FRIENDS OF MEADOW PARK

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON THE 9th NOVEMBER 2022 AT THE PARISH OFFICE, EAST LEAKE.

Present: Kevin Gibbons (Acting Chairman and Secretary), Andy Denker (Treasurer) plus 7 Committee Members and 3 other Members. Total 12.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Brenda, Neil, Trevor, Ian, Gwen and Keith

2. **Minutes of Annual General Meeting of 13th November 2019 were** ratified by those attending the Meeting.

Matters Arising: None.

Acting Chairman's Report- see item 3.

Secretary's Report -see item 4.

Treasurer's Report - see item 5.

Election of Committee – see item 6.

Forest School, Arboretum and Work Parties Report – see item 7.

Flower Report – see item 8.

Publicity Report – see item 9.

Butterflies Moths and Bee Worlds – see item 10.

Open Forum – see item 11.

Any Other Business – see item 12.

Date Of Next AGM – see item 13.

3. **Acting Chairman's Report (Kevin Gibbons)**

Unfortunately earlier in the year Kevin Shaw resigned as Chairman quoting a "conflict of interest" in connection with the yearly grass cut, this was not ideal, but Kevin has a very busy job as Chairman of the Parish Council. We very much value Kevin's work and help with the FOMP over the years, and I am sure that we will be able to work with Kevin and the Parish Council in more positive ways going forwards as we continue to look after the park that we all love.

We have also lost some key expertise this year as 2 members stood down from the committee. Suzanne has stood down due to other commitments, but hopes to return sometime. Sadly Eric,

who has been a stalwart member of the committee for many years and who was our expert ornithologist has had to stand down due to ill health, their presence and expertise is greatly missed.

As acting Chairman I am currently in the process of assisting the Parish Council put together a tender in connection with our proposed grass cutting plan, which I will bring for discussion at our next normal meeting, as well as working with Paul Phillips and ELPC in the next couple of months whilst we amend our Management Plan.

I have also seen the benefit of attending local meetings and conservation events, such as the East Leake Climate Change Action Group and the recent Rushcliffe Conservation Forum, which are a source of valuable information and new connections.

Going forwards as well as continuing with our day to day maintenance of the park, we also need to be prescient as to how we adapt to climate change and the growing pressures on ecosystems. In our own area we are seeing a lot of housing development taking over former greenfield sites, hence it has never been more important to ensure that the 44 acres of Meadow Park continue to be managed for the refuge and benefit of plants, insects and animals, and that we find new ways to increase the park's biodiversity.

4. **Secretary's Report (Kevin Gibbons)**

Membership is slightly up from 2019 (190 members) to 221 members in 2022, a very good level of membership.

Myself and Brenda set up a stall at the Village Carnival this year and chatted to a lot of people and gained a few new members. Activities like this are always useful, and it would be good to see if we can find more ways of increasing and retaining membership in this coming year.

We get a lot of feedback about the park, on social media ,and face to face, and it's always very positive with people saying how much they love the park, and also thanking us for the hard work we put in……so we must be doing something right!

Meadow Park continues to look wonderful throughout all the seasons and is a great credit to our committee and volunteers who do a really wonderful job. Thankyou everyone!

FRIENDS OF MEADOW PARK – TREASURERS REPORT

YEAR ENDING 31/10/2022

2021/2022 was another exceptional year for FMP financially.

The account for 2021/22 started with a balance carried forward of £2783.72, which was made up of £2287.62 in general funds and £496.10 in Arboretum Sponsorship.

Membership subscriptions have again remained constant over the last year, with the usual new member/non renewal balance. There were several very generous donations during the year, from members and the general village population ranging from £100 to £600, one for replacement trees in the Arboretum and another from Arch Communications, which covered the purchase of a tree celebrating the Queens Platinum along with additional willow trees, the East Leake dog show organisers again gave generously. The exceptional donation of £600 came from 'The Happy Crocodile', a Community Interest Company, the aim of which was to increase the number of children walking to the village schools. Unfortunately they have had to finish their work and have generously decided to donate their remaining funds to FOMP. Membership subscriptions to the year end were £669 along with donations of £1122.88, both amounts going to general funds. There were also very generous donations totalling £205 for the Arboretum sponsorship fund.

Overall income for the year was a total of £1996.88 which along with the opening balance of £2783.72 gave a total of **£4780.60** at the year end.

Expenditure for the year was **£1023.99**. This came from general funds, –£950.31, items ranging wild flower bulbs to safety equipment and refuse sacks–£297.55 from the Arboretum account, for new trees and associated equipment. Unfortunately this year also includes bank charges of £73.68.

With the income for the year being **£4780.60** and the expenditure being **£1023.99** the overall balance of the account as at 31/10/2022 is **£3756.61**

This is allocated as:

General Funds: £3353.06

Arboretum Fund: £403.55

The above totals will be carried forward to the 2022/2023 financial year.

Andy Denker

Treasurer Friends of Meadow Park

31/10/22

Please Note:

1]Outstanding payments to be made from the above in 2022/2023: General funds – Various items to cover the increased security fitted to our store –£143.79. Arboretum fund – soft buckle tree ties –£32

2]The figures above are taken from the unexamined accounts.

3]The accounts will be forwarded to Barry Pashley for Independent Examination.

5. Election Of Committee

As mentioned in the Secretary's report we have lost 3 key committee members, namely Kevin Shaw, Eric Bryson and Suzanne Halfacre.

i) The remaining committee members were all re-elected (including Trevor, Neil and Ian who weren't present at the meeting, but wished to be re-elected).

ii) Election of new committee members
The following 4 co-opted members were elected to be permanent members on the committee:

- Carol Barker
- Conrad Oatey
- Diana Jones
- Mary Mays

- Proposed by Alan, seconded by Mel.

We are delighted to welcome them onto the committee.

iii) Election of New Chairman
Kevin Gibbons was elected as Chairman

- Proposed by Andrew, seconded by Conrad.

iv) Re -election of Treasurer
Andy Denker was re-elected as Treasurer.

- Proposed by Mel, seconded by Alan.

iv) Re -election of Secretary
Kevin Gibbons was re-elected as Secretary.

- Proposed by Mel, seconded by Alan.

The committee therefore for 2022/2023 will be:

Chairman and Secretary: Kevin Gibbons.
Treasurer: Andy Denker.
Publicity: Brenda Lewis.
Elected and co-opted members: Alan Barlow, Neil Hunter, Andrew Sandford, Trevor Jones, Ian Morrissey, Carol Barker, Conrad Oatey, Diana Jones, Mary Mays.

ELPC Representative: Mel Roper.
RBC Representative: Paul Phillips.

7. Forest School,Arboretum and Work Party Report (Andy Denker)

FOREST SCHOOL

Over the last year the Forest school has virtually been back to normal with their regular sessions on Monday during term time. They have also had several all day in the Park sessions. FOMP have assisted where necessary in providing materials for example den building/willow weaving and keeping the area safe.

Lantern Lane Year 6 have also planted a Silver Birch adjacent to the area and will monitor its progress.

There has unfortunately been some vandalism in the area - six of the small seats were removed from their settings and have subsequently been taken away from the area by FOMP, the remaining four will be monitored and a decision on any replacements has been deferred.

The log circle, which is looking tired and worn, will be replaced over the coming year.

ARBORETUM:

Regular inspections have been carried out over the period since the last AGM in 2019 and maintenance carried out where required. Unfortunately there have been some losses over the period, with either excessive water or drought conditions being the probable cause. The Alder, Sweet Chestnut, Downy Birch and Sweet Plum have all died.

The Alder has been replaced but in a different area to give it more chance of survival, also the Juniper has been replaced in the existing space.

Other replacement trees for the ones which have died, a Downy Birch, Sweet Chestnut and Wild Pear will be planted when conditions are suitable.

All remaining trees are doing well.

WORK PARTY

A major thankyou to all those members who took part over the year, we have a very hard working dedicated team of regular volunteers on the workdays and also individuals/pairs/small groups who work on un- scheduled activities.

The Scheduled Activity days covered every month throughout the year. They generally followed the management plan with the flexibility to move along various projects.

Activities included: cutting back of Dogwood, Path/border clearance, Hedge laying, Coppicing, Planting of wild flower plug plants, sowing of wild flower seeds, removing Ragwort, Himalayan Balsam and the regular litter picking.

Total hours worked – 391

The Unscheduled Activity days are carried out throughout the year and covered extra work required as necessary.

Liaise and assist in Forest School, wild flower planting, hedge laying, Coppicing, Path repairs, Arboretum tree inspections, tree planting + watering trees, wild flower count, butterfly count, nest boxes, bulb planting.

Total hours worked– 293

OVERALL TOTAL – 684 HRS AED 9/11/22

8. Flower Report (Gwen Mountain)

In total 126 different types of wild flowers have been seen in Meadow Park from January to November 2022. There was a slight decline in the number of flower species this year compared with the previous year, probably due to the unusually long period of drought and the periods of excessive heat experienced during the summer months.

Yellow rattle continues to spread freely across many areas of Meadow Park, which is good for the general good condition of the meadow as it is semi-parasitic and feeds off the nutrients in the roots of grasses. As it feeds off vigorous grasses, it allows other more delicate native species to grow through.

Cowslips produced a good display in mid spring. Meadowsweet continues to flourish in Hall Field. It was good to see the meadow saxifrage flower again in 2022.

Many of the flowers which appeared in the summer months had a very short flowering period due to the prolonged and extreme heat and rapidly dried out. It is unclear at this stage what impact this may or may not have on next year's flowers. The spring bulbs planted in autumn 2021 did in many cases produce blooms but will take time to establish and we hope that the number of flowers will increase over the coming years. There was also some evidence of the meadow seeds scattered in April of this year producing flowers but the stems and flowers were in the main short and small. It is hoped that the numbers and size of plants will also increase with time.

The rainfall and mild weather throughout October appeared to have encouraged the blooming of a number of native species for a second time. On a very quick survey around Meadow Park on the morning of 1 November over 20 species were in bloom, the most prolific being knapweed with some other flowers being dandelion, daisy, scabious, buttercup, forget-me-not, white nettle, red campion, common mallow and field bindweed to name some of them. Knapweed produces one of the highest nectar sugar content of all meadow plants for insects in the UK. This supports the bees, butterflies, beetles and other pollinating insects and is also provides food for many birds.

The hips, haws, fruits and berries have been plentiful this autumn after the brilliant display of flowers on these trees and shrubs in the spring.

In conclusion, the weather has had a significant impact on the flowers of Meadow Park in 2022 so we shall watch with interest and concern to see what 2023 brings

9. Publicity Report (Brenda Lewis)

I keep the notice boards in the park up to date and send an article once a month to the East Leake Times and the East Leake Local News. Both editors are extremely helpful and give us good publicity.
Jenny Fisher takes very good photos and is rapidly becoming our resident photographer. I think she really makes a difference to the quality and quantity of our output. A number of other members also send photos on a regular basis and overall we get good coverage of what is going on in the park.
Mel Roper takes care of our Facebook pages which are always up to date and interesting.
I send John Ollivere updates for our web pages on the village web site and he adds them for us.

Kevin Gibbons and I set up a stall at the village carnival in June this year on a very windy day. We enlisted several new members and raised awareness of Meadow Park.
We have leaflets advertising Meadow Park/membership forms in the library, Parish Office and Mel's shop.
Altogether for a voluntary operation I think we do a very good job.

10. Butterflies. Moths and Bee Worlds (Kevin Gibbons)

Overall there were a total of 21 species of butterflies recorded in the park, this is a good number. Many thanks to Brian Johnson who made 17 visits into the park to do this. I didn't manage to make as many visits into the park as Brian, but it was clear that the Arboretum, the grassy area above Playfield and the margins on Gibson's field were particularly good strongholds. In terms of day flying moths, the six spot burnet continues to do quite well and I also spotted the chimney sweep moth in Little Meadow.

The butterfly bank above Playfield became somewhat overgrown this year. This was due to the fact that it was originally created with limestone chippings from the old paths that also included soil. The plan is to top it with larger limestone chippings this year to solve this problem, hopefully this area will then become an improved (albeit small) diverse habitat area.

The bee worlds continue to hold a wide diversity of flowering native plants and subsequently support lots of insects. Even the original bee world planted in 2012 has a healthy covering of bedstraw and birds foot trefoil. The bee worlds and wild flower squares would benefit though with a bit of additional spot planting in the early spring.

I plan to continue adding dog violet plants into the park during the winter and spring…hoping that soon we might start to attract some fritillary butterflies…..

Build and they will come!!……..

11. Open Forum (All)

Forest School – Carol

Carol asked if we could involve more children from the other local primary schools in the park. We could possibly set up some guided walks in the park. We could contact Brookside School to see if they would be interested, or the new Millside Primary School (Mel has a contact there)
Next Steps – Kev to put this on our January agenda to discuss and pursue further.

Litter and fires under the railway arch – Alan

Alan asked what the progress was on this.
Next Steps – Kev to follow this up with his GCR contacts.

Russian Vine – Mary

Mary mentioned that the Russian Vine near Bateman Road entrance was spreading again. We discussed ways of keeping it under control. We agreed to avoid using chemicals unless absolutely necessary, but feel we can knock it back using a work party, and also use the Green Climber later in 2023.
Next Steps - Andy to add this job to a work party

Wide mowed grass paths in fields – Alan

Alan and some other members feel that paths are being mown wider than necessary by the Parish team. There are clearly biodiversity and fuel benefits to be gained by only mowing minimal paths.
Next Steps - Kev to discuss this with Paul and the ELPC when the 2023 plan is reviewed and agreed in the New Year.

The diagonal path through Bateman Field – Mary
Mary pointed out that there were a lot of plants growing over the path.
Next Steps - Andy to include this as a work party job in the winter.

The path on the south side of the Arboretum (Mel)
Mel mentioned that the west to east path that runs between the top of Bateman Field and the bottom of the Arboretum is very uneven and has a lot of holes that need filling. Alan pointed out that the original cost of this was met on a 50/50 basis by the County Council and ELPC, AND Conrad pointed out that the general management of the paths is down to ELPC. Alan also mentioned that many years ago when Lesley Bancroft was the ELPC clerk that it was stated that monies would be earmarked for the maintenance of the path in future years.
Next Steps - Kev to raise this issue with ELPC when the plan is discussed.

The path into East Leake from Meadow Park main entrance (Sculpture and millstone) (Carol)
Although this is not part of Meadow Park as such, it is very uneven with tree roots pushing through the tarmac. This path is the responsibility of the County Council, and really needs attention. Mel has already tried to get this repaired as part of the cycle path, but to no avail. Perhaps we can link this issue with the Climate Action Group
Next Steps – Mel to mention it to Matt Barkley.

Planting an orchard in Meadow Park (Kevin Robotham)
Kevin wondered if this was a possibility. We discussed other areas in East Leake where orchard trees are being added in such as at the new estate at the top of Woodgate Road. It was felt that it would be difficult to add a proper orchard into Meadow park, but we could certainly include orchard trees into the proposed idea for Playfield.
Next Steps – Kev to discuss this idea with Paul and ELPC when the new plan is discussed.

Registering FOMP as a charity and setting up Direct Debits for membership (Andrew)
Andrew mentioned that registering the FOMP for charitable status was discussed many years ago and asked if this should still be considered. We also talked about setting up a Direct Debit facility for retaining membership subscriptions. It was generally felt that this would be too much additional work for us, and even though it might mean that some VAT could be recouped, this process can be quite complicated, so at this time unless anyone on the committee wants to take this on we will carry on as we are.

13. Any Other Business?

None

14.Date of next AGM

Wednesday November 8th 2023