

## Fairfield Association Chair's Report 2020

Covid 19 has made 2019 -20 a difficult year; one in which the trustees have had to take on more of the decision-making. However, difficult circumstances have made it clear that we are a group that works well together and in which individuals pick up and share the load.

Before Covid, the FA enjoyed a number of traditional events: Carol Singing (thanks to Stephen Hoyland who stepped in at the last minute to lead us), Apple Day and Wassailing and the Volunteers Buffet. Lockdown arrived just as plans for the Easter Egg Hunt were being finalised only to be cancelled. Our most optimistic current assessment of when we will be able to hold our next community event is Easter next year.

The Pony Wood footpath was opened by Jon Barry on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2019 and, along with our other footpaths, has been used by many people. Covid 19 has made us very aware of the importance of our footpaths. Most of them were refurbished in 2019 and in the coming year we hope to improve the path between the end of Sunnyside Lane and the Orchard.

Fairfield Nature Reserve has made an important contribution to many people's physical well-being and general enjoyment of life during difficult times. Our paths remained open, passable and litter-free, thanks to the work of our volunteers and the organizing energy of Ian Procter.

Dave Brookes has also reported that The Aldcliffe Road Triangle has been similarly well used:

We have not held an art exhibition or summer fair this year for obvious reasons, but the Triangle has been very well used by people to meet outside, keep fit, play music, and relax.

The play area was closed during lockdown but has since re-opened minus the big swings, which have become unsafe and need to be replaced. The importance of the play area to the community is recorded in a new Fairfield Association video made in collaboration with Lancaster University. Despite the difficulties of social distancing, students managed to make a great film about the Fairfield Association and what it means to the many people who use the area. Thanks to all the students who were involved, all those who took part and particularly to James and Julia McDowell who came up with idea and helped to make it happen. The student video can be seen on our website: [www.fairfieldsassociation.org](http://www.fairfieldsassociation.org)

There will be no Apple Day, Carol Singing or Wassailing this year, however, there will be a Fairfield Association Calendar. Here is how to submit your photographs (if you're quick!) and get your calendars.

Please email your photos to Carole Martin: [carole.martin56@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:carole.martin56@hotmail.co.uk) **by Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September**

The calendars sell very quickly, so to avoid disappointment, you can reserve your copy by contacting Carole Martin by email (see above) or by phone 01524 65994 or 07810 5575189. Please provide your address and contact details so that we can arrange for collection/delivery. As in previous years, the calendars cost £8 and will be available from mid November. **All proceeds go to The Fairfield Association.**

We still continue to work on gaining Local Nature Reserve (LNR) status. We think that the protection provided by being LNR is worth having and we will continue to pursue this goal. Our agreement with Natural England pays us approximately £8,000 each year and a further £1000 for our work with local schools. It is due for renewal in 2021 and, after a recent inspection, we are optimistic that we will be granted a year's extension. We hope to be able to continue extending our agreement with Natural for a maximum of 4 years before the government introduces its new environmental management scheme.

As you will see from the accounts, our finances are currently in good shape. It is also clear that apart from our Natural England Funding, our only revenue stream is Fairfield Friends. I would like to thank all those people who support us in this way and particularly Geoff Oliver who has developed and administers this important source of funding. Fairfield Friends provide us with an important annual revenue stream of around £5000, essential for forward and planning, maintenance work and replacing equipment (currently the big swings!)

Our accounts are always well set out, transparent and clearly explained. I have to thank Jane Parker for this and also for her scrupulous record keeping and attention to the details. I know there will always be a record of where the money went.

The Fairfield Association is a community of volunteers and this makes it impossible to thank all those who contribute to our success. I would however, like to give particular thanks to Julia Salmon who is on the point of moving away from Lancaster. Julia is responsible for the wonderful e-newsletters which cheerily keep us up to date as well as the regular newsletter which is about to come through your door. She also created our colourful signs and is a regular volunteer.

Finally, you are probably wondering why the AGM is so late this year. Sadly, Alan Burton, who oversaw our accounts for many years died this year. Alan was a close friend of some of us and provided advice to us all. We owe him a vote of thanks.