**Friends of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common**

**Minutes of a meeting of FOLK Committee held on 10 June 2025 in the**

**Stanton Room, Church Piece, Charlton Kings, beginning at 2.00pm**

Present: Mike Donnelly (MDn) (Chair), Andrew Bishop, Mark Dowie (MDw), Morgan Miller, Wayne Sedgwick, Rachel Watson and Peter Whalley.

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr. Paul Baker, Cllr. Angie Boyes and Peter Niblett.

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 15 April 2025

 These were accepted as a correct record.

3. Facebook Action Plan

MDn circulated suggestions for improving the administration of FOLK Facebook Page following feedback from the committee and others closely connected to Facebook’s management.

Currently, the FOLK Facebook administrators were Roger Smith, Julius Marstrand, Rachel Watson and Tony Duffin. Peter Niblett had recently resigned from his Admin role and Tim Sugrue had expressed his agreement to being an Admin. A proactive, not reactive, approach to the site was required and there should be daily monitoring of the site. Cheltenham Borough Council should be encouraged to regularly post directly onto the FOLK Facebook site. FOLK committee members needed to be active on Facebook.

Those present considered the issues and the following was agreed:

1. the preferred number of Facebook Admins was four;
2. Admins should have a close connection to the current organisation of FOLK;
3. people who were Admins should not post their opinions on the Facebook page;
4. the ‘anonymous member’ option should be removed;
5. the rules that applied to followers of the FOLK Facebook Page should be updated, with a particular focus on preventing abusive language and misinformation, and a link to them published;
6. Admins should delete posts if they considered they were contravening the rules or were factually incorrect;
7. a WhatsApp group for the Admins should be set up;
8. MDn to speak to Roger Smith and Julius Marstrand regarding the executive committee’s wish that Admins have current links to FOLK’s executive committee.

4. Wayne’s Report

1. CBC Project Protocol progress report:

WS advised that a partnership of volunteer groups in town needed to be set up and a contract signed by the members of the partnership. This should be achieved by October but it was necessary for him to meet with each group.

1. Cattle Welfare Project Progress report:

WS advised that work party co-ordinators had attended a site visit and they had made suggestions. FiPL had been extended by another year and it was hoped there would be funding available of £11,000. An application would be submitted this summer. Once the project was confirmed, there would be a post on Facebook.

1. Mobility Scooter Route Projects progress report:

Interpretation panels had been delayed a little but it was expected that they would be in place next week, one in Daisy Bank car park and one above the Salterley Quarry car park.

1. There were to be two benches installed on the hill, one dedicated to volunteers throughout Cheltenham and one dedicated to the Cotswolds Wardens. The memorial plaque scheme was working well. There had been three plaques installed last year and two more were due to be installed soon. Currently the cost of these was £750 each and this budget was specifically for the hill. Ravensgate had a similar memorial wall. There was a limit of eight per year on Leckhampton Hill at present.
2. An application had been made to Natural England for approval to plant nine trees as a replacement for the larch stand that had been removed. Silver birch and rowan had been suggested. Due to ash die-back, the Council’s Tree Officer intended to take down a number of trees on the side of Cirencester Road in the autumn, some of which were adjacent to the Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings site, for health and safety reasons. The protocol for this kind of health and safety work did not require consultation but the Council would inform the public about this.
3. Three calves had been born. The injured cow previously reported was now back on site and had given birth. The calves were of the unusual Riggit breed of Galloways and were multi-coloured.
4. WS had met with the newly appointed Rural Police Officer covering south Cotswolds, Richard Parker.

MDn observed that the CBC Project Protocol required to be in place earlier than October and suggested that it was necessary to move this forward between meetings.

In response to the Committee’s request for a contribution from the memorial plaque budget, ring-fenced to the hill, WS advised that it might be possible to make a claim for a grant if it was for something specific and possibly insurance costs might be a valid subject.

5. Treasurer’s Report

MDw submitted a report including a FOLK Statement of Accounts for the period 8 April 2025 to 1 June 2025, FOLK Cash Book Balances Statement and Bank Reconciliation at 1 June 2025 and Movement in FOLK Bank Account Balances: Position at 1 June 2025, including an analysis of FOLK expenditure year to date (£1,932.27). Bank balances showed a reduction of £1,006.06 since the last report and a decrease of £901.02 since the start of the financial year (1 October 2024). The funds held included grant monies previously received but ring-fenced in respect of specific future projects. An application had recently been made to the Leckhampton and Wardens Hill Parish Council for a grant of £1,000.

MDn advised that a £50 gift voucher for The Wheatsheaf had been given by the committee to Tim Sugrue in recognition of his hard work on FOLK’s website. The next grant should address servicing and purchasing of equipment. Consideration should also be given to training requirements and he would discuss this with Peter Niblett.

6. Date for FOLK Committee Summer Site Visit

 It was agreed that the summer site visit should take place on Tuesday 8 July 2025.

 MDn pointed out that the next Committee Meeting was on 7 October 2025 and preparation for the AGM was needed before that date. He reminded those present that he required a reserve person for the presentation at the AGM. MDn would speak to John Harvey regarding progress with the appointment of a new Chair and advised that he, MDn, was happy to support the nominee if required.

7. Any Other Business

 Tools:

 MDn advised that he and AB would be carrying out an inventory of the tool shed on Wednesday next week. Currently, the value of the tools for insurance purposes was £20,000. FOLK possessed a mower which was not used and he enquired if any other group might want it. WS agreed to give this consideration.

 Update on 25 Year Newsletter and Photo Supplement:

 MDn advised that this special newsletter would be circulated electronically in July. Consideration should be given to printing a number of hard copies for people who have supported FOLK over the years including Parish Councils who gave grants, these contributors to be named on the front page of the newsletter. It was observed that it would be costly to print. FOLK was formed on 26 June 2000.

 Management Plan:

The committee was advised that the Council had successfully obtained an extra £15,000 for the Management Plan, now completed, to be used to improve the document and make it more useable. The right person to carry out this work was now being sought. It was not practical to use in its current format and work party coordinators required it to be so. There was to be a meeting on Thursday to progress this matter.

Resignation from the Committee:

MDn advised that Cllr. Paul Baker had withdrawn from the committee as he was now the Cabinet Member for Greenspace and Waste. There would be a new nomination from Cheltenham Borough Council for the committee.

8 The meeting closed at 3.50pm.