



Friends of the Heath
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held
on Thursday 19th November 2019 at 7.30pm

Due to the restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 epidemic the Annual General Meeting for 2020 was held via Zoom. The meeting was attended by 9 people, six committee members and three ordinary members.

1. Welcome

The format of the meeting was explained by K Griffiths who was acting as Zoom “host”. The “panellists” (i.e. the committee members) would be visible on screen. The attendees would not be visible but could see and hear what was being said and were able to communicate with the panellists using the “chat” facility, and could post questions or comments.

He had prepared a set of polls to cover the motions that were expected, and these would enable participants to vote when the time came.

With the introductory comments completed he passed the meeting back to the secretary to continue with the business of the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr. J McCulloch and D Walton (both members of the committee) and also from Kathleen Richardson, Joy Jones and Sandra Curties.

3. Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting.

The secretary noted that the minutes of the previous AGM, held on 7th November 2019, had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Approval of the minutes was proposed by C Ganczarski and seconded by K Griffiths, and those present were asked to confirm that they were a true record. With no comments made or clarification requested, the on-line poll for participants was activated. There were seven votes in favour and two abstentions, thus the minutes were accepted without amendment.

4. Matters Arising from Minutes of 2019 AGM

There were no matters arising from the previous AGM.

5. Presentation of the Accounts.

The secretary noted that it had not been possible to circulate a copy of the financial statement for 2019-20 prior to the meeting. Based on the position as of 29th July 2020, one month before the end of the FotH financial year, total assets of the group were £10079, almost identical to the figure at the end of the 2018-19 year (£10066).

The bulk of these assets are held in the savings account, with a balance of approximately £9600. These reserves were built up by our predecessor organisation, Nether Knutsford Freeholders Association, and since the formation of Friends of the Heath in 2013 we have endeavoured to largely ring-fence this fund.

It was expected that there would be no significant changes in the last month of the financial year and that the final figures would be similar to those quoted above.

The secretary undertook to circulate the report for 2019-20 to the committee and to all members when it becomes available.

6. Chairman's Report

The chairman, N Johnson, commented that his annual report had been circulated prior to the meeting, and he therefore chose not to read it out. (For convenience a copy is attached to these minutes).

There were two aspects which he wished to add, the first being that Barbara Austin, a long-time committee member and trustee had passed away earlier in the year and he wanted to take the opportunity to express his appreciation of the contribution she had made over the years. He noted also that he had passed on his condolences to Mr H Brooks in relation to the recent death of his father, Randle Brooks.

The second point he made was to comment on how the Heath had flourished this year, as a result of less frequent mowing. J Moore and C Ganczarski both expressed the same view, noting how attractive it has been during the summer. K Griffiths added that we should again encourage Tatton Group and their agents to adopt the ecological mowing regime (proposed by FotH some time ago but never formally acknowledged by Tatton Group) as this would leave some areas un-mown and thus encourage wild flower growth etc.

At this point the vice-chairman, T Stringer, gave a vote of thanks to the chairman. He expressed the thanks of all the committee for the work he had put in over the past year on behalf of Friends of the Heath. The committee know that he is very busy and recognise and appreciate his making time along with numerous other commitments to chair Friends of the Heath. As a committee we were also appreciative of his presence during our discussions with Tatton Group, particularly in the context of the Guiding Principles document, and of his wise counsel which has guided our deliberations.

7. Election of the Committee

The secretary reported that a list of the existing committee members had been circulated to members prior to the meeting, and all had agreed to stand for re-election. The on-line poll for participants was activated and the vote taken. All members were re-elected.

Following the vote the committee now stands as follows:

N Johnson (Chairman)	C Ganczarski
Cllr. Christopher Gray	Kevin Griffiths
Cllr. J McCulloch (Treasurer)	Graham Rigg (Secretary)
T Stringer – (Vice chairman)	

8. Open Forum.

8.1 Funding

The secretary noted that donations for the 2020-21 year are now invited. Our income and expenditure is reasonably well balanced, but this depends upon our members making their annual donation. We ask for a minimum of £6.00 but encourage people to donate a little more if possible. The form to accompany payment to the treasurer was attached to the agenda sent out to all members prior to the meeting.

In response to a question about the nature of our spending, the secretary explained that expenditure is typically £300 - £350 per year, most of which goes on

- (a) Public liability insurance,
- (b) Subscription to Community & Voluntary Services at Cheshire East,
- (c) Subscription to the Open Spaces Society and
- (d) Cost of advertising the AGM in the Knutsford Guardian. This latter would not be needed this year, but the cost of setting up a professional Zoom account plus add-ons would be similar.

8.2 Future events

C Ganczarski noted that at this time of the year we would normally be in a position to draft a calendar of planned events for the forthcoming year, for the website. Because of the general uncertainties brought about by Covid-19 it is unclear which events are likely to take place during 2021.

K Griffiths noted the next event would probably be the Big Garden Birdwatch which generally takes place on the last weekend in January. It isn't clear whether the restrictions due to Covid-19 will have been relaxed sufficiently to allow this to happen, and we will need to await developments.

The Great Race (postponed from September 2020) is now expected to take place in September 2021. Because this event is expected to involve restricting access to certain parts of the Heath for safety reasons it was suggested at the most recent tri-partite Heath Forum meeting that this event could be used as a test case to apply for formal Section 38 permission from the Planning Inspectorate.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.10pm.