



Friends of Selsdon Wood

Working to improve our wood

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at the Forestdale Forum, Selsdon Monday 10th January 2011 at 8 pm

PRESENT: Dawn Gibbons (Chairman), Rob Turley (Vice Chairman), Linda Lee (Treasurer), Linda Morris (Secretary), Ted Forsyth, David Malins, Janet and John Bickerstaff, Sara Bashford, Liz Phillips and Heather Govier.

1. **Apologies for absence** were noted from Janet Nightingale, Matthew Frith, Pamela Flouch, Val Evans, Iris Hotston.
2. **Minutes of last meeting** The minutes for the last AGM held on 4th January 2010 had been distributed. They were agreed by the group (subject to corrections being made to numbering of items) and signed by the Chairman.
3. **Matters arising** – none which would not be dealt with elsewhere in the course of the meeting.
4. **Chairman's review of the year - attached**

Dawn had previously circulated the attached report and she highlighted some points at the meeting, thanking those Friends who had worked tirelessly on specific tasks throughout the year. She was very grateful for their support. Matters arising from her comments were discussed as follows:

- a. **Information leaflet and map** – David reported he was updating the membership leaflet now that the path name boards are in place, turning it into just an information leaflet with map with membership form and programme as separate inserts to allow for possible subscription changes in the future.
- b. **Jubilee Plantation fencing** – It was hoped this would be completed this year. Simon Levy to advise and liaise with Ted and David
- c. **Charcoal burning** – It was agreed that Rob Sowter's offer to hold a charcoal burning demonstration weekend should be pursued – possibly with a view to having this event in early June.
- d. **Guided walks** – Dawn had invited Jane to lead another Autumn Fungi walk and she was awaiting her reply. It was agreed that Malcolm Bridge should be approached to lead a Butterfly walk.
- e. **Photo competition** – It was agreed that this should be held again and the Friends were grateful to Heather for agreeing to manage it once more. It was thought perhaps overheads could be reduced if we obtained prizes from sponsors instead of directly funding them ourselves and if the entries were printed via an on line business. Publicity would be via the same outlets as last year (local press and schools etc) but it was also thought that more effort was needed to try to get the younger photographers on board e.g. perhaps by more direct contact with the local schools and youth groups before too long so it could be incorporated into their year's programme.
Heather agreed to make a link from the FSW Facebook page to Flickr for the photos.
- f. **Coppicing and work days** – Ted reported that the coppicing was continuing but slowly due to lack of numbers of friends attending the work days and because some days had to be cancelled because of the poor weather. Linda Lee suggested a personal phone call to the Friends from a committee member might encourage more participation or at least elicit a response as to what support that person might feel able to give other than just paying an annual subscription. It was agreed that this approach be tried in the week before the next work day so it could be evaluated.
- g. David reported that the replacement legs had been prepared by the East Surrey Woodturners and so a damaged bench could now be resited – if there was a strong team available to dig the holes! Likewise the signs for the Jubilee and Centenary Plantations would need holes dug for posts so these could be put up in due course as would also a bench in Field 3.
- h. **Forum / Facebook** – Dawn indicated that the Facebook page was proving more popular than the Forum. It was agreed that this should be restricted though, for security reasons, to Friends only.

5. **Treasurer's report – attached**

Linda Lee presented her report which had been previously circulated. The accounts had been scrutinised by an independent person, for which she was grateful, and had been found to be correct. John and Janet Bickerstaff asked that in future, comparisons should be given for the preceding year. She would bear this in mind when presenting the next year's accounts.

Linda was pleased to have confirmation that the 'lost' tools were to be replaced under the insurance. The excess of £100 had been accounted for by not replacing a few items which had proved not to be regularly used. The replacement items were expected to be delivered to Ted this week. It was agreed that he should purchase stronger padlocks and that he and David would hold keys so the council employees and contractors should contact them

when they needed access. Meike would draw up a suitable agreement with David and Ted about this arrangement. Linda Lee also offered to be a key holder as she lived nearest to the car park.

Linda Lee advised she would be asking Friends for their 2011 subscriptions after this meeting and would also ask them to complete the Gift Aid form now this status had been granted to FSW. She was hopeful this status would also allow FSW to receive donations via charity cheques.

6. Election of Officers and Committee

- a. Sara Bashford nominated the existing **officers** to be re-elected to their posts. As there were no other volunteers, they were duly re-appointed by unanimous decision of those present.
- b. **Committee** – Based on the experience of the last three years, it was thought that the committee should best consist of the officers and those Friends who had taken on specific regular roles e.g. Work day, project and publicity manager and sufficient other Friends to bring to the required numbers as stated in the constitution (see also below re constitution). It was unanimously agreed therefore that the committee (of 4 officers and 4 Friends) for 2011 should be as follows:

Chairman – Dawn Gibbons
Vice Chairman – Rob Turley
Secretary – Linda Morris
Treasurer – Linda Lee

Publicity and Project Manager – David Malins
Work day leader – Ted Forsyth
John Bickerstaff
Janet Bickerstaff

Any members of the 'core group' (those who had regularly attended meetings in the last year) but who were absent from this meeting would be able to put their names forward as additional committee members at the next meeting if they wished to serve in that capacity rather than merely attend in future as members, up to the limit of numbers indicated in the agreed constitution (see below).

There was a discussion as to whether it would be prudent to advertise the monthly meetings as 'Committee meetings open to all Friends' or simply as 'Monthly meetings'. Whilst it was realised that predominantly those attending in the past had been seen as the committee (or 'core group') and very few Friends had been encouraged to attend on an ad hoc basis, it was thought that perhaps referring to the meeting as committee meetings (even if open to all), might be off-putting to those who wanted to attend casually. It was therefore agreed the meetings should, in future, be referred to as 'Members' meetings': any business papers or messages between meetings need only be circulated amongst the committee members listed above and business decisions at the members' meetings would be taken only by that committee if there was any dissent from other members attending.

c. Constitution – It became apparent in the course of the above discussion, that those present had two different versions of the constitution. The Secretary agreed to review her records and attach the version that had been previously agreed at an earlier AGM to these minutes.

7. Review of subscription rate

It was realised that, although FSW had a sound balance at present, funds may not be in such a good state by the end of the year if the council budgetary restrictions resulted in less support for FSW and if the tools insurance premium was affected by the recent claim. Therefore, it was agreed that the annual subscription should remain at £5 per household for 2011 but that there would also be an option of raising it to a maximum of £10 for 2012 if this was felt necessary by next January.

The Treasurer emphasised that she believed some funds should be ring-fenced until it was clear what insurance premium FSW would have to pay in August and what level of financial support would be forthcoming from the council. This was agreed.

8. 75th anniversary of Selsdon Wood

The Chairman had asked the Friends for ideas as to how the anniversary of the Wood being entrusted to the NT should be marked. A few suggestions had been sent to her and these were considered.

It was agreed that Ted Frith's offer to update the **History of Selsdon Wood booklet** should be accepted and David Malins agreed to liaise with him about this. How this should be financed would have to be decided in due course.

A Teddy Bears' Picnic was also mooted as an ideal way to involve local families in the anniversary. A Friend who had suggested this would be asked if she would be willing to organise this (assisted by the committee). A date of 5th June was determined for this event. It was suggested that perhaps the local primary schools (Greenville, Selsdon, Croydon High Juniors and the Forestdale schools) should be invited to help us celebrate. It was also suggested that perhaps the NT should be involved in any commemorative activities.

9. Any other business

a. **Litter picking** - Heather Govier reported that she regularly picked up litter from the wood and that there seemed to have been an increase recently. She was thanked for her efforts.

b. **Security in the wood** - It was suggested that the help of some of the regular dogwalkers who had already

shown an interest in the wood (eg by litter picking etc) should be sought in keeping a watch on notice boards and the store as a means of the FSW/Council being made aware of any damage at the earliest opportunity. Note is already being taken at random intervals of when the gates are left unlocked and the council advised of this.

10. Date of next meeting - The next Members' meeting would be 28th February **2011** at 8pm in the Forum. The next AGM would be held in January 2012. The exact date would be advised in due course.

To be signed off at next AGM by the Chairman.....

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1. Re item 4 in the minutes - Chairman's Report AGM 2011
- 2. Re item 5 in the minutes – Treasurer's Report for the 2010 Financial year (1st January to 31st Dec 2010)
- 3. Re item 6 in the minutes - The Constitution of the Friends of Selsdon Wood

Re item 4 in the minutes - Chairman's Report AGM 2011

In the past 12 months we have been busy running our regular monthly work days, organising a number of walks in the wood in the absence of the Park Ranger and held our third Open Day in September. Our membership has continued to rise.

The **new information leaflet** for the Selsdon Wood, funded by Croydon Council, was published in early 2010. It had an enthusiastic response from both members and the general public. Please visit your local library if you have not received a copy yet. David Malins helped produce this leaflet with the designer and a special thanks should be given to him.

The group has continued to **maintain the benches** in the wood and cutting back the undergrowth around them when required.

In 2010, work started on the project to rejuvenate the area known as the **Jubilee Plantation**, named in 1977 to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee. The repair of the surrounding fence will take place in the new year.

In March, a **Charcoal Training Session** took place in Littleheath Woods which a number of our members attended.

Our **Bluebell Walk** in April was the second year we hosted the walk for the public. Due to the late winter the bluebells were not in such abundance this year but there were still signs of wood sorrel and wood anemone to interest walkers.

In late April, with the help of the Downlands Project we put in **new guide posts** on the red and green walk routes. Both Ted Forsyth and David Malins were instrumental in the success of the project. Many of the old posts were either rotten or missing completely.

In July, we cleared the large amount of bracken which was swamping the regrowth of gorse but were pleased to see the numerous gorse seedlings we uncovered.

During the year, we worked with the **ACCS** (Association of Croydon Conservation Societies) to run two **organised walks** for members as part of the Green Croydon for All project. The first walk in July was the High Summer Walk ran by Malcolm Jennings, the Chairman of the ACCS. The second walk was the Fungi Walk which was held in October and was run by Jane McLaughlin also from the ACCS. Both walks were popular with those attending. Ernie Thomason, the Park Ranger formerly based at Selsdon Wood, was unable to host any council backed walks in 2010. However, we have been able to get him to lead a number of walks in 2011 for which we are very grateful.

During the latter half of the year, there was a project to erect 50 **new wooden signs** in the woods. This project was funded by the London Tree and Woodland Grant Scheme and the Selsdon Residents Association. It was completed ahead of time due to the enthusiasm and hard work of both Ted Forsyth and David Malins (assisted by both John Zareba and Rob Turley) with Linda Lee efficiently overseeing the essential paperwork.

In September, we held our third **Friends of Selsdon Wood Open Day**. There were 12 stall holders including the RSPB, the Croydon Bee Keepers, the Croydon National Trust, the Croydon BTCV and the Downlands Project. There were also new stall holders including a local potter. The attendance was around 400 people, slightly higher than last year. The 66 Squadron Cadets attended this year and their help was much appreciated. The Open Day Photo Competition was a great

success. Special thanks should go to Heather Govier for organising this.

The new **coppicing season** started again in the Autumn. Ted Forsyth, with the help of David Malins, has continued to co-ordinate the planning of the work days. Ted has sent out regular workday updates. David has maintained a work log and liaised with the council and other organisations to ensure any relevant matters are dealt with satisfactorily. A deer fence was erected around the coppice area in February 2010. However, the theft, in November, of the majority of our tools from their storage area in the visitor's centre has shocked and saddened members. The tools were insured through the BTCV so a claim is currently being sent to the insurance company and hopefully, the tools will be replaced in the New Year. Meanwhile, we have asked the council to investigate the loss and report back to us.

The **Forum website** has not had a great deal of activity this year but please continue to visit the site and update your comments. Our Vice-Chairman has set up a **Facebook page** for the Friends of Selsdon Wood this year. Please feel free to register if you a Facebook user and to post entries on the wall.

The group was recently successful in being granted **gift aid status** and our membership form will be updated to include this.

In June 2011, the Selsdon Wood will celebrate its **75th Anniversary** of opening to the public and the Friends are planning to celebrate this. I hope our members will send me ideas of how we could do this and so use the opportunity to further promote the wood to the public.

As Chairman, I would like to thank our members for all their hard work on all the projects mentioned, which has made the past year such a success. Rob Turley (Vice - Chairman) will continue to act as editor of our newsletter "Leafletter" and is always eager for more articles and photos. He will also manage both the Forum site and monitor our Facebook page. Linda Morris (Secretary) will deal with the meeting minutes and issue them to those members without email and provide valuable help with the organisation of the Open Day including liaison with the stall holders. The Treasurer, Linda Lee will continue to deal with all financial matters and will also be responsible for keeping the membership list up-to-date. As mentioned above, David Malins will continue to act as our Promotion & Project officer and Ted Forsyth as our Work Day Co-Ordinator.

I hope that in 2011 further offers of support will come forward from other members to help those who have worked so hard in 2010 to make a difference in the Selsdon Wood for the benefit of local people and other visitors.

Dawn Gibbons January 2011

Friends of Selsdon Wood

Treasurer's Report for the 2010 Financial year (1st January to 31st Dec)

In financial terms, 2010 saw key developments for Friends of Selsdon Wood (FSW). In November, HM Revenue & Customs accepted FSW as a charity for tax purposes, enabling the group to claim Gift Aid backdated with effect from 1 February 2008. We will ask members to complete Gift Aid Declarations where applicable so that we can claim Gift Aid on past and future subscriptions and donations.

During the year, FSW successfully applied for a grant of £500 from the Forestry Commission's London Tree and Woodland Grant Scheme to be used to buy and install new path and area signs within the wood. The grant had to be matched in kind by FSW volunteers. Selsdon Residents Association generously also provided £500 to enable us to complete the work of installing more than 50 new signs.

Croydon Council's Nature Conservation Grant provided Friends of Selsdon Wood with £498.80 to cover the cost of tools and insurance during 2010. Sadly, the recent theft of many tools from the double-locked storage area means we have had to claim on the tools insurance. We paid for the replacement of a drill which belonged personally to a member and which was also stolen along with the FSW tools but would not have been covered by our insurance.

The Open Day in September realised a profit of £147.82. Friends of Selsdon Wood currently has 53 paid-up memberships (many of them family memberships) plus three honorary members. The subscription income of £215 in 2010 indicates 43 members. This is explained by the fact that some members joined FSW in the latter part of 2009 and were credited with a 2010 subscription.

Significant items of expenditure during the year included a new gazebo for the Open Day (£96.94) and the cost of 250 new membership leaflets (£115). Total income for the year, including the grants, was £2,006.62. Total expenditure, including £1,075.40 on the new woodland signs, was £1,781.76.

The surplus of income over expenditure in 2010 was £224.84. This sum, together with the credit balance of £541.02 at the start of the year, means FSW had a credit bank balance of £765.86 as of 31st December 2010.

Some of this is already committed. A sum of £144.94 is in process of being paid to cover the cost of urgently needed new tools to replace immediately some of those stolen at the end of the year. This will leave FSW with a credit balance of £620.92 to start the new financial year. In a time of recession we need to maintain sufficient funds to cover essentials such as insurance cover, should grants not be available to reimburse these costs.

FRIENDS OF SELSDON WOOD

Annual Accounts 2010 (1st January 2010 - 31st December 2010)

	£		£
	Income		Expenditure
Grants		Insurance	240.63 See note
<i>London Tree&Woodland Grant Scheme</i>	500.00	Tools	119.18
<i>Selsdon Residents Association</i>	500.00	250 m'ship leaflets	115.00
<i>Nature Conservation Grant</i>	498.80	Postage	20.59
Total Grants	<u>1,498.80</u>	Stationery	24.05
Subs	215.00	ACCS membership	5.00
Donations	145.00	Gazebo	96.94
Open Day Profit	147.82	Room hire	40.00
		Signs from Leeway	1,075.40
		Drill replacement	44.99
Total Income	<u>2,006.62</u>	Total Expenditure	<u>1,781.78</u>
Surplus of Income over Expenditure :			224.84

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2010

	£	£
	2009	2010
Balance at start of year	109.22	541.02
Plus income during year	<u>1,058.60</u>	<u>2,006.62</u>
Total cash	1,167.82	2,547.64
Less expenditure during year	<u>669.80</u>	<u>1,781.78</u>
Balance at end of year	541.02	765.86
End of Year Barclays Bank Account Balance		765.86

Note : Public Liability Insurance 190.63 + Tools Insurance 50.00

Re item 6 in the minutes - **The Constitution of the Friends of Selsdon Wood**

- **Name of the group**

The group shall be called The Friends of Selsdon Wood.

- **Aims of the group**

The chief aims and activities of the group shall be in consultation with and with the approval of, the London Borough of Croydon on behalf of the National Trust.

2.1 To ensure that Selsdon Wood is maintained:

a) for the benefit of the flora and fauna so that no one species shall threaten the survival of another and;

b) for the enjoyment and well being of the public

2.2 To carry out programmes of practical work, especially sustainable conservation and restoration work.

2.3 Educate volunteers of all ages in the principles and practices of nature conservation and encourage the public interest in Selsdon Wood.

2.4 Act as a forum for discussion on issues that may affect the aims and activities.

2.5 Raise money as necessary for the carrying out of its work.

2.6 The area served shall be Selsdon Wood as contained within the boundaries controlled by the London Borough of Croydon on behalf of the National Trust.

- **Membership**

- Membership shall be open to any person (aged 16 or over) who supports the aims of the group. However, children under 16 can participate in activities if they are supervised by a parent or guardian.

3.2 A person shall be deemed to be a member of the group if they have completed a membership form and paid their annual membership fee.

a. The group shall not refuse any request for membership on the grounds of an applicant's race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation. No member shall be treated less favourably on these grounds.

- **Annual General Meeting**

c. There shall be an open Annual General Meeting of the group at which voting shall be restricted to all members, who have subscribed in accordance with section 3.2.

- **The Purpose of the Annual General Meeting**

b. The AGM shall elect a management committee to administer the activities of the group consisting of a Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer and any other officers which the meeting shall consider desirable

c. Receive a report from the Chair of the Committee on the activities of the group over the

previous year.

- d. Advise the members of any changes or additions to the management plan for achieving the aims of the group as set out in section 2.
- e. Conduct any other business that it considers necessary to further the aims of the group.
- f. Receive annual accounts from the Treasurer and review the annual membership fee.

- **Summoning and Conduct of the Annual General Meeting**

- The Committee shall be responsible for arranging the time and venue of the meeting.
- 6.2 The Secretary shall notify the group 4 weeks in advance of the time and venue and request nominations from the members, which must be seconded by another subscribed member for the officer posts specified in section 5.1.
- a. If elections are necessary for officer or committee posts they shall be conducted by secret ballot.
 - b. All decisions of the meeting shall be by majority voting of members.
 - c. No Annual General Meeting shall conduct the business set out in Section 5 unless it is attended by at least 10 registered members or 60% of the membership.
 - d. In the event of a quorum not being achieved the Management Committee shall convene a Special General Meeting and business will be conducted if a quorum is not achieved on the second occasion.
 - e. The Chair of the group shall preside at the AGM. In his/her absence a committee member agreed by the majority shall preside.

- **The Committee**

- The Committee shall be responsible for the general administration of the group and the enactment of decisions of AGM or Special meetings.

7.2 The committee shall consist of the Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and at least 4 but no more than 6 other members.

7.3 The treasurer shall keep accounts which shall be submitted annually to inspection by a person who shall not be a member of the group but who shall be nominated by the committee.

7.4 The Committee shall ensure that all monies raised for the group are paid into a bank account or building society account. Also ensure that the account is operated on the joint signatures of any two of three officers. One being the Treasurer and the other two being appointed by the Committee for that purpose.

7.5 The Committee shall arrange for all volunteers on work projects to be adequately insured and for adequate insurance for injuries to third parties and damage to property.

7.6 No decisions shall be made by the committee if it is attended by less than 5 members.

7.7 The committee shall decide the duties of each of the Committee members and one member

shall be responsible for keeping a list of and enrolling new member.

- **Special General Meetings**

- Either the Committee or 10 subscribed members writing in notification to the secretary may call a special General Meeting which shall be held within 1 month of such notification.
- The Secretary shall give members 2 weeks notification of the meeting.
- Special general Meetings shall be conducted according to the same regulations governing AGM's.

- **Alterations to the Constitution**

- The constitution shall be altered only by a majority of members voting at an Annual General or Special Meeting.
- The notification of such meetings shall make clear that such a vote is to take place and the proposed alterations set out in full in such notifications.

- **Dissolution of the group**

- The group shall be dissolved only by two thirds majority of the members who attend and vote at an Annual General or Special General Meeting called for the purpose of dissolution.
- If the group is dissolved, all assets shall pass to a registered charity with a nature conservation focus as shall be determined by the meeting.