

# **FRIENDS of GALLOWS BANK**

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023 in the Sitting Room at the Blue Boar Inn, Mill Street, Ludlow at 7.30 pm**

### **PRESENT:**

David Davies (Chair), Jane Davies (Treasurer), Kate Adams, Trice Astill, Gwynfor and Jan Benjamin, Sarah Gurr Gearing, Christine and Graham Hubbard, Daniel Seal, Brian and Lesley Smart, Alistair Thornley, Deborah Tillsley, Alex Urka+ and Di Lyle (Secretary).

### **APOLOGIES:**

Adrian & Sheila Cobley, Jim Oakley and Laura Skorupa.

### **APPROVAL OF 2022 MINUTES**

The Minutes were agreed as a true record and were approved by majority vote.

Proposed: Dave Davies  
Seconded: Graham Hubbard

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman reported that the extended periods of atrocious weather had prevented the local farmer from carrying out the annual cut of the Bank and clearance of the hay. This will affect the wild flower meadow as the stronger and coarser grasses will overtake the flowers if the grass is not cut. It is recognised that establishing a wild flower area takes time and effort but the area on the Bank has been disappointing so far with only a few flowers germinated this year plus a couple of new species. If the meadow is to be successful, it will need to be more carefully monitored and a more extended period of clearing the area needs to be adopted.

Earlier in the year, almost 100 trees were planted with the help of a team of Friends, 80 of which are showing some good growth. The other 20 trees did not survive, some due to natural causes but, sadly, also because of vandalism which continues to be a problem. With continued maintenance around the base of the surviving trees, these should quickly become established.

Dave Davies has cut back branches and brambles around some of the other larger trees which were overgrowing footpaths as well as some of the bigger weeds around the perimeter of the field.

The Friends is currently in a good financial position having received two grants from Tesco and Veolia (see Treasurer's report). However, in order to keep the Bank properly maintained and accessible, in addition to the future projects outlined below, further funding will be needed.

Dave expressed his special thanks to Brian Smart as well as to members of the Friends who have helped carry out the physical work over the year and those who have kept the information about the Bank up to date.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Treasurer reported there was £6,355.95 in the bank account. Income for the year totalled £2,661 which came from two grants: £561.00 from Veolia and £2,000 from Tesco plus a donation of £100.

Expenditure for the year totalled £2,853.47. This included purchasing 90 trees plus ties (from the grant monies), tree pollarding, a set of kissing gates, insurance renewal and printing the revised leaflet.

The balance as at September 2023 is £6,355.95.

While the Trust's bank balance appears relatively healthy, Dave pointed out that keeping the Bank maintained and accessible costs money and income streams would be needed.

Kate Adams drew attention to Ludlow Town Council's Project Support Grants and agreed to send the application criteria and form to Jane. She pointed out, however, that any applicant needs to show a financial need so it might be best to wait until the bank balance was lower or to apply for a contribution towards a specific and large-scale project.

**Action: Kate to send project Support Grant information to Jane.**

## **ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS: CHAIR, TREASURER AND SECRETARY**

Dave Davies was re-elected as Chair.

Proposed by Kate Adams                      Seconded by Brian Smart.

Jane Davies was re-elected at Treasurer

Proposed by Kate Adams                      Seconded by Lesley Smart

Di Lyle was re-elected as Secretary

Proposed by Kate Adams                      Seconded by Graham Hubbard

All carried unanimously.

## **ANNUAL ELECTION OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

The maximum number of Management Committee members is eight. Including the Chair and Treasurer, there are currently seven members: Brian Smart, Lesley Smart, Heather Price, Trice Astill and Kate Adams, leaving one vacancy.

All current members of the Management Committee were re-elected.

Alex Urka volunteered and was appointed to the Management Committee.

## **FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES**

Dave outlined two major projects: the creation of a sensory space at the top of the Bank which would be fully accessible and the creation of a wetland area towards the bottom of the Bank. Both are long-term projects and will involve considerable and varied work to achieve and will also need funding.

Smaller projects are to clear the growth around the brook culvert. This will need to be done three or four times per month, starting next May or June; to install the kissing gate.

Apart from these specific projects, however, regular ongoing general maintenance continues to be important.

Members will be invited to help with the projects and with the general maintenance either physically or by making a donation for one of the specific projects.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### Oak Trees:

Daniel Seal ask for information about the vandalism to the oak trees earlier this year. Dave explained the situation and that putting up any signage was an invitation for those signs also to be vandalised. It was disappointing, but it was accepted that there is no way to prevent such behaviour.

### Homeless Man:

Dave said that a large tent had appeared some weeks ago, situated towards the top of the bank, hidden beneath some trees and shrubs. Kate said that this was a homeless man. People were aware of him and had offered him shelter but he couldn't cope with being inside. He isn't doing any harm and is being carefully monitored.

### Litter Pick:

Kate is keen to arrange a Litter Pick for the October half-term, suggested date Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October in order to involve school children.

Di said that Shropshire Council had confirmed that all rubbish collected on any Litter Pick goes straight into the incinerator. She suggested that the Litter Pickers should go around in pairs, with one person collecting general rubbish and one collecting bottles, glass and cans. Dave and Jane offered to take these sacks and put them in their household recycling containers.

**Action: Kate to advertise the litter pick on social media.**

**Di to advertise the litter pick as part of the press release following the AGM.**

### Info Event:

Kate suggested holding an Information event about the Bank at Easter. This would give visitors a chance to know more about the Bank, and participate in the forthcoming projects. The event would be accessible for wheelchairs, etc, and would be well signposted.

Dave agreed to locate the design of the original information poster and obtain quotes for a new information board at the main entrance to the bank.

**Action: Dave to obtain quotes for new information board.**

Communications:

Di said she had experienced problems setting up and accessing a new Gallows Bank email address. Alistair Thornley offered his help to try and resolved the problems.

Heavy-duty Mowing:

Because the poor weather conditions over the summer had prevented the local farmer from doing the usual mowing, Dave said it would be necessary to locate pay for a large-scale mower and to have the cuttings taken away.

Kate suggested that, in the meantime, walkers could help by straying off the paths and trampling down the long grass until a cut could be arranged.

**DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The date of the next Annual General Meeting was agreed for Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8.15 pm.