



FRIENDS OF THE MEADOWS

Minutes of the 2025 Annual General Meeting

Held on Thursday 20th of November 2025

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

41 Members were present.

Apologies

Rachel Cross, Stephanie Hefferan (Greenspace Officer)

1. Minutes of 2024 AGM

Proposed, seconded and unanimously accepted as a true record.

2. Chair's Report

The Chair, Julie Savory, gave the following report:

Meadows Working Parties

A key focus of our work has been to get out on to The Meadows and actively take measures to look after and improve the bio diversity to be found there.

Working parties take place on the second Saturday morning of each month and have been supported by a great group of volunteers.

In 2025 our main project was to start planting native wild flowers. We consulted with the Council's Greenspace Officer, Stephanie Hefferan, about suitable species. In early Spring and late Autumn, in various locations, we planted the following plugs and seeds: red campion, ragged robin, primrose, musk mallow, wild carrot, meadow cranesbill, cuckoo flower, selfheal, cowslips, marsh marigolds. Many of the plugs planted have struggled due to the long dry spring and summer and the competing forces of nettles, dense grass and Himalayan balsam but we are hopeful that seeds planted will produce flowers next year. Musk mallow on the mound does seem to have taken successfully and in the Autumn looked a pretty sight alongside the red poppies that have appeared following disturbance of the soil by Severn Trent for the eel screen works.

We planted a rowan tree at the entrance to the Meadows at the end of Bottoms Lane and two hawthorn saplings to fill in a gap in the hedge on Bottoms Lane. We also had a couple of litter picking sessions.

In November we installed six bird boxes on trees on The Meadows and Barnfield. These bird boxes were supplied by Woodwork to Wellness, a charity based in

Saltney which promotes wellbeing through creativity in making things, including bird boxes, from wood.

Management of The Meadows

We work closely with Stephanie Hefferan, the Council's Greenspace officer who organises contractors for scrub control, grass cutting and restructuring the brambles which helps maintain biodiversity.

As a committee we remain concerned about the impact on biodiversity following 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.

Stephanie has been active in liaising with Severn Trent following the installation of the new eel screens. Damaged paths have been resurfaced and the water board mound reprofiled with vegetation beginning to get re-established there which we are supporting by planting wild flower plugs and seeds.

Other activities

Experienced local botanist, Martyn Stead, held a series of five **botany walks** between May and September and Andy Ingham continues to monitor the comings and goings of wildlife, especially the birds which make The Meadows their home or stopover on their migratory journey. These findings are included in the four newsletters which are produced each year by Rachel Cross.

Ruth Davidson attended the **Annual Ceremonial Inspection of the River Dee**, an event hosted by the Lord Mayor bringing together groups and individuals interested in the River Dee.

We are represented on **the Summit of the Dee** set up by MP for the City of Chester, Samantha Dixon, which brings together interested parties (including Welsh Water) to discuss problems about water quality and its impact and have assisted with a survey of water user numbers as part of an application to DEFRA for designated bathing status.

We maintain links with **Chester Zoo** who have been awarded £4 million from the national lottery for the **Networks for Nature Project** which actively supports community groups to look after their green spaces. Rachel and I attended the official launch of the project in July.

Membership

We currently have a membership of 177. Membership costs a minimum of £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. Do get in touch if you have suggestions for actions we could take to preserve and enhance The Meadows.

Join us

Many thanks to all committee members and volunteers for their respective contributions. This includes committee members but also working party volunteers and newsletter delivery volunteers.

If any members are interested in becoming more actively involved, either as a committee member or by helping out with practical tasks such as tree planting

and wild flower planting working groups, please do get in touch. Send a message to <https://www.friendsofthemeadows.org>

3. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, Keth Dixon, outlined the main points in the account which was proposed, seconded and unanimously approved.

FRIENDS OF THE MEADOWS ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30 2025

	2024/25 £	2023/24 £
Receipts		
Subscriptions/Donations	1,888.12	1,692.00
Bequest and accrued interest	30.39	10,187.66
Total Receipts	1,918.51	11,879.66
Payments		
Printing Newsletters	524.52	546.19
Post and Packaging	138.62	101.92
Website	100.00	-
Donations	175.00	50.00
Meeting Expenses	198.91	148.04
Owl Boxes	400.00	-
Insurance	100.80	100.80
Tree and flower Planting	579.08	62.00
Notice Board Maintenance/Other	15.00	-
Total Payments	2,231.93	1,008.95
Surplus/ (deficit) of Receipts over Payments	(313.42)	10,870.71
Balance Brought Forward	17,038.45	6,167.74
Add Surplus/Deduct Deficit for the Year	(313.42)	10,870.71
Balance Carried Forward	16,725.03	17,038.45

The Receipts and Payments Account for the year 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025, (2024/25) shows that our Balance has reduced by £313.42 to £16,725.03.

Receipts. Subscriptions and Donations in the year are up by about £200. Subscriptions have remained at £5 per household although many pay more with the addition being regarded as donations. These total roughly the same amount as the £5 subscriptions themselves.

Payments. Spending is up on last year by about £1,200. This is due to finally paying for the owl boxes £400, about £500 on wild flower plugs and seeds, and the biennial costs of the website of £100. There have also been donations to the charity - Platform for Life, on behalf of our independent inspector of accounts £75; and to the Broxton Barn Owl Group in recognition of their help in erecting the owl boxes £50.

The committee decided to move banks from Barclays, who were unable to provide interest earning bank accounts, to the NatWest Bank paying (2.23%). This was in order to protect the spending power of Dr Pullin's legacy. The Committee also decided to place half the legacy in the West Cheshire Credit Union (WCCU)'s 2025/26 Reserves Account Issue 2, paying 4%, interest payable on 31 March 2026.

The balance is held NatWest Current Account £6,694.64; Deposit Account £5,030.39; and WCCU £5,000.00.

4. Election of Officers

The following officers were elected unanimously:

Chair	Julie Savory
Secretary	James Holroyd
Treasurer	Keith Dixon
Membership Secretary	Richard Cain
Meadows Log/Social media	Andy Ingham
Newsletter Editor	Rachel Cross
/Website Admin	
Newsletter Distribution	Ruth Davidson
Co-ordinator	

5. Any Other Business

5.1 One member wondered whether willows along the river bank could be thinned to afford a better view of the river for those following the river path.

5.2 The Chair made an appeal for members to join the Committee. Volunteers were always needed to help with planting of wild flowers and general maintenance of the Meadows.

The meeting was followed by a talk by Mike Graham on: Thomas Harrison – Architect and Engineer