

Minutes of the Fairfield Association AGM held on 23 September 2025

The meeting was held in the Music Room at the Storey.

Present (members, *not yet members*)

Andrew Brennand (Chair), *Angela Robertson*, Clio Graham, Dave Brookes, Geoff Oliver, Helena Murphy, Ian Procter, Jane Parker, *Ken Robertson*, Mark Tanner, Michael Sheppard, Mike Stevens, Sharon Diffenthal, *Sheila Bevan*, Steve Bullen, Sue Nieduszynska, Sue Pope (Secretary)

1. Apologies

Adrienne Wallman, Hilary Short, Ian Diffenthal, Mick Short, Robin Jackson, Suzanne Procter

2. Minutes from the last meeting

Accepted

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Chair's report (Andrew)

First off, thanks to everyone for coming to the meeting. It's been a busy and successful year for the Association and I know everyone here tonight has contributed to that success in one way or another. Without our volunteers we can achieve nothing and they have been working tirelessly to improve our estate and organise entertaining things to do there. With the exception of the Wassailing celebration, we have maintained our regular calendar of events and each has been a real thrill to see executed so professionally. From Apple Day in the autumn, through to Carol Singing on Christmas Eve, the Easter Egg Hunt, Fairfield Festival and the Triangle Summer Fair it has been great to see the community coming together to enjoy this very special place we have created together. Special thanks must be extended to Bethany Haughey and Katherine Woodfine for taking on the Easter Egg Hunt and Veronica Dunne for running Apple Day.

Our membership numbers are growing and we now have 401 membership accounts, up 40 from last year. This growth in membership is testament to the new systems that our technology lead Mark Tanner has put in place. It is now easier than ever to manage the communications you receive from the Association and find out about what we are doing, and I know the website he has put together has meant it is much easier to find out what is

happening and read about our successes. The website has had over 11 000 visitors in the last calendar year. Grace Naylor has also been doing sterling work on our social media feeds. There are a number of new projects underway. We have received funding from Avanti West Coast to expand the Fairfield Cycle Hub at the bottom of Wingate Saul Road. We will be installing a second hangar, some bike racks and a tool station in the remaining space. Planning permission has been approved and work should be complete before Christmas. We are also in the process of replacing all the benches in the playground and work there should conclude over the winter. Sue N will tell us about what is happening on the reserve and with the Lucy Brook project amongst others when she gives us her Flora, Fauna and Orchard Group (FFOG) update. There are a couple of other things we hope will come to fruition over the next year. Adrienne will put in a bid for an oral history project and work has commenced on the preliminary stages of a QR code trail where walkers will be able to listen to audio clips describing various locations around the estate.

We have continued to host school visits and thank Tony Finn for his efforts on this front. Sadly, the bureaucracy involved for schools in running trips has increased and weather has also been a challenge, but we hope to continue these visits in the next year with help from Dan Morris from the Lancaster & Heysham School Sports Network who will be bringing primary schools from slightly further afield to enjoy what we have to offer.

As I mentioned previously, the Aldcliffe Triangle ran a successful Summer Fair in August, their first since 2019, and there is, I am happy to report, a band of enthusiastic new volunteers supporting Dave Brookes with the maintenance of the Triangle. From time to time the estate is used by homeless people camping in tents. The Triangle continues to work with the City Council and Lancaster Homeless Action to move the campers on.

There is some work going on behind the scenes to adjust how the Association is governed. We are currently a standard Charity but are seeking to amend our constitution to that of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). CIOs are registered and regulated by the Charity Commission, not by Companies House, and they continue to operate under charity law. This will not affect the day to day running of the charity but will change the liabilities of the trustees. At the moment much of our land is either leased or owned by named individuals and trustees are personally liable for any debts the Association might incur. By changing our legal status to a CIO, which can own land and assets in its own right we are future proofing what we have built together. When the amended constitution is ready this change will be put to a vote of the members.

There are two other important things to mention. Most of you will be aware that we were nominated for the BBC Radio Lancaster Make a Difference Awards earlier this year and ten days ago we were both thrilled and gratified to discover that we had won the prestigious Green Award. I genuinely believe this is not just an acknowledgement of what we have achieved in the last year but in the last thirty years. This award belongs to anyone who has baked a cake, pruned an apple tree, suffered through a meeting, attended an event or made a donation in that time. We couldn't have done it without you. One person who personifies the Stakhanovite spirit of tireless effort in the pursuit of making the Association what it is today is Mick Short who will be standing down as a trustee after thirty years of service. I

can't think of a better place for us to keep this trophy than on Mick's bookshelf. I know he doesn't want a fuss to be made and that is partly the reason he is not here tonight, but I invite everyone to join me in showing our appreciation for the countless hours and selfless devotion Mick has invested in the Association.

5. Treasurer's Report (Jane)

Jane spoke to the [accounts up to 30 April 2025](#) that had been made available on the website in advance. The accounts are subject to an independent examination. New income this year: Skipton Building Society interest £2896 and bike hangar rent £150. The balance includes a substantial legacy of £54 760. Ian Procter asked what was being done with the legacy and it was agreed that since the attempt to purchase new land had faltered due to the owners not responding to multiple enquiries the Association should come up with a "Plan B" as a suitable way to use the Margaret Burtonwood legacy. Huge thanks to Jane for taking care with the accounts and her clear explanations.

6. The Playground update

Covered in the Chair's report. The playground is popular and well used.

7. FFOG update (Sue N)

Sue N spoke to [her report](#) that had been available in advance on the website. She noted Rebekah's commitment in organising our wonderful volunteers. She thanked Sharon and Ian Diffenthal, who have been marking dog waste with biodegradable pink paint. Mark has managed to get Google to say bicycles should be pushed through the Nature Reserve. There are now ten White Park cattle as the five young males have been sent to slaughter. Sue described the national mosquito project and the Lucy Brook wetland project, for which funding has been applied. There is always something happening in the nature reserve, you can see up to date information on the website. Ian Procter said a diversity of hedge width and height is best for wildlife and biodiversity. Andrew expressed thanks for the huge amount of work involved in managing the reserve.

8. Election of trustees and officers

Trustees have a three-year term of office, after which they need to be re-elected. The following were duly elected

office	trustee	proposer	second
Renew trustee	Andrew Brennand	Sue Pope	Jane Parker
Renew trustee	Dave Brookes	Sue Pope	Jane Parker
Renew trustee	Hilary Short	Sue Pope	Jane Parker
Renew trustee	Michael Sheppard	Sue Pope	Jane Parker
Chair	Andrew Brennand	Michael Sheppard	Ian Procter

Secretary	Sue Pope	Andrew Brennand	Jane Parker
Treasurer	Jane Parker*	Andrew Brennand	Sue Pope

* not a trustee

Mick Short has completed 30 years of service to the Fairfield Association and is standing down as a trustee. He will continue to support the Association in whatever way he can.

9. Standing item for notification of third parties of change to trustees

Mick Short needs to be removed from the list of trustees on the Charity Commission website – Sue P to action.

10. AOB

None.

Date of next AGM

22 September 2026.