

Minutes of the FSW committee meeting held on Monday 20th July 2026 @7.45pm at the Forestdale Forum

1. **Present:** David Debenham (Chair), Ted Forsyth (Vice Chair), Linda Morris (Secretary), Karen Hall (Treasurer), Valerie Baldry, Jim Dunning and John Zareba. There were no apologies for absence
2. **Minutes of the last meeting -18.5.26** – agreed.
3. **Matters arising** noted within the following minutes.
4. **Membership and Financial reports** – Noted Treasurer's reports as circulated by KH before the meeting. There were no new members. Current bank balance was £7635 and planned expenditure for the coming year was i.r.o £5670 plus cost of restoration of the Jubilee pond c. £1500-£2000 (see below) and insurance c.£300 (due in Nov). Items on the list would need to be prioritised following this evening's decisions.
5. **Constitution** – The new version as circulated and attached to these minutes took account of the comments made by the committee and the Friends who responded to our request for their views. It was agreed that, as most Friends did not reply, we could assume they were in agreement with all proposals. Therefore, according to the new wording, the new version need not be presented at an SGM but that FSW can act according to its terms from now and then have it formally approved at the next AGM.
6. **Safeguarding Policy** - It was recently realised we seemed to have no written safeguarding policy, so one has been drafted based on the Council's and Guide Association's policies and other research. With the addition of the contact details of the Safeguarding Lead at LBC, this was agreed by the committee. It could be published on the website as it contained no personal information. All Friends would be asked to make themselves aware of this and of our previously given H&S guidance posted there for our working volunteers.
7. **Work sessions** – It was noted that there were reports placed on the website by HG of all recent activity. Grow Wild would be attending again on 11th August to continue water deliveries for Valerie's patches and seat bramble/nettle clearance.
8. **Outstanding jobs** –
 - a. **Bird Boxes and path signs** – JZ had not yet completed the full survey of bird boxes and path signs, but had so far not found any repairs/replacements needed to boxes. The Beech Grove fallen sign would be replaced when there were two people able to do the job together (H&S requirement). Following a request from HG, JD offered to make new signs for the 'cross paths' if JZ could give him a list of where they were needed.
 - b. **Bat boxes and the DMBFS** –Chris Green had confirmed to DD he would be dealing with these now – assisted by Lucinda Offer. There was a discussion as to how often the feeders needed to be filled – especially during the summer - to try to save on the annual expenditure on bird food and taking account of RSPB guidance. It was agreed that current stock should be used up before more ordered and the items and quantities to be bought reconsidered then. It was thought it would not generally be a problem having empty feeders for some days.
 - c. **Seats** – it was noted that the remade Nicola Bailey seat was back in place and the new plaques had been fitted to the Bickerstaff's seat and the Juniper seat – thanks to JD.**Bella memorial** - It was agreed the plaque on 'Heather's seat' at White Squirrel corner could be revised to include mention of Bella as she was such an exemplary dog and had become FSW canine Friend and mascot. JD would liaise with HG about this and deal with the plaque.
9. **Walks** – It was noted that there were reports placed on the website by HG of all recent walks.
10. **Tool store security** - DD reported that the council had required (without seeing the need to make a mutually convenient appointment with FSW to open their locks) immediate full access to the store so, in this instance, the final wiring of the defibrillator could be completed. LM and

DD had written several times to the council about this and the ongoing arrangements they were offering between FSW and the council for easy access but had had no replies.

Following on from previous experience of 'losing' tools when council employees and contractors had open access to the store, FSW needed all their tools to be stored on site as securely as possible to satisfy insurance requirements in the event of any future claims for losses. Tools stored at home were not covered by the FSW insurance (and would need transporting to the wood whenever they were needed, which was impractical).

As it has been impossible to arrange shared access with the council that satisfied our security requirements, it was agreed we should buy a secure metal cabinet for the electrical and other valuable tools etc as suggested by JD at £150 for one narrow one with two vertical compartments - or two singles with different internal configurations to suit both tall and short tool storage. Alternatively, LM suggested a double sized version (Janitor cupboard) – one side for tall tools (*internal height to be checked*) and the other shelved (*alleged weight capacity 45kgs*) for saws etc at about £300.

JD and DD would look at the details of the proposals and how best to rearrange the existing racking in the store to accommodate the cabinet(s). It was agreed the tool stock should be reviewed with the disposal of unwanted/unused items in mind.

11. **Inventory of tools etc** – An updated list of tools (and their replacement value) kept in the store was needed as KH does not have a complete record of tool purchases over the years via the relevant invoices. Tools no longer/ unlikely to be used should be disposed of - The Wilderness and Grow Wild will accept usable bow saws and shears etc.
12. **Council liaison** – a. No response yet to the recent application for PIP grant of £250
b. No positive action regarding the request for repair of Farleigh border gate at Farleigh Border/Old Farleigh Road junction despite our immediate and clear replies to their repeated requests for detailed directions to the location.
13. **Website, email and Facebook** – Noted that HG still maintains the website for us and she still responds to some selsdonwood@gmail.com messages, as do DD and LM. DD has set up a FB page as Chair to give more specific FSW notices e.g. Easyfunding results, work session notices etc
14. **Calendar 2027** – LM has them now but she would prefer a volunteer to deal with them (from their home) so she would seek a Friend's help in the August newsletter. Calendars are available for a minimum donation of £5 plus envelope and postage costs £2.50 (2nd class) and £4 (1st class). It is hoped many will be sold at the Community Event stall in September.

Secretary's note – post-meeting, HG confirmed she still has 50 envelopes and will pass them on.

15. Photo competition – DD would liaise with SB who is still organising this.

16. Bio-diversity Projects –a. Butterfly Bank, Patch plantings & Junipers (VB) – All were doing well with frequent watering during the summer months – although difficult without access to working trollies.

VB had spent about £60 so far on plants from the £200 grant received from the Croydon Beekeepers.

It seemed we had too little help to be able to man a stall at their fair in October.

b. Linden Glade – Flowers were now appearing as a result of plantings there and the water level was being maintained during heatwaves by the slow trickle from the cairn. Animal life has been seen around the pool edge vegetation – including a water (or field?) vole.

SB had passed the video trail camera to DD but the recent hot sun had 'killed' it unfortunately.

Whilst it was interesting to see the videos, the general view at the meeting was that none of us really have the time to peruse the video regularly. Therefore, it was decided not to replace it – for now, at least.

c. Jubilee Pond restoration – The committee discussed to what extent this cracked pond should be repaired- whether to try to ‘improve’ its viability and aesthetics or leave it as it is, simply as a bird and animal ‘watering hole’ with a variable water level and no marginal plantings.

Initial enquires have been made by LM to get an idea of suitable design/ cost of a new liner from the company that did LG as no other local companies seem interested. Ollie (LG fibre glass supplier) has recommended keeping pond shape and configuration as it is but relined with fibreglass – cost c.£1600. This would need quite strenuous preparation work which the current work team were uncertain about committing to do themselves. LM was awaiting news via ACCS, Downlands Trust or the Wilderness about a possible company sponsorship deal for both funds and labour. Veolia might also offer funds and/or labour – LM to enquire.

It was suggested that repairing the pond would be less arduous if it was not lined with fibreglass by Ollie but, instead, we used a suitable basin shaped preformed liner set on a bed of sand. LM would check prices and availability of these to suit the existing shape and size of the pond.

JZ offered plastic tank to use as a temporary ‘home’ for the mud and creatures it contained from the bottom of the existing pond when it was drained.

Any restoration would have to be a new project needing more funds – possibly starting it off with JB’s funeral donations (almost £300 to date). LM would prepare new posters for the display at the Community Event about the project to encourage more donations.

17. Paths and Car Park Projects – It was agreed we should still plan for continuing the **Stones not Mud paths project** this year but are awaiting news from the council as to the availability of more woodchips.

It is hoped DD, JD and JZ might have good health, time and suitable weather to do at least the **main pot hole** in the car park in the latter half of August.

18. Welcome noticeboard - The order has been placed (Cost c. £1600 incl. delivery) whilst the technical detail of the final layout is still awaited. Delivery possibly in August.

19. FSW Stall @ Community Event – 6th September – DD, JZ, TF, KH and LM offered help for erecting (9.15-10.15) and dismantling (16.00-17.00) stall and manning it during the day with specific cover for membership table, information displays, photo competition. and children’s table. LM would update the displays. VB was uncertain about being able to attend but LM would ask via the newsletter if any Friends could offer to help on the day as we would also need someone to lead a walk.

20. Date of next meeting – 28th September@7.45pm