

The Friends of Littleheath Woods
Minutes of the Committee Meeting of 6th August 2025 at 42 Farley Road

1) Welcome and Apologies

Present: Ian Leggatt (IL), Jeff Bayton (JB), Brian Flynn (BF), Chris Hyde (CH), Shirley Shepherd (SS)

Apologies: John Gallagher (JG), Peter Underwood (PU), Sean Walsh (SW)

2) Minutes of the Meeting of 9th April 2025

- a) The draft Minutes were agreed.

3) Treasurer's Report and Accounts

- a) CH reported that:
- the current account bank balance stood at £4,734;
 - member subscriptions stood at roughly the same number as last year but were increasingly being paid by bank standing order;
 - there were no costs currently outstanding.

4) Website

- a) The website had been up-dated to show details of the Surrey Community Fair due September 2025.
- b) Details of the Working Party's operations would be up-dated.
ACTION IL.
- c) BF is now listed as the "log management" contact. The availability of log sacks for sale would be confirmed. A new key had been cut for the store padlock and was currently held by CH.
- d) A date and arrangements for a "Fungus Foray" walk, probably in October 2025, had yet to be set and published. SS to contact Jane McLoughlin regarding plans and a date. **ACTION SS**

5) Membership Records

- a) Noted that controls and restrictions to the future circulation of Friends' membership data, including the use of passwords and the "Blind Copy" facility, related to compliance with the Data Protection Act. **ACTION IL and SS**

6) Friends' Membership Recruitment in Croham Valley Road

- a) Noted that fliers had been delivered to all the (circa 150) houses but, to date, no responses or enquiries had been received. The Committee recorded its thanks to PU for undertaking the distribution exercise.

7) Five-Year Plan

- a) Noted that there has been no further developments with regard to confirmation (or rejection) of the Plan as submitted. CH to monitor the position. **ACTION CH**

8) Attendance at Selsdon Community Fair – 7th September 2025

- a) The Committee's expectation was that a 4m square gazebo could be borrowed from TCV; **ACTION PU**
- b) This being the case, construction of a gazebo would not be pursued.
- c) FoLW had suggested that a suitable site for a stand would be next to that of the Friends of Selsdon Woods, close to the entrance to the event, but any level site would be acceptable; **ACTION PU**
- d) It was expected that the formal "Opening Time" would be noon, so that a team (initially comprising IL, CH, BF and JB) would need to be on site from 11am to erect the stand, comprising the gazebo, notice boards, table and chairs, leaflets and other publicity material including a "Quiz", plus a sample sack of logs; **ACTION: IL, CH, BF, JB**
- e) Provision should be made to take orders for logs but not to receive payment until delivery;
- f) Further discussion of the day's activities and attendance could be undertaken at intervening Working Parties!

9) Bird, Bat and Fauna Surveys

- a) Noted that Steven and Ruth Budd regularly post bat survey data on the Selsdon Wood website. IL to contact them regarding extension of this activity to Littleheath Woods. **ACTION IL**
- b) SS would be continuing use of the "Merlin" App in the woods and maintained records of her results. She would contact Lucinda Offer to participate in surveys on a regular basis. **ACTION SS**
- c) Monitoring of the presence of other wildlife on the Woods would continue.

10) Grass Cutting in Fallen Oak Field and Clears Croft

- a) Noted that no cutting had occurred in 2025 to date but a cut is expected this Autumn, subject to weather conditions. CH was in contact with Council staff. **ACTION CH**

11) Replenishment and Sale of Log Stocks

- a) Following the actions prescribed in the Minutes of 9th April:
 - i) The moisture meter had not been located and might have to be replaced;
 - ii) Other prescribed activities would continue on Mickey Wheeler's return to the Working Party, including location, or replacement, of the moisture meter and its retention by BF;
 - iii) Noted that "Training" was with reference to the general management of the sacks of logs.
ACTION CH and BF

- b) Noted that 20 sacks had already been sold at the 2025 price of £7.50 a sack. Stocks amounted to circa 60 sacks in place plus further supplies expected from the recently fallen oak outside SW's garden;
- c) All stocks were now retained in the Store at SW's. Sacks of red chestnut wood, liable to "spit", were labelled with a red tag;
- d) Brian Stone had retained detailed notes of purchasers in previous years. Agreed that CH retrieve these from BF and interpret them sufficiently to contact former customers with an up-date on 2025 prices and availability. The Date Protection considerations of such an operation were noted.

12) Disposal of Dog Waste in the Woods

- a) Noted that the prescribed publicity action had not reduced the level of waste deposits. It was agreed that the next step should be the display of notices warning of the direct hazard to health represented by uncollected deposits, particularly to children. BF and CH would collaborate on the design and location of further notices.

ACTION CH & BF

13) Birthday Celebration "Woodland Walks"

- a) Noted that CH had completed the draft route preparation but the Walks had not taken place in the Spring in anticipation of a low turn-out as a result of the bad weather;
- b) CH and IL would meet on Sunday 31st August to test a trial route, not exceeding 2 hours in duration, including stoppages for descriptions and questions;
- c) Possible dates for publicity would be Saturday 20th and ~~Sunday 21st September~~, comprising two walks each day starting at 10am (CH) and 2pm (IL);
- d) Although participation would be free, ticketing would be arranged through the EventBrite website to monitor and limit numbers;
- e) Publicity would be arranged via the FoLW website and SRA Gazette;
- f) The Walk leaders would appreciate being accompanied by other FOLW members, both to monitor the attendees and to support discussion – to be raised at Working Parties;

14) Annual General Meeting: 21st May 2025

- a) The meeting had been completed and is separately minuted. Alice Owusu-Evans had been unable to attend.
- b) Brian Stone's resignation from the Management Committee had been accepted. John Gallagher's regular absence was understood to represent his intention also to resign; the Chairman was authorised to accept this in writing.
- c) These reductions would result in there being 3 Officers and 4 Ordinary Members in post, with 2 vacancies for Ordinary Members.

- d) Noted that PU had proposed discussing Committee membership with Lucinda Offer.

ACTION IL & PU

15) 30th Anniversary Celebrations

- a) The “History of the FoLW” Gazette article had been provided to PU for potential entry in a future issue of the “Inside Croydon” publication. **ACTION PU;**
- b) A copy of the photograph of the original Working Party had been provided to PU to support such an article;
- c) In anticipation of extreme weather conditions likely to apply in July, the Open Air event previously scheduled had been cancelled.

16) Working Party Items

- a) IL reported that he would not be renewing his First Aid Training Certificate. Noted that CH and JB had current certification and were usually present at weekly Working Party sessions. However, Cyril Watmore had declared his intention not to renew his personal First Aid training Certificate, which would potentially invalidate his certification as a ‘Chain Saw User’. CH & BF were asked to investigate this position with regard to the Friends’ insurance policies and Health & Safety Regulations.
ACTION CH & BF

- b) Noted that the “Fire Site” warning sign erected in Beech Glade had been removed by unknown persons. Given the continuation of the dry weather spell, it was agreed the sign be replaced. **ACTION CH**

- c) Noted that a wasp’s nest in the equipment storage shed in Sean Walsh’s garden had been removed at a cost of £5;

- d) BF asserted that a second strimmer/brush-cutter was needed. A new item could cost over £700, but he had equipment available which, if refurbished, could serve. Agreed that BF pursue this option, including purchase of a suitable blade. Storage facilities (either at his home or in the shed) would need to be determined on acquisition.
ACTION BF/CH

- e) JB referred members to the loss of two stone fruit trees in the orchard (Victoria plum and Damson) and proposed that:

- The two dead trees be removed but their former locations marked in case of retained soil infection;
- They be replaced nearby with two pear trees – a Concorde and a Comice (which cross-pollenate) – to avoid cross-infection and improve variety in the stock;

- The new trees would incorporate a semi-dwarfing rootstock to restrict growth to a maximum circa 12' in height for management purposes, similar to the apples on site;
- Re-planting would occur this Autumn, at a budgeted cost circa £120.

This development was agreed for implementation. **ACTION JB,BF**

It was also Noted that the newly planted “Scrumptious” apple was thriving and had produced a small crop of fruit this year.

- f) Noted that hazel coppicing would be resumed this Autumn.
- g) IL reported that the offer of delivery of a quantity of wood chip mulch by Croydon Council for use around Selsdon had been discussed at the recent ACCS meeting but, in view of the lack of detail concerning its delivery and usability, the offer had been declined.
- h) Noted the proliferation of “*Red Bartsia*”, an annual weed similar in its effect to Yellow Rattle in weakening grass growth, in the fields this year, as well as the incursion of wild parsnip, the sap of which is a skin irritant.

17 Potential Development at Ashen Grove

- a) IL reported that the site had been sold at initial auction for over £100,000. However, subsequent surveys had identified up to 15 active badger setts on the site and that the woodland was subject to a “blanket “ preservation order by Croydon Council;
- b) It was understood that the site would be re-offered for auction with a reserve price of **C£150,000 but was unsold.**
- c) IL and PU would report further developments of interest.

18 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 23rd October.

Members thanked SS for here hospitality. The meeting closed at 20.50. JB