

MINUTES OF FPBNR AGM on 22 July 2024 at 6pm at 204 Old Bath Rd, GL53 9EQ

Attendees: Hazel Bolton **HB**, Sharon Lee Sheather **SLS**, Rob Dewey **RD**, Sue King **SK**, Chris Sturgeon **CS**, Janet Wood **JW**, Monica Donnelly **MD**, Morgan Woodland **MW**, Steve Kendal **SKL**, Andy Teague **AT**, Tom Dolman **TD**

We were joined by Steve Mason **SM**, Community Parks Officer, Cheltenham Borough Council

Apologies: Graham King **GK**, Duncan Siret **DS**, Rebecca Boulton **RB**, Ali White **AW**

Minutes of AGM 2023 : Approved. Proposed by **SK**. Seconded by **AT**.

Matters arising : **HB** said that **RB** had no response from her workplace colleagues for IT help for FPBNR. **CS** said he had an inexhaustible supply of railway sleepers and **TD** also said he could provide timber/offcuts. **SK** raised the issue of broken steps at the Old Bath Road exit/access – **SM** of CBC will take this up. **JW** mentioned her satisfaction of the completion of the pedestrian crossings on Old Bath Road.

Treasurer's report: See copy of Accounts 2023 – 2024 previously distributed by HB. Best fundraiser once again was Apple Day raising £360. One £15.00 life membership taken at Apple Day. £2292 cash in the bank. Cheltenham Lottery continues to bring small contributions in. **RD** asked whether we need to try to increase funds to cover increases in insurance, materials, etc? However, he had found cheaper, fuller cover through Markel Insurance (£271)
Treasurer's report approved: Proposed by **CS**, seconded by **AT**.

Group coordinators report: **HB** thanked everyone with special mention of **GK**, **SK**, **RD** and **SLS**. **HB** talked about some of the events that had taken place.

Nearly 300 volunteer hours have been recorded made up of an average of 9 people turning up to Working Parties, taking part in Environment Day at Leckhampton High School, Apple Day, admin – dealing with emails, messages etc, Volunteer Day where over 20 Friends' Groups participated, etc. (**SM** explained how CBC supports these groups, sharing info on how to set up and run a group- the QE2 playing fields were mentioned and it is hoped that FPBNR might assist, eg. with loaning /helping to raise the cost of insurance cover. **SM** said he would hope to have a Volunteers' Page on the Website)

SK mentioned that she still received messages around Giant Hog Weed in the Nature Reserve. **RD**, **SK** and **TD** to get together to sort this. **HB** discussed the issue of litter, fires, antisocial behaviour under the bridge – friends were concerned that the bricks may be crumbling and the safety of the bridge compromised. However, the bridge provides access to 2 schools and is well-used- any work would be expensive and inconvenient. **AT** mentioned the paths leading from the iron bridge becoming impenetrable and this started a discussion about the bridge itself and the area around it – there are very differing views amongst members. **HB** will make contact with Dave Kingscote at Old Pats Club regarding this.

Graham King's Report: In Graham's absence, **SK** read out his report. He mentioned path maintenance, enlarging glades to have diverse habitats, rewilding ethos and woodlands with sunlight, carbon sequestration, regenerative farming, Bat recordings indicating the presence of the Lesser Horseshoe bat, tree management etc. **HB** asked **SK** to thank **GK** for a very interesting report.

Election of Officers:

Group Coordinator: No one came forward but **HB** said she was prepared to continue for another year. **SKL** suggested we introduce a fixed term of say 3 years – there was a discussion about this and a majority of members felt this should be adopted.

RD was happy to continue as Treasurer Proposed by **CS**, seconded by **AT**

Future events: As so many members were away around 21st October, it was eventually decided not to hold an Apple Day this year but to organise a different event, such as Orchard Day in Spring 2025. **SM** will organise a Bat Walk asking for donations, date to be arranged.
AOB: **TD** mentioned the lack of signage on Mead Rd to the Nature Reserve – **SM** to follow up. **CS** mentioned the passing of Gordon Lawrence, who helped set up and run the train on a number of events in the nature reserve. **HB** said it was very sad news.

Meeting closed at 7:35. Date of next meeting to be advised in July / August 2025.