



FRIENDS OF THE MEADOWS

**Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 6th November 2024 at 7.00 pm**

**in St Mary's Handbridge Centre,
St Mary's Without-the-Walls, Overleigh Road, Handbridge CH4 7HL**

44 members were present

Apologies: Stephanie Hefferan Greenspace Officer, Sandra Paddison.

1. Minutes of 2024 Meeting

Proposed, seconded and unanimously accepted as a true record.

2. Chair's Report

The Chair, Julie Savory, gave the following report:

Looking after The Meadows

During 2024 we removed and re-sited and reused some metal and wooden tree guards that were no longer required and planted native saplings suitable for the ground conditions (rowan, hawthorn and hazel).

In June, a large patch of Himalayan Balsam from the ditch on the south side of The Meadows was removed. However as seed flows down the river from Himalayan balsam plants up stream, it remains very difficult to prevent its spread.

In March, as part of Keep Britain Tidy fortnight, we took part in a litter pick with the Angling Trust and the Welsh Dee Trust.

We have been supported by a great group of volunteers with working parties taking place on the second Saturday morning of the month. We very much appreciate their input.

Future Plans include planting native wildflower seeds and plugs in the Spring. Species being considered include purple loosestrife, marsh marigold, cuckoo flower, red campion, mallow, cowslip, common knapweed and oxeye daisy.

We liaise with Stephanie Hefferan, the Council's Greenspace officer who

organises contractors for scrub control, grass cutting and restructuring the brambles to help maintain the biodiversity. As a committee we remain concerned about the impact of the loss of grazing in 2015. The willow scrub is continuing to spread and if not addressed the area could become more of a willow fen than a water meadow.

Other activities

Two owl boxes, supplied by the Broxton Barn Owl Trust have now been installed. Five botany walks were held between May and September led by Martyn Stead a very experienced local botanist.

Andy Ingham monitors the comings and goings of the wildlife, especially the birds, that spend time of the Meadows and reports back in each quarterly newsletter which is produced by Rachel Cross with delivery co-ordinated by Ruth Davidson.

We are represented on the Summit of the Dee set up by MP for Chester, Samantha Dixon, which brings together interested parties to discuss problems about water quality and its impact and we continue to nurture links with Chester Zoo who are doing a lot to support and encourage local efforts in our area to support wildlife through their Networks for Nature Project.

Bequest

In the summer we received some unexpected news. Dr Allan Pullin, a former chairman of Chester Civic Trust and a Director of the Cheshire Historic Buildings Trust, left a bequest of £10,000 in his will for Friends of the Meadows. This is such a generous gift and we will ensure it is used to help preserve and enhance the Meadows.

Membership

We currently have a membership of 177 households. Membership costs £5.00 per household and we are very grateful for the additional donations made by Friends which contributes significantly to supporting the various projects and tasks we undertake.

Many thanks to all committee members and volunteers for their respective contributions. In addition to those mentioned above these include: James Holroyd Secretary; Keith Dixon, Treasurer; Richard Cain, Membership Secretary; and newsletter delivery volunteers.

If any members are interested in becoming more actively involved, either as a committee member or by helping out with Meadows maintenance working groups, please do get in touch. Speak to a committee member or send a message to <https://www.friendsofthemeadows.org>

3. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, Keith Dixon, presented the accounts:

FRIENDS OF THE MEADOWS ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30 2024

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Receipts		
Subscriptions/Donations	1,649.00	1,692.00
Bequest and accrued interest	-	10,187.66
Total Receipts	1,649.00	11,879.66
Payments		
Printing Newsletters	545.52	546.19
Post and Packaging	81.64	101.92
Website	100.00	-
Donations	100.00	50.00
Meeting Expenses	48.76	93.79
Room Hire	42.00	54.25
Insurance	100.80	100.80
Tree planting	-	62.00
Total Payments	1,018.72	1,008.95
Surplus of Receipts over Payments	630.28	10,870.71
Balance Brought Forward	5,537.46	6,167.74
Add Surplus for the Year	630.28	10,870.71
Balance Carried Forward	6,167.74	17,038.45

The Receipts and Payments Account for the year 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024, (2023/24) shows that our Bank Balance at Barclays has increased by £10,870.71 to £17,038.45. This is thanks to the very generous bequest from Dr. Allan Pullin in August of £10,000 together with interest of £187.66. The ongoing annual transactions of the Friends are summarised below and resulted in a small surplus of £683.05.

Receipts: Subscriptions and Donations in the year are up about 2.6% and total £1,692.00. Subscriptions have remained at £5 per household although many pay more with the addition being regarded as donations. These total about the same amount as the £5 subscriptions themselves.

Payments: Spending is down slightly on last year at £1,008.95. The biennial costs of the website of £100 have been offset by the cost of tree planting this year.

There were two donations recorded of £50 last year; firstly, to Cheshire Wildlife Trust on behalf of Martyn Stead for his efforts leading the botanical walks; and secondly on behalf of our speaker at the AGM who wanted her expenses donated to Record. The speaker at this year's AGM expenses (£50) are shown as part of the costs of the AGM in the 2023/24 accounts.

There are some committed payments outstanding to meet the costs of installing owl boxes. The generous bequest of Dr Pullin leaves us able to envisage new initiatives as well as ensuring our financial stability.

4. Election of Officers for 2024/2025

The following officers were elected unanimously.

<i>Role</i>	<i>Nominee</i>
Chair	Julie Savory
Secretary	James Holroyd
Treasurer	Keith Dixon
Committee Members	Richard Cain (Membership Secretary) Andy Ingham (Meadows Log/Social Media) Rachel Cross (Newsletter Editor/Website Admin) Ruth Davidson (Newsletter Distribution)

6. Any Other Business

A request was made for volunteers to help with planting of wild flowers and general maintenance of the Meadows.

The business of the Annual General Meeting was concluded and the meeting was followed by a talk by Jim Holmes on: *The River Dee from Source to Sea*