

Minutes of the 28th Annual General Meeting of
THE FRIENDS OF LITTLEHEATH WOODS
St John's Church, Selsdon, Garden Room Suite
Wednesday 21st May 2025 at 8.00pm

Those Present:

Jeff & Valerie Bayton, Sheila Childs, Brian Flynn, Peter Hall, Chris & Adrian Hyde, Ian & Kathy Leggatt, Ewald Schroder, Shirley Shepherd, Linda Sinclair, Graham Meadows, Richard Morley-Smith, Brian Stone, Chris Struthers, Martin Taylor, Peter Underwood, Councillor Robert Ward, Stephen Wright.

Apologies for Absence:

Lucinda Offer, Alice Owusu-Evans (Croydon Council), Keith Sinclair, Sean Walsh, Cyril Watmore, Mickey Wheeler.

Item 1: Welcome

Chairman Ian Leggatt thanked all those present for coming, reminding them that this was the Friends' 30th Anniversary but only its 28th AGM, as a result of the intervention of Covid.

Item 2: Minutes of the AGM of 22nd May 2024

The adoption of the Minutes of the 2024 AGM was proposed by Martin Taylor, seconded by Adrian Hyde and agreed by general vote.

Item 3: Matters Arising

- a) The proposed article for the "Inside Croydon" magazine under preparation by Peter Underwood would now include a celebration of the Friends' 30th Anniversary;
- b) Noted that the condition of woodland paths was a regular item for review by the Committee and Working Party activity but it remained a current policy not to introduce tarmac or paving. Charcoal had been laid where the accumulation of surface water was a particular occurrence;
- c) Although surveys of flora and fungi continued, no formal provision had been made for ground-based fauna; candidates with relevant expertise would be welcomed. Data on the presence of birds is being collected during 2025.
- d) The latest iteration of the "5 Year Management Plan" to 2028 was approved by the relevant Croydon Council staff (who have been subject to recent changes of personnel) at the beginning of 2025.

Item 4: Chairman's Report

The Chairman drew attention to his 2024/25 Newsletter which accompanied the invitation to the AGM. While it was proposed to maintain the household membership at £5, he encouraged benefactors to use "**Easyfundraising**" to support the Friends with donations.

Item 5: Treasurer's Report

Chris Hyde distributed copies of the "End of Year Summary" of the Accounts for 2024/25 (which had been confirmed by Reviewer Marc Stas) and showed a bank balance carried forward of £4,211, down by £890 from the 2023/24 value. She advised that:

- a) Subscriptions remained at a similar level to the previous year;
- b) Annual donations from product sales have reduced between years (from £900 to £500) as log stocks have been exhausted;
- c) Donations via **EasyFundraising** remain a useful option to be encouraged;
- d) Equipment and training expenses relate to the acquisition of another battery-operated chain saw and training for its operator;
- e) Some replacement of tools will be necessary in 2025;
- f) The Committee wished to thank the Reviewer for his confirmation of the Accounts.

The report was proposed by Kathy Leggatt, seconded by Peter Underwood and accepted by general vote.

Item 6: Constitution and Election of Committee Members

- a) The Chairman reported that long-standing member Brian Stone would be standing down from the Committee (and also the Working Party) after this meeting and recorded his thanks for his long service. Since joining the Working Party membership in February 1999, Brian has instigated and led the installation of most of the bench seating in the Woods, became the first certified chainsaw operator and managed the programme of converting fallen trees into logs for sale – a valuable source of income to the Friends. He was also the instructor for the safe use of tools.
- b) The remaining members of the Committee were all willing to continue as follows:

Chairman – Ian Leggatt	Member – Brian Flynn
Treasurer – Chris Hyde	Member – John Gallagher
Secretary – Jeff Bayton	Member – Shirley Shepherd
	Member – Peter Underwood
	Member – Sean Walsh

It was suggested to re-elect the current Committee *en bloc*; this was proposed by Richard Morley-Smith, seconded by Adrian Hyde and accepted by general vote.

- c) The Friends' Constitution provides for 3 officers and 6 members, while co-option for specific tasks is also possible. Interested parties should contact the Chairman in the first instance.
- d) As an instance of the impact of Littleheath Woods on the local community, the Chairman mentioned some dates, including:

Year 1493 – first documented mention of "Littleheath Woods"
Year 1932 – first declared an "Open Space" by Croydon Borough
Year 1996 – First FoLW "Working Party" activity.

It is likely that the FoLW is the oldest "Friends" Group in the Borough. Prior to November 1996, Working Parties were held in the Woods on Sundays, but were organised and run by BCTV, as they had both the tools and the experience. Ian Leggatt, Martin Taylor and Graham Meadows were early members of that group.

The first Working Party organised by FoLW was a mid-week event in November 1996, consisting of 5 people (again including Ian Leggatt and, subsequently, Martin Taylor and Graham Meadows) and led by Patricia Crooke, the prime motivator and organiser for the next 20 years. The current Working Party is 15 strong, managed by Chris Hyde, to whom the Committee is very grateful! Between 1996 and 2024 there have been over 1,400 Working Parties, including 50 different members, spending over 40,000 person hours on site.

Item 7: Annual Subscription

The Treasurer reported an increase in the number of subscriptions being paid by Standing Order, simplifying the administration. Retention of the current rate of £5 per household per annum for 2025/26 was proposed by Kathy Leggatt, seconded by Jeff Bayton and accepted by general vote.

Item 8: Reporting of Environmental Damage

A Councillor being present at the meeting, advice was sought from the floor for the appropriate methodology to report local environmental problems, with the specific example of damage to a tree at 22 Rylandes Road, apparently caused by the movement of a skip. Robert Ward spoke to confirm that the mapping of “green space” in Croydon Borough was continuing, including the up-dating of tree locations. In such instances, a report should be filed on the “Love Clean Streets” website for follow up action: an acknowledgement of the report should be received within a fortnight. Such notifications (which could include fly-tipping and animal carcasses requiring removal) would allow the proper processes to be activated, and monitored by Councillors.

Item 9: Close of Meeting

The Chairman thanked all those present for their attendance and directed their attention to the available refreshments. The business meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Please don't forget to add **Easyfundraising** to your computer toolbar to automatically raise funds when you do any online shopping with participating retailers. Create your account at <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk> and nominate “Friends of Littleheath Woods” as your chosen beneficiary.