

FRIENDS OF ABBEY FIELDS

THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on Wednesday, 24th July 2013 at the Senior Citizens Club,

Jubilee House, Kenilworth

The Chair welcomed the members present and the visiting speakers The Blackthorn Blossoms.

1. **Apologies** for absence were received from: Joanna Illingworth, Susan Tall, Heather Alford, Val Golby, Anne and Tony Gilmore.
2. The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 18th July 2012 were approved.
3. Matters arising:
 - Clive Stone informed us that the Bird Seed Dispenser that he had seen had now been discontinued so we wouldn't be able to obtain one for Abbey Fields.

4. **Chairman's Report**

Dave Pettifor expressed his feelings in the form of Enjoyment – Satisfaction – Pride – Thanks. Enjoyment in seeing that the bulbs you have helped to plant have flourished over the following years; Satisfaction in knowing that you are doing the right thing; the Pride one gets because we have responsibility of looking after Abbey Fields for the future, not only for ourselves but those coming after us. We are the Trustees. Although the full responsibility lies with WDC but even so our own input is significant.

He took great enjoyment, pride and thanks to everybody concerned with FOAF – WDC in particular to Jon Holmes who has been our best friend at the WDC and has worked extremely hard to ensure that what we do is right for the Fields and has supported us in everything we do. The Wildflower Meadow is flourishing – a disappointing start but it will come right – nothing is instant – it will take time.

The issue of cycling in the Fields will have to be side tracked for now.

The Play Area has proved very successful – teeming with children at the weekends.

It is tremendous that the WDC chose Abbey Fields to put such a large amount of funding into such a project. The children absolutely love it but it is not yet complete. The area behind the tennis courts will be planted along the fence line.

He had been Chairman for 5 years and it was time to move on and give way to someone with fresh ideas so that he can spend more time with his family.

We have had a tremendous year and done extremely well and he thanked the Committee for everything they have done.

5. **Secretary / Membership Secretary's Report:**

Pat Smith thanked David Pettifor for all his hard work as Chairman and for the rest of the Committee for their continued hard work. She then reported that we now have 170 members including 7 new members since the last AGM plus 1 corporate member. Unfortunately 25 members and 1 corporate member have not yet renewed their membership.

6. **Treasurer's Report**

Gordon Mitchell reported that although our expenditure exceeded our income this year, the money has gone on good projects to improve Abbey Fields, and we still have a healthy balance in the bank. We have now completed the replacement of all of the bat boxes, now totalling 47, most of

which have been occupied. He proposed keeping the subscriptions the same for the coming year; this was seconded by Keith Rockett and approved by those present. He then proposed that our subscription year should in future run from 1st July to run in line with our financial year. It was explained that at the present time it ran until the end of February, so our members would gain an extra four months membership this coming year, although the membership reminders would still be sent out in the spring. This proposal was seconded by Bill Sidebottom and approved with a majority vote of those present.

7. **Newsletter:**

Linda asked if anyone wanted anything to be put in the Newsletter if they could email her directly. Bill Sidebottom congratulated her on the excellent Newsletters which he always looks forward to reading.

8. **Forthcoming Events**

Dave Rickers said that we were sticking to our three main events which had proved popular over the years, being the Bird Walk, Bat Walk and the Moth Evening. We had moved the Bird Walk to a more popular time of 8am which had been well attended, and the Bat Walk was also brought forward as Jon Russ brought with him some bats that had been rescued so that we could have a close up view of what they looked like – tiny! Our Moth Evening this year will be held on Friday, 9th August – meet at the car park at 9pm and wrap up warm. He ended by asking if there was anything more we could do connected with the Fields, please let us know.

9. **The Election of the Committee for 2013/2014**

As David Pettifor had decided to step down from the Chair and no other member of the Committee was willing to stand, Pat Smith said she would be willing to stand for Chair for this year in order for Friends of Abbey Fields to continue. Unfortunately Clive Stone had been asked to step down from the Committee as he had not been able to attend any of their meetings recently. Sam Sexton had expressed an interest in joining the Committee and was welcomed to stand. Unfortunately no-one at the moment was willing to stand as Secretary so Pat would continue in both positions until hopefully a volunteer would come forward to help. It was therefore proposed that the Committee should continue as follows:

Chairman/Secretary/Membership Admin – Pat Smith
Treasurer – Gordon Mitchell
Events/Litterpicking – Dave Rickers
Newsletter – Linda Pettifor
Membership Recruitment – Joan Rockett
Website – Sam Sexton
Dave Pettifor

The Committee was nominated, seconded and approved by those present.

10. **Any Other Business**

- Joanna Illingworth, although unable to attend had asked that the following comments be made regarding cycling on Abbey Fields. The results of the Town Council's survey on the future of Kenilworth suggest that more people are in favour of a cycleway across Abbey Fields than are against it. If this is a true reflection of public opinion, and has the support of the Town Council, the Friends of Abbey Fields should not continue to oppose the idea of a cycleway. The Friends should not try to thwart the democratic will of the people, even if, like me, they do not want

cyclists in Abbey Fields. Although there were two people in favour of cycling through Abbey Fields in attendance, the vast majority was against this idea and did not believe that we should stop our campaign to try to prevent cycling through Abbey Fields.

- Susan Tall, who also could not attend the meeting, had suggested that as next year is the 100th anniversary of the start of World War One, the British Legion were hoping to do something a bit special at the War Memorial and she wondered if it were possible to set poppy seeds in the wild flower meadows in Abbey Fields. As Jon Holmes was at the meeting he was asked whether this were possible. He explained that poppies flourish in disturbed ground like ploughed fields for arable crops or road side verges that have been reconstructed / turned over. Adding poppy seed into the existing meadow sward would be a non-starter as there would be too much competition and no disturbed ground. It was a nice idea but not achievable.
- Litterpicking – Jim Dunlop said how much the Fields had improved regarding litter since Martyn Stacey and his team had taken over. Dave Rickers confirmed that the litterpicking sessions had found that there was a lot less litter to be found, although they would continue and were very well supported by our members, always concluding with well deserved refreshments at the Swimming Baths Cafe. However Pat Murchison thought that more should be done to deter the litter being left in the first place by encouraging the Police to take action against those littering the Fields as it must cost a substantial amount of money for the Contractors to remove the litter so regularly.
- Jon Holmes mentioned that Steven Falk might give a guided walk around the flower meadow, pointing out the various flowers.
- Pat Smith announced that a draft of the 2014 Calendar was on show at the back of the room and pre-orders could be taken.
- The Meeting closed at 8.46pm

Tea was taken.

Our guest speakers, The Blackthorn Blossoms – Avril Newey and Ann Richards gave us a splendid talk of their childhood memories of school days and harvest festivals and the different areas of Kenilworth having nicknames, all linked in with poems by Avril.

The Chair thanked Avril and Ann for a most enjoyable end to the evening; particularly as she had been reminded of her own childhood.