

Friends of Selsdon Wood

Working to conserve our wood



Minutes of the Committee Meeting of the Friends of Selsdon Wood held on Monday 24th February 2025 at 8.00pm in the Forestdale Forum.

Present: Heather Govier (in the Chair), Ted Forsyth (Vice Chair), Linda Morris (Secretary), Karen Hall (Treasurer), Neale Fox, Valerie Baldry, Jim Dunning and David Debenham

1. Apologies for absence from John Bickerstaff.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 24th November 2024 as archived on the website (accessed by committee only via Events page) were approved as a correct record of that meeting.

3. Matters arising

- FSW Walks and the SRA – Linda confirmed that the programme of events to commemorate 100 years of Selsdon would advertise FSW walks within it.
- Heather reported that her dog and one other seemed to be 'spooked' by Ted's mushroom seat on first seeing it.
- A letter was written to advocate that Selsdon Wood should be included in the designated Area of Natural Beauty (AONB) – Linda has heard no more about this.
- As the official centenary of SW is not until 2035/36, it was agreed there was no immediate rush to plant a commemorative tree, but the idea should be kept in mind and perhaps discussed with the council at an appropriate time. It was felt any solitary tree would need fencing and should be of a substantial size when planted. Enquiries could be made by anyone who saw a suitable nursery or offer e.g. from Woodland Trust etc at any time.

4. Finance – Karen had circulated the recent financial details prior to the meeting. She had reported a current credit of £6987 with proposed / planned expenditure of £3170. Heather had paid in calendar money and some subs and it was agreed that Karen would follow up any subs queries, as Treasurer.

It was agreed FSW should reimburse Neale for the battery chain saw he had bought and that Jim should order the next batch of linseed oil etc for the wood carvings and purchase a new set of shelves, taller than that currently under the window in the store room. Linda asked that it not extend too far into the corner beyond the window as she felt that could impede the space on the walls utilised for the tools now hanging there. The dustbins holding other tools should then still be able to fit under those tools in the corner.

5. Walks and work sessions – Heather reported that Frank Oko had offered to lead the Tree walk. She had accepted this as he seems very knowledgeable. There had been no walks in the winter months. Attempts trace Mario Maculan (another possible walk leader) had been unsuccessful.

Ted reported on the tasks dealt with since the last meeting. All work session reports are posted (with photos if available) on the website.

Thanks were given to David Brown for his recent work on the Jubilee Pond and to John Zareba for repairing the weight arrangement to keep the gate at Farleigh Border closed and for helping Valerie with the fence at the BB.

6. Bird/bat boxes – Jim will add the locations of the bat and bird boxes recently discovered to be missing from his original map and lids will be re-attached to those that seem to have lost their tops.

7. Council Liaison – **a) Alice** seems to be settling in well and is visiting all green sites in Croydon. Linda's understanding from what she had heard through ACCS and other Friends groups volunteers was that she seemed not to want (or have time) to interfere with what each group had done and was continuing to do. We agreed this approach was welcome to us as we only wanted to carry on much as we were. Linda makes contact with Xabier, when necessary, on green matters for SRA and she will do the same for FSW.

b. Toilets - The council are unlikely to redecorate the WCs so it was suggested that perhaps this could be another 'business team event' or a job for DoE volunteers etc in the summer although it was noted the current schedule for those working with us now was due to end by June.

9. Projects –

a. Entrance gate sign – Linda advised that the final version of the signs to be set up around Selsdon by the council was imminent so this should then indicate if there were any motifs from those we could perhaps share. Alternatively

Heather could ask again if the artist who drew the revised owl could do another three – maybe an animal, a bluebell and a tree. It was agreed that the wording should be quite basic with perhaps drawings in corners and alongside the central section e.g.

Welcome to Selsdon Wood

Nature Reserve and Bird Sanctuary

Owned by the National Trust

Leased to and Managed by London Borough of Croydon

Assisted by the Friends of Selsdon Wood

Linda will report back as soon as she has more information from the council.

b. Butterfly Bank – Valerie reported that she was continuing her care for the butterfly bank. Some of the plants are not perennials and she will replace them, and any others that have not survived, in the spring. She said how grateful she was to John for the invaluable help he is giving her with the fence. This is now very effective at keeping dogs and people out.

Thanks were expressed to Valerie for her work.

c. Linden Glade – There is now frog spawn in the pool – and possibly some dragonfly eggs too. It remains to be seen if the outcome is more viable than that for spawn in the Jubilee pond.

Linda suggested LG needed little other than ‘cosmetic interference’ this year (e.g. keeping bramble and ferns in check so neither became too overpowering) as it would be good to see what self-seeded plants appear and how the existing planting grows.

d. Wood carvings – Lorcan had submitted three drawings today of his ideas for new carvings. All three were liked although there was some doubt about the vulnerability of the more delicate features e.g. ears of the fawn. It was agreed that Linda would ask him to provide estimated costs for each and more information about where they would be sited in the wood so we can then decide whether to go ahead with commissioning the work from him and decide which one to have.

e. Stones not Mud project – Kristie Poulton of SES Water visited the wood with Heather on 14th January and to look at the muddy paths. She agreed that it was something they could probably help with. Further contact from them is awaited, presumably from a more ‘technical’ person who can decide what equipment they could use. The paths are too muddy for heavy duty vehicles to access the wood at present so there seems to be no need to chase SES up on this immediately. However, in view of the suggestion by Friends that perhaps the paths need first to be scraped clear of the mud that has built up over the years on top of the original more stony paths, it might be useful to see if they would be able to do this in some places with a mini digger to save the volunteers’ having to do this with shovels. This would need to be done whilst the mud remains soft. The remedial ballast would then have a firmer foundation on which to be laid.

f. Pot Holes in the car park – Neale has purchased 4 bags of tarmac but the bad weather has precluded this being spread. Neale hopes to fill the holes on a weekday when he is available and the weather suitable.

12. AOB - Linda confirmed that Peter Underwood is organising the **SRA Community Picnic and Fun Day event, in conjunction with the Rotary Club on 7th September 2025** as part of the centenary year of the SRA celebrations. The FSW will have a stand there and Linda suggested that the two larger FSW gazebos should be used for our info/membership display and photo competition cover but there will be no white elephants or tombola unless some Friends step forward to run these for us. This will mean collecting all the items and storing them in advance of the event and setting up and manning the stall(s) as Linda will not be doing those things anymore. We could perhaps still offer Storytime and the walk.

It was suggested that we do not need quite so many tables as are currently stored but, with Linda’s knowledge of how our stock of tables were best arranged at such events in the past, it was agreed that none should be thrown out until after this year’s event. Linda has retained a case full of table covers for the FSW display tables.

13. Date of next meeting – AGM at 8pm followed by normal Committee Meeting on 31st March 2025.

This meeting closed at 10.00pm.