

Friends of Selsdon Wood (FSW)

Working to conserve our wood



Minutes of the Meeting of Friends of Selsdon Wood held on Monday 4th August 2025 at 8.00pm at the Forestdale Forum.

Present: Heather Govier, in the Chair, Ted Forsyth (Vice Chair), Linda Morris (Secretary) and Karen Hall (Treasurer). Other Friends attending were Valerie Baldry, John Bickerstaff, David Debenham, John Zareba, Neale Fox and Jim Dunning

1. **Apologies for absence** - None
2. The **minutes** of the previous meeting were approved, noting that the date of today's meeting was changed from the scheduled 28th July to avoid members' unavoidable absences.

Matter arising not mentioned below – Bird and bat boxes – Heather has not been advised by Steve Budd of any new boxes he has made or erected and Jim confirmed that he is satisfied that the map is currently accurate.

The Budds are moving away from the area and although their move is becoming imminent, Heather said that Steve plans to continue to visit and may still add new boxes in the future. When this occurs, the locations of the boxes will be added to the map and the listing.

3. **a. Membership Report** – Karen confirmed there are currently about 130 paid-up members.
b. Financial Report - The current balance in the bank is £6138 which includes £1400 for three years' Gift Aid (plus interest for late payment by HMRC).
4. **Walks and Work Reports** - Reports of all walks and work sessions are on the website. Special thanks was given to Valerie who addressed 120 girls from Croydon High School about biodiversity in the wood on their visit to the BB on 3rd July. Full details of this school visit are given on the Walks page of the website.
Grow Wild has continued their helpful monthly visits to the wood and will next be attending on 5th August.
5. **Seats** – Jim reported that he has made a replacement for the Nicola Jane Bailey seat from some spare pieces of wood as the original is now rotten and beyond reasonable repair. Over the years, FSW have been unable to contact the relatives of Nicola and so we are unable ask them if they want it replaced. It was agreed it would therefore be appropriate for us to go ahead and replace it with this new one which Jim plans to transport to the wood in three pieces. It will then be fitted together in situ and the old one dismantled. Some of the wood may still be suitable for bird or bat boxes etc. or for refurbishing another seat. Jim was thanked for his work. Linda will ask the Grow Wild team to clear the vegetation around the present seat on their next visit so that the bench can be removed on the next FSW work session and replaced by the new one. Jim will refit the existing plaque to the new bench.
6. **Council Liaison – Trees (and grass-cutting)** – There are many saplings now growing in the fields, presumably due to the lack of any cut last year and the 'no mow May' policy extended through the summer by the Council. Linda agreed to write to the Council about this and to enquire how this was to be managed to prevent the wood encroaching too much into the fields. She will say that we still wish to see the policy of not having major cuts of the fields in the summer is continued in Selsdon Wood apart from the areas we have specifically requested to be cut e.g., field edges (to limit field sizes) and the lower half of Field 1 (to allow it to be a recreational area).

Heather reported that she had met with Alice and the Tree Officer, Greg Kirby and they had explained that the Council were now numbering the trees they felt need to be felled as they are considered a danger to visitors to the wood. Some diseased or dying trees are also scheduled for felling. There is no

large-scale clearance planned like that previously carried out in Vincent Avenue. Details of this meeting are given on the Management page of the website.

Access to meter in our store – We have had several emails asking for access to our storeroom so that the old electricity meter can be replaced with an Automated Meter Reading (AMR) meter. Xabier has confirmed that the Council want the change to be done and so Linda has made the necessary arrangements to allow the installation engineers access to the electricity meter on 4th September (Jim or David will attend in her absence).

Other access to the store – It was agreed that on the rare occasions when the Council need access to the store, for routine maintenance etc., they should continue to make arrangements with FSW to attend with the keys as this has proved to work satisfactorily up to now. Should no FSW member be available, we will fit a combi lock specifically set by FSW for the Council use, together with a gun key padlock and another C lock (which the Council already hold for use on the office and toilets). The ‘Council’ combi lock and gun key padlock will be fitted by FSW in advance of the proposed visit and replaced as soon as possible thereafter to try to avoid any untoward access to our stock. Linda will advise Xabier of this decision if pressed again for the locks all to be changed to Council ones as it is thought that will better safeguard our insurance requirements against theft.

Dripping water heater tap – The hot tap in the office has developed a constant drip. This will be investigated by Neale and referred to the Council for repair if necessary.

7. **Selsdon Community Day – 7th September** – Linda confirmed that Peter Underwood was dealing with this event for the SRA but has so far been unable to obtain local Scouts’ participation re refreshments. He has allocated FSW a stall space for our 4.5x3 m popup gazebo. This should be enough to house 3 trestle tables (in an L- shape around a side and back). One would be for a small display of current /recent projects i.e the Carvings and the Stones not Mud project to inform about those and the associated Just Giving pages.

David has drafted a notice board poster (attached to these minutes) to attract more active volunteers. This will also be displayed at the Community Day together with some general membership information on table 2.

The third of the trestle tables will be allocated to the Photo Competition and calendar sales.

There will be space in the central area of the gazebo for a 4th table for memberships. John Bickerstaff confirmed he will be there to manage that but will need help. John Zareba said he will be available on the day and Linda said she would be spending her time between helping on the FSW stall and the SRA one. Neale said that, despite his impending house move, he and Karen will be there to help put up the gazebo and during the day - as will David and Valerie.

Neale agreed to lead a walk around the carvings trail starting at 1.30pm (possibly another at 3pm if numbers are sufficient to warrant this) but it was thought there was no need for Storytime this year. Linda will prepare an advertisement for this.

It was suggested that as FSW seemed no longer to have a need for the original, white 6x3m gazebo, we should dispose of it. Linda suggested we should perhaps keep it until at least after this year’s event to be sure this was the right decision.

(Secretary’s note on writing these minutes - Perhaps we should know by the event day if we want to keep it or not and, if we do want to dispose of it, we should advertise it for sale then – say at £75 o.n.o / or just £50?)

8. **Projects – a. Entrance name board** – Linda has already obtained agreements from Linda Lee and a friend who also does nature drawings to provide some pictures for the board as we all agree that the silhouettes used on the signs set up by the Council in Selsdon are unsuitable for our project. Neale and Jim advised they were unable to do any more preparatory work on this. As a draft should be sent to the manufacturer for an updated and more exact quote, Linda agreed to continue with this and present a

proposed complete layout of Linda's and Tina's artwork as soon as possible. Potential subjects for the pictures were suggested as bluebell, owl, badger, fox, deer and butterfly. It was thought a bat may not have enough contrast in the drawing against the brown wood background. The wording has already been agreed

b. Butterfly Bank – a QR code link to the BB Plant and Lepidoptera List has now been made and erected by Neale. Valerie was thanked for her hard work, and it was noted there is now a good display of flowers.

Marjoram etc - Valerie drew attention to an article from the Times about planting wildflowers to support the bees and other pollinators as Ted was advising two years ago. She asked if she might supply and plant some more Marjoram and Horseshoe Vetch in the fields as the previous patches she had planted seemed to have taken well. It was agreed that Grow Wild should clear three areas for her to use. She was thanked for ideas and work on this.

c. Linden Glade pool – Heather suggested the surface should be skimmed of the intrusive weed covering. John Zareba agreed to do this. Neale will move the dog water bowl to a spot where it would be easier for newts in it to get out again. It was suggested a wooden ramp or stick be added to the bowl to help too.

It was agreed that it remains ok for a trickle of water to be allowed to run into the pool and Steve Budd has been given access so that he can manage this for us.

d. Wood carvings – The new bench has been greatly admired but it was agreed that a further carving should not be commissioned before next year when the current interest has perhaps waned somewhat. David reported he had tried to add the carvings to Google maps but only two had so far been accepted. Heather said she would prefer only their location to be shown but not their 'identity' – this is how they are represented on the map on the Carvings page of the website. David has also corrected the location of the pool on the Google map.

e. Missing name boards – Boards had fallen from fixings in Langford's Way, Avis Grove and Beech Grove. It was thought they had all been rescued and stored in the vicinity of their tree or in the office/tool store. It was agreed new ones should be made if required to fill any gaps as time permitted.

f. Car park potholes – Neale has been unable to proceed with his plans to repair the pot holes as the car park has been too busy when he was there. FSW would still try to use the bags of tarmac already bought – perhaps with some other help eg Linda will ask a local resident if he could use the materials we have and if he could do the work for free.

g. Stones not mud – David agreed to contact Jewson's to ask if/when they could deliver four tonne bags of ballast at least to the far edge of Field 1 whilst the ground was dry and hard. FSW could then use the trolleys to shift it to the required spots along Vale Border as the muddy patches appear during the winter.

10. AOB – Building on Green Belt and NT land – John Bickerstaff reported he had written to the National Trust about Sir Sadiq Khan's plan to allow building on Green Belt and other protected land. JB had not yet had a reply, but the Chair and Secretary tried to reassure him that these areas e.g. Ashen Grove and Selsdon Wood are protected.

Date of next meeting – 29th September 2025