

**Minutes of the 16th Annual General Meeting of Friends of Anderton and Marbury
Comberbach Memorial Hall
Monday 18 May 2015**

The Chair of FoAM, Mary Jeeves, opened the meeting at 7.30pm and welcomed the attendees.

1. Apologies

The Chair received apologies from Elna Harrison, Clive and Helen Brookes.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Minutes of the 15th AGM held on 19th May 2014 had been posted on FoAM's website. The Chair asked if anyone had any concerns or issues about last year's Minutes. No concerns were raised and the Minutes of the 15th AGM were approved as a true statement.

3. Chair's Report

The following is a transcript of the Chair's verbal report:

The year got off to a good start following the AGM with our now traditional and very successful Quiz and Supper, which we'll get to as quickly as possible.

Last year members and other friends were generous in Bringing and Buying for the Plant Sale (recycling in action). There were also items made by the woodworking volunteers on display. (Hopefully you're all prepared for next weekend's event.)

The weather for the Wildflower Walk at Anderton was drizzly and Breakfast with Moths came after a wet night, but both attracted interest. It was good to see some youngsters amongst those interested in both the moths and the breakfast.

FoAM was pleased to support the first Northwich Pedal Power Festival, which attracted a large number of cyclists in dreadful conditions, with the sun appearing after the event was over.

It was a great shame that on the occasion of the Picnic in the Park a decision had to be made to cancel the event due to the forecast of severe thunder and lightning.

Conditions were more favourable for the Teddy Bears' Picnic, although sitting on the grass was not to be recommended and Marbury Lodge provided a dry seating area. Mr. Bear and his assistant led the Bear Trail and joined in all of the activities with enthusiasm. FoAM's new sound system created greater involvement in the songs and stories.

Perversely September then followed as the driest on record, not the ideal conditions for the Fungal Hunt. Morning and afternoon groups of walkers found more than 60 species of fungi around Marbury Park after much keen-eyed searching in damper areas.

At the end of September, after more than five years, Mark and Lorraine sold their last panini, pancakes, coffee and ice cream at Marbury. FoAM marked the occasion with a presentation.

The Autumn Bird Walks centred on Neumann's and Ashton's Flashes and Haydn's Pool. A misty morning delayed good views, but information on migration habits and song recognition was supplied before conditions improved.

We welcomed Janet and Barbara as the new caterers in the familiar refreshments van on the day of the Autumn Walk in Marbury Park. A bright, sunny Saturday in November kept them very busy and there have been some hectic weekends since. They are also now serving drinks and cakes on Wednesday afternoons as a trial, but success is probably weather dependent.

Cool and windy December weather meant that the new removable side panels for Marbury Lodge were much appreciated for the shelter that they provided at the Christmas Decorations Workshop. About 60 people of all ages joined in making their seasonal trimmings from natural materials and made generous donations for wooden products made by volunteers.

The first event of 2015 was the Bird Walk in Big Wood with walks of different lengths. Unfortunately only one group got a sighting of a bittern in the reed-bed.

The Homes for Wildlife event included nest-box building and a new venture, making bug hotels. Once again the side panels to Marbury Lodge gave much appreciated shelter from the cold wind.

On the same day there was a new event with Liverpool Astronomical Society members bringing their telescopes to share their knowledge of the night sky. The cloud-free skies were ideal for star gazing, but it was bitterly cold. Participants retreated into Anderton Memorial Hall for a break with an informative talk and hot drinks.

Comberbach Memorial Hall was the venue for Clive Brookes' fascinating talk to an audience of about 70 on Marbury's Second World War History following his months of research.

Interest in Marbury's past has continued. FoAM produced a display for Home Front Weekend at Weaver Hall Museum. There have also been guided walks for Northwich Heritage Society, Northwich Air Cadets and a Wheelchair Walk for Leonard Cheshire Home residents. Talks on Marbury's history have been given to the Northwich Branch of Cheshire Family History Society, the Friends of Weaver Hall Museum and Preston Brook and District History Society. These organisations have made donations to FoAM.

In December FoAM provided a display at CWAC's Winnington Community Event giving residents an indication of facilities in the local area.

The display at the first Hearts of Northwich Festival in St Helens Church, Witton showed FoAM's events and projects. The panels were also decorated with a variety of heart shapes crafted by FoAM members from material gathered in Northwich Woodlands.

All the entries in the Photographic Competition were taken in Northwich Woodlands. They were displayed in Comberbach Memorial Hall in March following the judges' assessments. The photos were of a very high standard and have since been displayed in Barnton Library and will next be on show in Northwich Library.

The highlight of the 'Springtime in Marbury Walk' was the display of wood anemones along the banks of Forge Brook. The recent 'Dawn Chorus Walk' attracted about 30 keen bird enthusiasts, who formed three groups to follow experienced leaders. They were all rewarded with bacon butties and hot drinks on their return. It seemed to be even colder when the second groups set off mid-morning.

Thanks to all those who contributed to the running of these events: Greg Baker, Robin Baker, Dave Bedford, Liz Bentham, Martin & Lorraine Brannan, Clive Brookes, Janet & Dave Bullock, Anna & Ian Cooper, Simon Davies, Trevor Davies, Frances Findlay, Alan Garner, John Gilbody, Andy Harmer, Elna Harrison, Sandra & Steve Head, Dave (Fungalpunk) Higginson-Tranter, Paul Hill, Dave James, Jim Jeeves, Nick Jones, Roy & Joyce Kirkpatrick, Mike Lees, Vernon Lundy, Chris Moseley, Alan & Joanne Redley, Graham Walker, Diana Whipp, Steve Wilde and Brenda Yates. Apologies to anyone I've omitted to name; so many volunteers work behind the scenes.

FoAM commissioned Richard Janes to carve an oak bench sculpture for Marbury Lane. It reflects the nature of Northwich Woodlands and the efforts of the volunteers, especially those of FoAM treasurer Ian Booth, who died just over a year ago. The inauguration of the bench will take place later this month, when members of Ian's family hope to attend.

The second island in Haydn's Pool has been enlarged thanks to a generous donation of more than 30 tons of limestone from TATA Chemicals Europe and hours of work by regular and TATA volunteers. Oystercatchers and lapwings have been attempting to breed on the islands, but the camera has shown that badgers are among the guilty predators. Humane deterrents have been purchased in the hope of allowing successful breeding.

FoAM has again purchased seed that was sown on Marbury Lane and Dairy House Meadows to provide food for birds later in the year. We also brought the Woodmizer to the 'Bodge, Chip & Whittle' event to plank up timber from the Woodlands. The wood is used by the woodworking volunteers for a variety of products and at FoAM's 'Homes for Wildlife' event. An information board was created and positioned by the remains of the Ice House, giving information about its original construction

Work has begun on the Heritage Lottery Funded Saltscap Project, although there is little to see on the ground yet of FoAM's Saltscap Trail between the Lion Salt Works and Anderton Boat Lift. Volunteers have cleared the scrub from the route of the new pathway from Ollershaw Lane to Neumann's Flash.

Committee members have been preparing directions for a variety of Walks in Northwich Woodlands. The details of these are beginning to appear on the FoAM website so that they can be downloaded. Copies are also available from the information caravan.

An inauguration ceremony took place at the new Arboretum interpretation panel, which indicates the history of the arboretum and the position of specimen trees. The panel is already attracting many viewers. The project began with the new winding path using paving blocks from the Northwich regeneration work near the library. The carved wooden identification plaques were replaced and an extra one installed to mark a newly planted tree. The project was supported by INEOS Enterprises, through the Landfill Communities Fund. Other contributors included Marbury Ward Councillors, Mersey Forest, FoAM and volunteers working with the Rangers. Such collaboration is what makes Friends of Anderton and Marbury so effective.

4. Treasurer's Report

The following is a transcript of the Treasurer's verbal report:

Net income for the year was £765.09.

A significant amount of the income comes from the sale of charcoal/logs and donations following events and talks given to other organisations.

Events this year showed a deficit of £288.51. The food at last year's AGM was subsidised by FoAM. Generous donations received from some activities, eg. Christmas Decorations Workshop, Homes for Wildlife and the Bring and Buy Plant Sale, partially offset the costs involved in running events.

Subscription income has increased this year and a further four members have taken out life membership. Our three Ward Councillors gave grants of almost £1500 from their Members' Budgets. Wood products made in the workshop, such as cutting/cheese boards and kits for nest boxes, generated income at events and a number of kits were sold to Friends of Little Budworth NP.

The Arboretum Project was supported by local chemicals manufacturer INEOS Enterprises, through the Landfill Communities Fund. Jo Sayers of the Mersey Forest team supported FoAM's application and managed the funding from INEOS. FoAM contributed towards the project, making up the difference between the grant and the actual expenditure incurred.

Two other large projects this year were the shingle island on Haydn's Pool and removable sides for the lodge.

We opened a saving account this year which has already generated a small amount of interest. The Heritage account has remained unused for a number of years and the bank have indicated that they wish to close this account. The £60.16 will be transferred to the current account this coming year and the account will be closed.

A filming company spent a day in the Park last October, filming an advert for NFU Mutual Insurance (yet to be seen on TV). They donated £750, which was equally shared between FoAM and the swimming club.

Overall, we have increased total assets of £26,126.60, of which liabilities/provisions are £6,926.40, leaving us with net assets of £19,200.20.

The finances of FoAM continue to be healthy.

Finally, I would like to thank Steve Penwill for auditing the accounts and keeping me, a novice, on the straight and narrow!

5. Membership Secretary's Report

Membership has been buoyant – with some members leaving but more new people joining.

We need now to consider other ways of collecting subscription renewals, as postage is becoming increasingly expensive.

6. Election of New Chair

The current Chair encouraged members to join the Committee and thanked people for all the support which had been given through her term of office.

Mary then proposed Alan Redley as the next Chair. She also proposed Dave Bullock as Treasurer and Lorraine Brannan as Secretary. None were opposed and all were elected unanimously into the posts.

Alan accepted his appointment and proposed a vote of thanks to Mary for the excellent job she had done as Chair over the past three years.

7. AOB

There was no other business.

The Meeting closed at 7.55pm

Friends of Anderton & Marbury
Treasurers Report, 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015

Income & Expenditure		2014-15		2013-14	
Events and projects:					
	Events				
	Income	861.15		930.03	
	Costs	(1,149.66)		(591.60)	
		-----	(288.51)	-----	338.43
	Projects				
	Wood Mizer	(396.00)		(396.00)	
	Barn Owl Box	(134.02)		0.00	
	Wild flower seed	(168.00)		(445.20)	
	Shingle Island	(1,139.26)		0.00	
	Screens for Lodge	(825.00)		0.00	
	Other projects	(1,237.63)		(1,094.00)	
		-----	(3,899.91)	-----	(1,935.20)
	Other Income:				
	Subscriptions (net)	1,507.00		1,300.00	
	Grants	1,439.47		0.00	
	Donations from talks and walks	458.91		460.00	
	Donations	1,219.57		729.78	
	Sales (Logs, charcoal etc)	1,188.83		1,285.00	
	From Suagfree TV for filming	750.00		0.00	
	FOAM Workwear	106.00		8.00	
	Royal Forestry Society Award	0.00		500.00	
	Miscellaneous income	23.11		220.00	
	Provision release	0.00		0.00	
		-----	6,692.89	-----	4,502.78
	Other Expenditure:				
	Meeting room hire	(83.60)		(97.60)	
	BTCV membership & Insurance	0.00		(196.76)	
	Costs - publicity	(396.00)		(466.00)	
	Postage, Stationery	(214.92)		(153.75)	
	Bird food, flower seeds, Barn Owl G	0.00		(64.99)	
	FOAM Workwear	(326.00)		0.00	
	Woodworking tools materials	(115.60)		(425.45)	
	Gas barbecues & bottles	0.00		(242.99)	
	Sugarfree TV to Swimming Club	(375.00)		0.00	
	General	(228.26)		(297.68)	
		-----	(1,739.38)	-----	(1,945.22)
			-----		-----
	Net Income		765.09		960.79

Assets & Liabilities		1-Apr-15	31-Mar-14	movement
Assets				
	Bank account - General	11026.01	24484.24	(13,458.23)
	Bank Account - Heritage	60.16	60.16	0.00
	Bank Account - Other	15,023.11	0.00	15,023.11
	Cash	17.32	32.74	(15.42)
		-----	-----	-----
	Total Assets	26,126.60	24,577.14	1,549.46
Liabilities/Provisions				
	Unpresented cheques	(570.77)	(14.40)	(556.37)
	Provision for Educational	(3,783.47)	(3,783.47)	0.00
	Provision for Heritage costs	(60.16)	(60.16)	0.00
	Provision for Life Membership	(1,512.00)	(1,284.00)	(228.00)
	Footpaths	(1,000.00)	(1,000.00)	0.00
	Total Liabilities	(6,926.40)	(6,142.03)	(784.37)
		-----	-----	-----
	Net Assets	19,200.20	18,435.11	765.09
Funding				
	Prior year net funding	18,435.11	17,474.32	960.79
	Current year net income	765.09	960.79	(195.70)
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	Total funding	19,200.20	18,435.11	765.09

Signed (Treasurer):

Date:

Signed (Auditor):

Date: