

The Friends of Therfield Heath and Greens (FOTH)

AGM Tuesday 23 July 2024. The Ballroom, Old Bull Inn, Royston 7.30pm

Attending committee members

Holly Christie (Chair)

Ray Munden (Treasurer)

Ann Smith (Secretary)

Sally Marchant (Membership Secretary)

David Bubbins

Jane Dottridge

Bryony May

Sarah Ramsey

Attending members

Paul Brown

Ruth Brown

Marguerita Derman

Mike Dottridge

Ian Hirst

Val Hirst

Ann Keep

Nick Keep (chair of conservators)

Robert Law (conservator)

Angela Louch

Joan Munden

Mike Wright

Pam Wright

Apologies for absence

Richard Clayton, Philip Mayne, Lyn Ross, Janet Rossignol-Bubbins, Jessica Stewart.

Welcome and Introduction by the Chair. (The Agenda had previously been circulated by email and 1 paper copy as requested.)

Holly welcomed everyone to the AGM. The Old Bull Inn was thanked for providing the Ballroom without charge. The Friends paid for tea, coffee and orange squash to be provided and attendees were asked to help themselves. Extra paper copies of the report were available if people requested one. The committee members were asked to identify themselves by raising their hands. Holly encouraged questions throughout the proceedings.

Apologies and Quorum.

5 Apologies were received by email. 21 members, including the committee, attended, meeting the quorum of 11.

Approval of minutes from the 2023 AGM (previously circulated by email and 1 paper copy as requested.)

The minutes were approved by Mike Dottridge, seconded by Val Hirst.

Chair's report (previously circulated by email and paper)

Holly commented on some of the activities listed in her report. Holly thanked Claire Beale who led the flower walk. Ray Munden organised the summer photography session which was a learning opportunity. Member and artist Joan Munden was thanked for organising the En Plein Air Art Sessions. Some of these now take place away from the main Heath. This year saw a new location for the artists at South Farm and in August the location is on Therfield Green for the first time. The merger with Royston Wildlife Group gave an opportunity to engage with a wider Royston Community. The annual Bat Walk on the Heath is always a favourite event. Holly reported great feedback from participants of Yoga on the Heath in partnership with Aline. Despite the chilly weather, local families came out to take part in the Egg Hunt. £300 was raised that afternoon with the help of sponsors Tesco and Ensum Brown. The Friends were ably assisted by the Royston Army Cadet Force for the first time by conducting a litter pick prior to the egg hunt and re-hiding eggs throughout the Hunt. The annual Quiz was successful and the raffle was supported by donations of prizes from local companies. Holly especially thanked our members who also donated raffle prizes. Another first this year was a fundraising meal at the Thai Rack restaurant in Royston, thanks to Ray Munden for his idea and organising the evening. As always the litter pick takes place monthly, organised by Dave Bubbins, and regularly supported by our members.

Holly then looked at the year ahead. Holly is standing down and assured everyone that The Friends committee will continue to organise activities, fundraise and engage with the local community. The money raised will go to the conservators as and when needed for different projects.

Member Angela Louch queried why the Friends presentation to the Therfield WI was cancelled. Ann Smith replied that at the time one of the presenters, Cat the ranger, had left her position and the other presenter, Holly was travelling abroad and wouldn't know of the situation until she returned just before the date in question. Ann took the decision to cancel the talk, leaving time for the WI to arrange for another speaker, rather than cancel at the very last minute.

Angela Louch asked what was happening about the vacancy for ranger. Nick Keep answered that although the conservators had advertised the vacancy, they had not been able to employ someone. The Conservators are reconsidering readvertising.

Treasurer's report. (previously circulated by email and paper)

Ray commented on the report which will also be going on the FOTH website. He highlighted the now substantially increased balance which will allow for a larger contribution to be made to the conservators when they need it for a future project. For the first year the money raised from the events was more than the income from members fees. This was due to our members supporting events and the hard work by the committee organising them. We are still waiting for HMRC to refund our Gift Aid money. Ray has contacted HMRC twice but hasn't received a reply yet.

Election of committee members.

As there was only one nomination per vacancy there was no need for any voting to take place.

Nomination for Chairperson, Bryony May. Proposed by Sarah Ramsay, seconded by Jane Dottridge.

Bryony May elected as Chairperson for The Friends of Therfield Heath and Greens.

Nomination for Secretary, Ann Smith. Proposed by Angela Louch, seconded by Dave Bubbins

Ann Smith elected as Secretary for The Friends of Therfield Heath and Greens

Nomination for Committee member, Sarah Ramsey. Proposed by Sally Marchant, seconded by Bryony May.

Sarah Ramsey elected as committee member for The Friends of Therfield Heath and Greens.

AOB

Mike Dottridge asked what the income was for this year - £6,608.38

In reply to Clare Swarbrick's query last year re engagement with wider community, Ann expanded on activities organised or being planned: talks on archaeology, in the

museum, and bats, as a RWG talk, have been arranged enabling those who preferred not to walk across the Heath to still learn about and enjoy those subjects. There is a possibility of an ecologist led walk across the Heath involving residents from the Ivy Farm Estate, opposite the Heath, and FOTH members. The committee are looking into redesigning the FOTH website to make it more engaging and interactive for the user. Sally asked the members present to let us know of websites they enjoy using to give us ideas. Jane suggested the Royston Cave website.

Ray Munden thanked the Old Bull Inn for allowing us to use their premises without charge. He then thanked Holly for her hard work, enthusiasm, high quality of written work and her professionalism that she brought to the position of Chairperson.

Bryony May presented Holly with gifts of flowers, book token and a card from all the committee as a thank you for being Chair.

Holly then expressed her thanks to members and the committee.

Ray reminded everyone about the forthcoming RWG talks and encouraged everyone to support them.

The meeting officially ended at 8pm.

Members socialised in the Ballroom until 8.40pm.