct this within the Wildflower Meadow – many thanks to him !

The erosion of the banks of the Burn has been a concern: the Conservation Volunteers have taken this on, using a technique called spiling, whereby hazel branches, coppiced within the park, are woven into a natural support for the banks. They have so far carried out 150 hours of work, funded by the Council, covering a section near the Oxfords end, one near the willow dome, and currently one nearer the main entrance. Andrew Swann asked how much remains to be done, and could FOBVP cover the costs.

Volunteers have cleared the ditch beside the path from Comiston Springs to keep the path drier. David Rimer has promptly removed graffiti, and Andrew Swann and Chris Rutterford have repaired the mural when damaged.

All the above has represented a great deal of work in enhancement and maintenance.

The park is well used for activities, e.g. schoolchildren have a regular early run each Wednesday, MacFit have exercise sessions near the gym, and the Interlopers orienteering group have appreciated our support.

Tea in the Park: see below.

Finance

Steve Ambler reported a balance of £11,389. He is concerned that inflation eats into its value, and would wish to see some of it spent. Tea in the Park had raised around £1200.

He noted that we may in the near future need a new independent examiner. Ted Duval queried whether an organisation of our size and turnover actually needs this. (This was followed up: we verified that as a registered charity, we are indeed bound by OSCR and also by our Constitution to have our accounts checked and certified independently.)

Membership report

Alastair Bruce reported that we have gained 14 new members, and now have 216 paid-up members, an increase of 9 on the previous year. Fees remain the same as at the time of founding, though some members add generous donations.

Tea in the Park

Claire Jellema's hard work and enthusiasm have made this a success over several years. In passing on this task, she will provide notes and practical help, lists of contacts for volunteers etc: we hope to recruit a member or team of members to run this next September.

Tree Warden's Report

Alan Fleming reported first on wildflower growing: there has been more planting of various species, including cowslips, in the existing Wildflower Meadow, and seeds are on order to

increase the variety and colour. The Dirty Weekenders have removed turf in 3 areas so far; seeds will be sown there in March. Free trees from the Woodland Trust will be planted in the park and along Cockmylane. Regular work is carried out on the willow dome, and the fruit trees. Butterbur clearance in the form of pulling off leaves has held regrowth back: it will be interesting to check whether this promotes diversity in the area. Documenting – photos and observations – was encouraged, to check whether work carried out has promoted diversity.

Election of Committee

Claire Jellema wishes to step down from her role as Tea in the Park Co-ordinator, and will step back from the Committee if a replacement comes forward.

Thanks were expressed to Robin Harper, who wishes to step down: he has played a valuable role in monitoring erosion of the Burn.

Richard Bush is willing to return to the Committee; he was proposed by Paul Bailey, seconded by Brian Smith, and approved.

Any other business/ Future projects

Theatre plinth: Historical information on the theatre has been sourced, text and photos, and it is hoped to use this for a plinth within the area.

The pavilion area: before any installation can be carried out, the area needs to be drained – ideas are welcome as to how the area can be used: seating/outdoor games?

Both the above would require use of funds.

Charles Black asked how much the activity structure near the theatre, which is less visible, is used; regular walkers assured him of enthusiasm for it, especially during holidays and weekends. The meeting was closed, with thanks to all who attended.