

FOLK AGM 2024

Minutes of the Twenty-fifth Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Leckhampton and Charlton Kings Common held on Tuesday, 12 November 2024 at the Wheatsheaf, Old Bath Road, Leckhampton, Cheltenham

25.1 Opening and Welcome

The Chair, Mike Donnelly, opened the meeting at 7.10pm. He welcomed the 57 members present, including 11 Committee members, and the guest speaker. He noted that all papers relevant to the meeting had been circulated to members and had been available on the FOLK website.

25.2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies from Councillor Angie Boyes, Bridget Paish and Orlagh Phipps were noted.

25.3 Approval of Minutes of the 24 Annual General Meeting held on 14 November 2023

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

25.4 Matters arising from Minutes

There were no matters arising.

25.5 Annual Report for 2023/2024

The Chair gave a Power Point presentation which summarised issues covered in the previously circulated Annual Report and Treasurer's Report. The themes reported on included

- FOLK's aims/objectives: it was essential to remain a conservation and education group; new challenges needed to be addressed, in particular meeting the needs of young people and members of society with reduced mobility; it was necessary to reflect those needs in our goals whilst maintaining a focus on core activities; a review of future activities and funding had taken place.
- Highlights: nomination for the King's Award for Voluntary Service, FOLK presence at High School Leckhampton's Eco Day, success in obtaining grant funding for FOLK's running costs, FOLK presence at Party in the Park (Pittville) free event for children, establishment of a team of six work party co-ordinators job-sharing the on-site work parties, successful events including a Quiz night and a Wildlife on the Hill site walk.
- FOLK activities: core activity of on site work parties, supporting conservation work parties with High School Leckhampton, engaging with Cheltenham Borough Council to produce a Site Management Plan.
- FOLK people: statistics included FOLK membership 515; FOLK Facebook subscribers 2,600; a total of FOLK volunteer hours 2,560 which included 1,641 hours working on the hill; a further 919 hours for meetings and admin, production of the Folktalk Newsletter, preparing for and attending events, web site management, hours given by volunteers to attend training courses.
- Partnership Projects: update provided on projects with National Grid, Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold Wardens, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust with their

adder project and Natural England who wish to make Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common a National Nature Reserve.

- Major Works on the site:
 - Infrastructure improvements to paths.
 - Completion of the dry stone wall from Hartley Lane to the Memorial Wall by the Cotswold Wardens. This year the Cotswold Wardens had contributed a total of 1,895 volunteers hours to the site with 1,155 hours building the dry stone wall and another 740 hours for project work and maintenance on the hill and common.
 - Installation of fencing in Daisy Bank field to enable cattle grazing.
 - Veteran trees management.
 - Lime kiln conservation.
- FOLK – Our Future: identifying priorities for the coming year, commitment to core conservation and education objectives with continued focus on habitat conservation and site maintenance for the benefit of all users of the hill, celebration of 25 years of voluntary service.

The presentation included highlights of the Treasurer's Report for the financial year 1 October 2023 – 30 September 2024, including:

- Income for full year £4,839
- Expenditure for full year £2,766
- Surplus (excess Income over Expenditure for full year £2,073
- FOLK Reserves at 30 September 2024 £4,073
- Subscriptions were not collected from members and therefore FOLK relied upon the generous support of local individuals and grants from organizations to fund activities.
- Grants and donations from organisations and individuals totalled £4,400 in the year, all relating to funding of specific projects.
- FOLK Insurance for Public Liability, Personal Accident and Equipment costs had risen this year by 26% to £636. Work party costs related to fuel and oils, new hand tools and servicing of our powered machinery.
- After successive shortfalls, this welcome return to surplus income generation reinforced the importance of effective and targeted funding of activities.

The Chair expressed his thanks on behalf of FOLK to the following for their financial support in the last 12 months -

- Local individuals.
- Gloucestershire County Council for the Build Back Better Grant.
- Shurdington Parish Council for a grant for volunteer training.
- Leckhampton Borough Council for the free use of Stanton Hall for FOLK meetings.
- Cheltenham Borough Council for their contribution towards insurance costs.
- Chalton Kings Parish Council for the free use of Stanton Hall for FOLK meetings

Following the presentation of the Annual Report and Treasurer's Report, the following issues were raised -

- a) When finalised, the joint Ravensgate and Charlton Kings Common site Management Plan would inform FOLK's work party management plan.
- b) Those present were reminded that the next Quiz was to be held at the Wheatsheaf on 22 November 2024 at 7.30pm and they were encouraged to attend and support this event.
- c) With the support of Shurdington Parish Council, consider developing links with Tewksbury Borough Council.
- d) The significant contribution from Geoff Holt in the running of FOLK's work parties for ten years was recognised and much appreciated.

The proposal by Serena Meredith that thanks be extended to Geoff Holt for his leadership of FOLK work parties was agreed by those present. The proposal by Councillor Paul Baker that thanks be extended to the committee and volunteers for their commitment and hard work was agreed by those present.

The Annual Report and the Treasurer's Report were accepted.

25.6 Accounts for 2023/24

The Treasurer's Report in respect of the financial year 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024 had been circulated to all members and summarised in the presentation referred to above.

25.7 Election of Officers and Executive Committee

The Chair began this section of the meeting by displaying an image showing the current membership of the Committee and indicating which members did not wish to be re-elected. This list also included the names of the nominated representatives of Cheltenham Borough Council to the FOLK Executive Committee, together with the names of the Newsletter Editor and the Webmaster. He advised that, since the AGM of 2023, Rachel Watson had been appointed to the role of secretary and Peter Niblett had been co-opted to the Committee due to his role as work party co-ordinator. Currently there were 3 Committee Member vacancies and nominations had been sought prior to the meeting. He advised that he would continue as Chair for one more year only. No nominations had been received and he invited those present to put themselves forward at this meeting. He stressed that without an adequate number of officers and active committee members FOLK's future would be at risk.

The Chair thanked the members of the Committee for their support and hard work over the last year.

25.8 Any Other Business

There being no other business, the Chair closed the meeting at 7.50pm.