

## **FRIENDS OF ASTON'S EYOT**

### **Minutes of AGM held on Tuesday 1st November 2011 at the Gladiator's Club**

Present: 26 people attended

Apologies : 3 people sent apologies.

1. The Chairman, Anthony Cheke, gave brief report of the year since the Friends were inaugurated on 26 September 2010.
2. The Treasurer, Laurence Burrell, presented the accounts for the year. He explained that grant income had to be ring-fenced for specific expenditure as a condition of the grants, so the subscriptions were very important for basic running expenses.
3. It was agreed that the subscription should remain the same for the coming year, ie £5 per person, £3 concessions, but that this should be thought of as a minimum. The question of a family subscription was discussed briefly – it was agreed this should be decided by the committee. It was proposed and accepted with all in favour that members may renew their subscription in the run up to an AGM at the current year rate, and would not have to pay anything further if the subscription was raised subsequently at the AGM. This would help encourage the timely paying of subscriptions.
4. Election of the Committee. As there were no further nominations, the nine existing committee members who had agreed to stand again were elected:  
Ruth Ashcroft  
Laurence Burrell  
Anthony Cheke  
Tim Lee  
Claire Malone-Lee  
Thelma Martin  
Kate Pattullo  
Mike Tait  
Greg Webster
5. Claire Malone-Lee appealed for people to help with plant surveying. Expertise was not necessary, but more eyes made it more likely that unusual plants would be spotted. It was agreed she would email members with times and dates of planned sessions.
6. The meeting was then open for general discussion. The following points and queries were made:
  - a) A suggestion was made that the leaflet recently produced should be put on the website
  - b) Jackie Ingram raised the question of the motorbikes which have been recently seen on the Eyot. It was suggested that it would be easier to persuade people not to ride motorbikes there if there was a notice to say that motorbikes (or motor vehicles) were not allowed. It was agreed it would be better if Christ Church added this to a robust “no camping” sign.
  - c) On the question of signs it was agreed that in general it would be better to have Christ Church put up any signs prohibiting particular actions.
  - d) Several members raised the desirability of retaining the wild character of Aston's Eyot. It was agreed that it is as important to say what we will not do as what we will

do; it was confirmed that the plan is to leave most of the site undisturbed.

e) Sarah Wilde raised the importance of planning issues, and in particular that FoAE should object to Oriel College's plans to build housing on the river side of Meadow Lane on their meadow nearer Iffley Village. Although Oriel are only planning one row of houses here, leaving the rest undeveloped for public benefit, it would set a precedent for building on the river side of Meadow Lane which should be resisted. This point met with agreement.

f) Pam Webber and others commented on the greatly improved atmosphere on the Eyot – people feel safer and access is easier now there are paths improving visibility and now the rough sleepers have gone. The Eyot looks more cared for – less neglected.

g) It was reported that the Local Archaeology Project might be interested in Aston's Eyot. Some members felt that no further digging should be done there. It was agreed that at least we might find out whether they were in fact interested and if so what was envisaged.

h) Eka Morgan raised the point that some people may be against noticeboards and signs at the entrances to the Eyot. But they play a very important role in setting the tone for the site. A visitor with Forestry expertise had commented that even if a site is to be left wild and undisturbed, the 3 key elements to get right are welcoming entrances, paths, and rubbish removal.

i) Ruth Ashcroft asked what members thought about the width of the Council mown paths. It was agreed that in general a wide mow was a good thing – it lets people walk side by side in comfort, and knocks the nettles back at the edges to allow smaller plants to flower.

j). There was a vote of thanks for committee members for their work. Individual committee members were thanked for their contributions.