

AGM Minutes 2014

Minutes of the AGM held on Thursday 23rd October at 7.30 pm at the Gladiators Club, Iffley Road, Oxford.

Present: The Committee, Anthony Cheke (Chair) Ruth Ashcroft (Secretary) Laurie Burrell (Treasurer), Claire Malone-Lee (Membership Secretary) Timothy Lee, Penny Bassett, Kate Patullo, Greg Webster, Thelma Martin (Minutes)

In addition, 15 others, of whom a list has been retained, were present .

APOLOGIES were received from Ivan Wright, Amos Clarke, Brigid Newman and Pamela Webber.

MINUTES of the last being, having been circulated, were agreed.

ANNUAL REPORT The Chairman, having welcomed those present to the fifth AGM of FOAE,

and outlined the history of the Eyot and the Friends' involvement with it, presented his annual report,

outlining the work undertaken and activities carried out during the past year. In particular, the success of the Calendar competition was highlighted, as was a flurry of interest in the Eyot prompted by the Chairman's article published in the Oxford Times. The report was supported by a display of photographs curated by Timothy Lee and Penny Bassett.. A copy of the report has been circulated to members. A calendar competition for 2016 was announced.

THE TREASURER'S REPORT was presented by Laurie Burrell, copies of the accounts having been provided for members at the meeting. 2013-14 had been a year without grant funding, but income from subscriptions, donations, the Dog Show and calendar sales provided a surplus of £400, all outgoings having been covered..

SUBSCRIPTIONS The meeting agreed (nem. con.) that subscriptions for the coming year should remain at £5 and £3 for concessions. It was noted with gratitude that many of those entitled to a concessionary subscription in fact paid the larger amount.

Councillor Elise Benjamin offered £200 from Council funds at her disposal to keep costs down if required. She had , in addition, been asked if the Council would consider putting a waste bin at the bottom of Bedford Street.

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE for 2014-15. The committee were all prepared to stand for re-election, with the exception of Kate Patullo, who was standing down through pressure of work. James Martin had volunteered to stand in her place, and, there being nine candidates for nine vacancies, the committee was re-elected without a contest.

FUTURE PLANNING Ruth Ashcroft presented future plans, including the plan to increase greater diversity of plants attractive to pollinators on the Kidneys, and the "Bird Seed" patch on the Eyot intended to produce food sources which will attract more species of farmland birds . A discussion ensued as to whether we would join in a commemorative Poppy planting scheme. It was felt that support and condemnation could be evenly divided, A suggestion was made that white poppies be planted as well, but the native poppy is red and can be placed

on the birdseed patch, where it is found in the seed bank . In answer to a question Claire Malone-Lee confirmed that Heartsease was present in the flower meadow.

An appeal was made for assistance with any future Dog Show event, and a discussion followed concerning its widening as a community event in which FOAE had a part, rather than being the sole organiser. It was a very great deal of work, the burden in the past having been largely shouldered by Kate Patullo, who received the Committee's thanks.

A question about the type of soil led to a short discussion of the history of dumping and capping with local clay soil on different parts of the site.

Ruth Ashcroft also announced the successful application for a grant from the Patsy Wood Trust, a local charity, giving £12,855 for work over three years. . The need for the purchase of a secure, fire and vandal-proof, Armastore shed was explained, and suggestions received on where best to site it and how to conceal or paint it, which the committee were happy to consider. The rest is for the further thinning of the plantation, probably in the coming winter to compensate for the vigorous growth following earlier work, Willow pollarding and Orchard restoration, though dense areas will be left in the latter, and following expert opinion confirming our own view that we have few or no identifiable varieties of fruit, the meeting was assured that it would not be tidied up into a proper orchard, but left wild, with some effort to get more light and space to the better trees. The area was valuable as a food source for birds and mammals and as a habitat for mosses and lichens.

AOB The Chairman announced a protest at Radcliffe Square at 1pm the following Saturday against Badger Culling. A question from the floor concerning deterring badgers from local gardens was answered by Laurie Burrell, who reminded the meeting that Badgers were a protected species, unlike foxes, even though they were predators of hedgehogs, ground nesting birds, and bumblebees. They had been present of the Eyot for only 7 or 8 years, but had multiplied rapidly. They can be discouraged by setting wire netting deep on boundaries, but his considered view was that gardeners would have to live with them.

In response to a question, the Chairman confirmed that there had as yet been no sign of Ash Die-back on the Eyot or in Oxford generally. A sickly-looking tree had probably been affected by drought, as the Cherry next to it displayed similar symptoms

With thanks to all for attending and for their help during the year, the formal meeting closed at 8.25p.m.