

Friends of Hedgemoor Park (HPF)

Minutes of the Social and Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday May 27th at 6.30pm at Honey Café St Swithin's Church, The Paragon, Bath

Number of attendees: 22

Graham Groom, Chair of the Friends of Hedgemoor Park (HPF) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Introduction and background to HPF

Voluntary group formed in 2019 with a committee of 7, a membership-based constitution, and a bank account. The purpose is to give the local community a sense of ownership/agency/pride over this much-loved space. The community can demonstrate their commitment by simply becoming a member or if they have time to spare, to volunteer in practical ways. The strength of such community engagement allows the group to speak up for their interests and lobby for resources. The park is owned by the BANES council and HPF is obliged to work within their guidelines. The council values the support of Friends groups.

Graham introduced the current committee present at the meeting: Nigel Pollard, Treasurer; Caroline Groom, Secretary; Edwina Vardey; Clare Rosier.
Nick Tobin was unable to attend and sent apologies.

2. Chair's report of past year

Overview:

- 115 Members: 107 Individuals, 8 Groups - membership up 40% from last year
- Bank reserves up by £680
- > 800 hours of volunteer time
- Volunteer numbers up
- Maintained excellent relationship with Parks Dept
- Continued to fulfil purpose as set out in constitution

Key activities/achievements:

Gardening -

385 volunteer hours

Bath in Bloom visited for joint working session

HPF won Bath in Bloom Silver Gilt award, and a Britain in Bloom/RHS Award Level 5 - Outstanding

Supported BANES in gaining another Green Flag award for Hedgemoor Park

Park maintenance -

Litter picking at least once, but usually twice weekly

Reporting fly tipping, damage to infrastructure to BANES for attention.

Liaison with local police re anti-social behaviour

Communication, liaison, administrative, community support -

Annual membership drive - written communication via letterbox drop

Liaison with other organisations - Your Parks charity (Graham part of steering group), Bath Urban Treescape, Parks Friends Groups around BANES.

Communication with local community - email responses, noticeboard updating, social media

Set up informal Green Spaces Friends Network - early days but WhatsApp group set up for those who wish to take part.

Supported Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award students.

Liaised with Mali Kedward, Volunteer Co-ordinator appointed by BANES to support Friends Groups. Mali was unable to attend the AGM but sent apologies.

3. Treasurer's Report

Summary:

Year to 31st March 2025

Receipts: £1,341.86

Payments: 661.72

Net Receipts 680.14

Cash funds brought forward £2,423.79

Cash funds carried forward £3,103.93

Full accounts available to view on HPF website.

4. Election of Committee Members

Five committee members wish to stand again for the coming year: Graham Groom, Caroline Groom, Nigel Pollard, Clare Rosier, and Edwina Vardey.

Proposed: Patrick Rotheram

Seconded: Lyn Murgatroyd

Election supported unanimously

Nick Tobin who has served on the committee since 2019 decided to stand down this year. Graham thanked him for his help, advice and support over the years.

Two new members have accepted invitations to stand for the committee, both known to HPF through gardening activities:

Lily Hughes

Proposed: Caroline Groom

Seconded: Stephanie Pollard

Election supported unanimously

John Wayman:

Proposed: Graham Groom

Seconded: Lyn Murgatroyd

Election supported unanimously

5. Wildflower meadow

Kevan Horne, one of HPF's lead gardeners gave an interesting presentation about the work involved in creating and maintaining a wildflower meadow in a public park. The 60 x 5 metre meadow was planted by Avon Wildlife Trust in 2018 but had little watering or maintenance following planting.

Kevan has experience in wildflower planting and maintenance and has used yellow rattle to help suppress grasses, which is successful if not overshadowed by other plants. Plug plants of cowslips and primroses doing well. Pyramidal orchids have spontaneously appeared, other plants e.g. twayblade orchids have disappeared!

Ragwort thriving and is an essential food plant for the cinnabar moth caterpillar.

Kevin showed photographs of extensive variety of other wildflowers that have been present - Knapweed, Oxeye Daisy, Field Scabious, Tufted Vetch, Red Campion, Musk Mallow, Fox & Cubs, Bird's Foot Trefoil, Wild Oregano, Meadow Pea, Ragwort, Wild Carrot, Wild Snapdragon.

Stressed that meadows tend to do their own thing and develop over the years, but need attention, e.g. reducing some more vigorous plants such as spotted medic

Also requires good working relationship with Parks Team as they carry out the essential annual cut, after which the HPF volunteers may need to rake up the arisings.

Dan Merrett, an expert in wildflower meadows from Bathscape visited the meadow in July 2021 and was impressed with the quality. Since then, it has continued to develop.

6. Victorian Drinking Fountain

Caroline Groom presented some background about the fountain, which was cast around 1889 by MacFarlane and Co. at the Saracen Foundry in Glasgow. In 1859 The Metropolitan Free Drinking Fountain Association was set up with the aim of providing clean, safe drinking water to the public. The fountain was probably donated to the park by the Temperance Movement who were instrumental in

funding many drinking fountains. Unlikely to be a bespoke design as the MacFarlane catalogue of the time shows similar designs. Decoration on the fountain typical of the time - stylised acanthas leaves, lily pads and other plants reflecting the Victorians' romantic view of the countryside as cities became more congested and polluted.

In 2017 restoration work on the fountain was initiated and funded by Bath Preservation Trust: World Heritage Site Enhancement Fund. The paintwork was analysed by a local paint expert, Lisa Oestricher, who suggested the Verdigris paint, a popular Victorian colour.

Iron Art repaired the stand for the eagle and prepared it for regilding by a local gilder Krysta Brooks.

Volunteers (who are now members of HPF) rubbed down and repainted the fountain.

The fountain cannot be used as a drinking fountain and is decorative only.

7. Plans for the year ahead

- Tree trail which was completed in 2019 needs an overhaul.
- Wildflower roundels, also managed by HPF need renewing and edging inserted to keep tidy
- Bandstand - could this be used for music? Perhaps appealing as a rehearsal space. To consider ways of increasing use
- Possible repainting of the fountain

The following suggestions are not within the remit of HPF volunteers, but the group will continue to liaise with BANES:

- Two benches need replacing
- Hedgemoor Park sign at Lansdown Road gates needs repainting, and gates themselves need refurbishment
- Bastion wall and tower: the tower was refurbished last year, hopefully the wall will be attended to next year

8. Q & A and any other business

No further questions.

Patrick Rotherham voiced thanks for the work of the HPF.

Graham thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 8pm

