

## Minutes of the Fairfield Association Annual General Meeting held on 20th June 2012 at The Friends Meeting House.

### Present

Clare Austin, David Austin, Mandy Bannon (secretary), Kathy Barton, Sheila Beven, Graham Brandwood, Andrew Brennand (chair), Dave Brookes, Margaret Burtonwood, Helen Easton, Glenys Ferguson, Oliver Fulton, Ruth Haigh (membership secretary), Michael Hallam, Hazel Harrison, Helen Hicks, Lesley Knaggs, F.K Knaggs, Bill Littlejohn, Jane Littlejohn, Steve Longdale, Zee Longdale, Jane Parker (treasurer), Sue Pope, Ian Procter, Mary Ridley, Hilary Short, Mick Short, Jane Stuart, Elaine Weedy

### Apologies

Penelope Andrews, Sarah Dawson, PCSO Cath Elliot, Tony Finn, David Herod, Peg Herod, Helen Hobbs, Amanda Jackson, Rosalind Peel, Anne Rickards, Michael Shepherd, Philip and Susan Turner, Anne Woodfine

### The Minutes for 2011

were accepted with just one amendment to page 2, regarding the last sentence of the top paragraph. This year, we do not want to make a change to the constitution as it might prejudice the field's negotiation.

### Fun Day

It wasn't held last year, as we had Robin Loxam's open garden instead— so people are keen for it this year. To be held on Saturday 7th July, this year's Fun Day will be bigger and better, spreading into the Girls' Grammar School field for children's sports activities and having music all through the afternoon, as well as stalls etc. Andrew had invited people to volunteer for the stalls. Jean asked about the plug requirement as she was supplying the electricity to support the music etc.

### Chair's Report

In his third year of being chairman, Andrew Brennand reported he had received the same strong support and guidance offered in previous years. He thanked all the committee members and trustees for their hard work and everyone who organised, helped out at and attended the highly successful calendar of nine community events.

Noting the opening of FAUNA in December, as the highlight of the year, Andrew said this had been achieved by turning £5,000 of Fairfield Association money into £100,000. He attributed this to Oliver and his helpers' effective bid drafting and our successful fundraising.

Andrew reported that the Cannon Hill Residents Association are disbanding and have kindly agreed to give all their remaining funds of £5000 to the Fairfield Association. (He proposed a vote of thanks to them later in the meeting).

Andrew explained that the acquisition of FAUNA's neighbouring fields is not yet resolved, although progress has been made and we are optimistic about a successful conclusion.

Andrew thanked Sarah Dawson and Ian Mecklenberg who have monitored and maintained the Fairfield playground which continues to be well-used by the community. Andrew reported that the Millennium Orchard also remains well-managed and well-used. A new orchard path has been built to link up with the recently re-opened Towneley Close, successfully campaigned for by Fairfield Secretary Mandy Bannon acting independently of the Association. Tony Finn has been central in forging even stronger links with local schools who are now using the Orchard for educational visits. Andrew thanked the orchard volunteers and gave special thanks to Ian Procter for coordinating the volunteer sessions.

Andrew thanked our Treasurer Jane Parker, for looking after the accounts. Andrew reported continued coverage from the local media and added that communications with members has been ably managed by Ruth Haigh, who maintains our database and coordinates delivery of newsletters and fliers. Finally, Andrew thanked Mick Short and Glenys Ferguson, the chair and secretary of FOG – the FAUNA and Orchard subgroup, who have worked hard to get FAUNA off to the best possible start. *The Chairman's full report is appended.*

### Treasurer's Report

Jane Parker presented Receipts and Payments Account for the Year ended 30<sup>th</sup> April 2012. Total funds amount to £59,995 (compared to £47,553 last year). She pointed out that most of the money was committed and explained how monies were divided between restricted – e.g. grants for specific purposes and unrestricted - general. Jane also provided a detailed breakdown of money spent and raised in the course of

our fundraising activities. She thanked Alan Burton for his support throughout the year in auditing our accounts. *The accounts were accepted without amendment.*

### **Membership Report**

Ruth Haigh reported that our membership had decreased slightly from last year's 146 to 134, but that this was still higher than in 2010. Ruth felt that last year's campaign for the fields had particularly boosted membership last year, so was not over concerned at the slight decrease. We have had 18 new members this year. Ruth invites people to rejoin every year, and the decrease is as a result of people not rejoining. We have 37 people who don't pay membership but are active supporters in other ways.

Andrew reminded us that good membership base does provide a healthy income (£5 per person) and strengthens our position when applying for grants. As membership confers no privileges, we do well to get the members we do. Ian Procter felt that we should be more active in recruiting members, perhaps at Fun Day, and make it more prominent on newsletters. David Austin wondered why people were not joining if they were active in other ways. As he delivers the Civic Society newsletter, he said he'd be happy to deliver our newsletters and invite people to join on the doorstep. Zarena Longdale wondered if the Association was too child-orientated to recruit members with no children like her and her husband. Andrew explained the last "grown-up" event we had tried to organise (wine-tasting) had to be cancelled due to lack of sales of advance tickets. Mick reminded us that we are an environmental charity and that the events we put on are to support that end. Michael Hallam asked about our catchment area and we confirmed our remit is "Lancaster" rather than just the Fairfield area. Elaine wondered if we need to think about rebranding. One attendee suggested that we could strengthen the message that anyone could join. Someone else asked where we stood on the issue of the Freeman's Wood campaign and Andrew explained we are engaged but not "leading the charge".

### **Vote of thanks to Cannon Hill Residents Association**

Andrew proposed a vote of thanks for the Cannon Hill Residents Association – for offering to sign over £5000 to us on their disbandment.

### **Confirmation of Trustees**

It was agreed there would be no change to current trustees. In addition to Andrew, these include Oliver Fulton, Ruth Haigh, Michael Shepherd, Hilary Short, and Mick Short.

### **Election of Officers**

The following were re-elected unopposed:

Chairman: Andrew Brennand

Treasurer: Jane Parker

Membership Secretary: Ruth Haigh

Secretary: Mandy Bannon

General meetings have management committee – and we meet monthly. Trustees meet maybe 3-4 times a year. Everyone is welcome at monthly meetings. There are usually between 9-16 people.

### **Playground Update**

Andrew reported that maintenance and resurfacing is on-going. A fifth plaque has been installed. PCSO Cath Elliot had attended a meeting in March, raising issues to do with vandalism and what the police thought might be insufficient lighting. But the playground lighting has been improved since then, and Cath has emailed to say that vandalism has gone down.

The playground is getting used a great deal. There have only been two items damaged in the last two months which have cost £35 + VAT and £40 +VAT to repair by Ian Mecklenberg.

### **Orchard /FAUNA Update**

Mick Short explained that the FOG committee looks after FAUNA and the orchard. Volunteers deal with both since FAUNA has been completed.

Re: FAUNA – there had been one or two teething problems. Cromwell Road residents have had some issues, which we are working towards resolving. And the Association was trying to deter people from cycling and dog walking without leads. Sheila Beven wondered if signs could be put on the gate at the Cromwell Road entrance. Mick suggested that people don't always notice signs. Oliver asked that if anything was wrong on FAUNA to please let us know before February, so contractors can put it right inside the terms of their contract.

We have had Go Wild events and a bird event may happen in the next week – weather permitting.

Volunteer Sessions – we need more volunteers, especially as we are about to plant 1000 reed seedlings in the wet area and triangular meadow. Richard Storton from RSPB is advising with this. We are working on

building a tool shed near Edenbreck Cottage, where the old pig sties are. We are currently putting in a planning application.

Re: Orchard - David Austin asked about the three quarter circle of fruit bushes in the orchard which are overwhelmed by blackthorn. Mick acknowledged that we have a general blackthorn problem and Ian Procter said they'd pruned it in March, as it has to be done in winter. Mick reiterated Andrew's comments on how Ian has done a terrific job with the volunteers – and Glenys as secretary. We also get about 30 university volunteers about once a term which works very well. Bins are now being emptied in the orchard, since Towneley Close was opened.

### **Fields Update**

Mick Short reported that we are continuing to raise money (Over £100 000 has been raised as pledges) and we are working on applying for Heritage Lottery Fund. We will have an announcement to make soon.

### **Triangle Update**

Dave Brookes explained how a group of residents from the Regent Street Road area had got together to improve a triangle of land, a former boatyard, opposite Aldcliffe stalls, next to the canal. They want to turn the currently derelict land into a public green space. Last month, they asked if they could join the Association as a sub group. We agreed and this week, they had resolved to join us. They will bring new members and will be able to share some of our resources/expertise when it comes to applying for grants etc.

### **AOB**

- i) Kathy Barton informed us about the Incredible Edibles Awards scheme and invited the Association to take part.
- ii) Michael Hallam also mentioned the Charcoal group.
- iii) Mick reminded us about the Cross Bay Walk to take place on 30<sup>th</sup> June which is raising money for the fields.
- iv) Mick thanked Oliver and Dave for all their work on FAUNA.
- v) Mick also thanked Helen who has been emptying bins in the orchard for several years.