

# FRIENDS OF PUTNOE WOOD and MOWSBURY HILLFORT

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 29 November 2022 via Zoom

**Members present:** Lynn Caudrey, Jon Bishop, Mick Lilliman, Anne Lilliman, Dave Parratt, Peter Stathers, John Wallace, Marion Wallace, Chris Wedge, Helen Wilkie, Andy Wilkins, Allison Wilkins.

**1 Apologies for absence** were received from Martin Fannon, Sue Fannon, Diana Readhead, John Wilkie

**2 Minutes of meeting held on 16 November 2021 and matters arising**  
The minutes were agreed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.

**3 Chairman's Report on the work of the Friends of Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort for the year 2021/2022**  
Dave presented the Chairman's report appended to the minutes. A diary of activities at Putnoe Wood and the Hillfort, as recorded by Lynn, are also appended.

**4 Report of the accounts of the Friends of Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort for the year.**  
Peter Stathers presented the annual report and accounts.

Friends of Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort									
Annual Accounts as at 14 November 2022									
2019/20		2020/21		<u>Opening balances</u>		2021/22			
538.47		387.81		bank		320.10			
0.00	<b>538.47</b>	0.00	<b>387.81</b>	cash		0.00	<b>320.10</b>		
<b>Income</b>									
200.00		0.00		Borough funding		0.00			
66.21		0.00		Sale of tea etc		0.00			
150.00		0.00		Wassail visitors' donations		0.00			
				Misc. Receipts		200.00			
<b>416.21</b>	<b>954.68</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>387.81</b>	<b>Total income</b>		<b>200.00</b>	<b>520.10</b>		
<b>Expenditure</b>									
45.47		49.71		Web site		62.24			
0.00		18.00		Tools and equipment		0.00			
2.50		0.00		Photocopying		0.00			
38.60		0.00		Wassail costs		0.00			
111.40		0.00		Donation to wassail charity		0.00			
17.77		0.00		Tea and sugar		0.00			
63.60		0.00		Reinstate bench		0.00			
287.53		0.00		Tree protection		0.00			
<b>566.87</b>	<b>387.81</b>	<b>67.71</b>	<b>320.10</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>62.24</b>	<b>457.86</b>		
<b>Closing Balances</b>									
387.81		320.10		bank		457.86			
0.00	<b>387.81</b>	0.00	<b>320.10</b>	cash		0.00	<b>457.86</b>		
<b>Treasurer:</b>						<b>Sign</b>	<b>Date:</b>		
Peter Stathers									
<b>Audited by:</b>						<b>Sign</b>	<b>Date:</b>		

Our bank balance at the time of this report stands at £457.86, up from £320.10 at the end of last year. An increase of £137.76:

Once again no Wassail took place this year, and as we have continued to bring our own refreshments, there has not been any other regular income. The only income received was from the donation by NatWest Bank following their poor response to attempted changes in banking details/method.

Our only item of expenditure this past year was for the Web Site and this figure seems to increase quite quickly, so our 'kitty' may well decrease quite rapidly. It is currently unclear how we can earn future income or what we will be able to support going forward. At the last AGM it was proposed that one solution would be to ask for voluntary contributions, now, or at some time in the future, and another was to reinstate communal refreshments. Other suggestions are of course welcome.

## **5 Election of Officers**

<b>Chairman</b>	Dave Parratt
Proposed by	John Wallace
Seconded by	Helen Wilkie
<b>Secretary</b>	Helen Wilkie
Proposed by	Dave Parratt
Seconded by	Mick Lilliman
<b>Treasurer</b>	Peter Stathers
Proposed by	Andy Wilkins
Seconded by	Chris Wedge
<b>Task and Events Co-ordinator</b>	John Wallace
Proposed by	Helen Wilkie
Seconded by	Mick Lilliman

All members present in agreement.

## **6 Any Other Business**

None

The Chairman closed the Annual General Meeting.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 16 NOV 2021 TO 29 NOV 2022**

Firstly, I would like to thank the Friends for another productive year. The public, independent assessors and statutory agencies are all agreed that both sites are well managed and in excellent condition. A tribute to you all.

With thanks to Lynn, I will now summarise the key activities and events for the past year.

#### **Mowsbury Hillfort**

There was no wassail in 2022 due to uncertainty over Corona Virus.

We are awaiting the final version of the County Wildlife Site status award which will show the final extent of the area included in the site.

Ravensden Parish Council proposed the designation of the site as a local green space in their Neighbourhood Plan. This includes the whole site and, in addition, the Butts to the south of the site. The Draft plan has been submitted to Bedford Borough Council and, subject to any amendments by the independent assessor, will be put to a local referendum before becoming part of the Development Plan. This should afford the site similar protection to that of Green Belt.

In May there was a Green Flag assessment hosted by Chris Wedge and John Wallace which resulted in another award for 2022.

In May a site meeting took place with Dave Parratt, John Wallace, Natural England, Historic England, Geoff Sanders, James Lynch and Jon Bishop. It was agreed that the site is well managed and in generally good condition. Although badgers are posing an increasing threat to the archaeology, there are no easy answers. Likewise the damage from rabbits.

In June Ravensden Lower School visited the Hillfort. This was organised by Marion Wallace, Chris Wedge and Helen Wilkie following liaison with the school. The visit went well and was much appreciated by the children and teachers and formed part of the children's history classes.

Limited work was undertaken on site as the moats remained full of water for most of the year. Some clearance of the southern hillside was done in March to keep scrub down and maintain a long grass habitat. The meadow was mown on 15 September, and the rampart, courtyard, orchard and bottom of meadow have been brush cut and raked.

In October the southern hillside was brush cut again to assist the grass habitat.

Golf balls have been removed from the site all year and over 2500 picked up, with a few more being retrieved by an employee of Fusion, who run the site. We will see if the Council or Fusion might be persuaded to raise the height of the fencing on the practice range. Tree planting in the margin by the fence might be an alternative to consider.

Mick and Anne have undertaken regular litter picks on Sundays, and Chris Wedge has organised the weekly butterfly survey.

#### **Putnoe Wood**

Coppice plot 1e was coppiced from Nov 21 to Jan 22.

Small balsam was pulled and brush cut in June.

The wood was visited by a mystery shopper on behalf of Green Flag and subsequently the award was confirmed in July.

Chris Wedge and John Wallace drew up a Management Plan for the wood which was submitted to the Borough Council, but no formal response has been received to date.

The paths in the wood were surveyed and a plan of repairs prepared. Materials supplied by the Council and repair works have been completed, together with laying of additional MOT at main entrances. Further path repairs to be undertaken in New Year.

Coppicing on Plot 1F has commenced.

Additional thanks go to Andy for maintaining the website and Facebook page, to Marion for hosting the Zoom meetings and to Peter for sorting out the transfer of the Friend's bank account.

## APPENDIX 2

### ACTIVITIES AT PUTNOE WOOD 16 NOV 2021 TO 29 NOV 2022

Nov 2021 17	Coppice in plot 1e. Litter pick
24	Coppice in plot 1e.
Dec 21 1	Coppice in plot 1e
8	Coppice in plot 1e
15	Coppice in scallop 1e south of main path
22	Coppice in scallop 1e south of main path
Jan 2022 5	Coppice in scallop 1e and brush cut bramble in coppice plot 1e
12	Brush cut bramble in coppice plot and scallop 1e. Clear some bramble by hand. Brush cut in northern glade. Litter pick.
19	Tidy in coppice plot 1e. Ident tree twigs. (snowdrops flowering)
26	Brush cut south glade. Tidy coppice 1e. Trim ash saplings in north glade.
Feb 2022 2	Brush cut in north glade, but stopped early as both brush cutters had loosened nuts. Rake bramble in south glade. Rake cross path 2. Trim edges of south path. Survey path edge by steam to assess repairs needed.
9	Brush cut north glade. Clear path 3 of leaves and plants. Litter pick. Evaluate condition of info boards.
16	Clear cross path 1. Rake bramble in north glade
23	Clear fallen trees from centre ride, southern path and path by stream.
April 22 13	Clear smaller parts of branch fallen across green path. Clear debris from other paths. Litter pick. Note plants in bloom in the wood.
20	Chain saw branches that had fallen across south path and green path and clear them from paths.
June 22 8	Brush cut and pull small balsam. Trim paths. Litter pick.
15	Brush cut, slash and pull small balsam. Trim paths.
29	Slash and pull small balsam. Trim paths. Litter pick.
July 22 13	Litter pick. Clean notice boards. Trim stream edges.
27	Litter pick. Trim green path.
Aug 22 3	Trim green path.
Nov 22 2	Replace edging on north path. Litter pick.
9	Fill edging on north path and in wood gateways with MOT aggregate.
16	Coppice in plot 1f.
23	Coppice in plot 1f. Litter pick.

**ACTIVITIES AT MOWSBURY HILLFORT 16 NOV 2021 TO 29 NOV 2022**

Dec 2021 29	Prune apple trees where they might impede wassail. Saw and clear logs from pond 3 Wassail cancelled due to uncertainty of corona virus.
Feb 2022 23	Trim bramble on southern hillside. Pick up golf balls (500).
March 2	Brush cut and hand cut on southern hillside. Pick up 220 golf balls, mainly from ramparts.
9	Brush cut bramble on south scarp slope and on southern hillside. Rake and remove cuttings to edge of scheduled area. Pick up 210 golf balls.
16	Rained off
23	Rake cuttings on southern hillside and remove cuttings south of scheduled area. Pick up golf balls. (Jon Bishop assessed dead pine on raised walkway)
30	Cut dogwood on southern hillside and remove cuttings south of scheduled area. Pick up 110 golf balls.
April 6	Replace green mesh on medlar and loosen green mesh on other fruit trees where it was tight. Litter pick. Slash growth on path past pond 2. Pick up 90 golf balls. Large badger hole dug to left of path entrance to courtyard.
20	Litter pick. Move some fallen elder in east moat to burn site. Tidy compost at back of orchard. Butterfly survey. Note emerging plants. Pick up golf balls. (Some logs at the burn site had been burned by picknickers)
27	Clear round fruit trees in east orchard. Cut saplings and collect fallen wood in south moat, remove some to burn site. Collect golf balls (200). Litter pick. Pull nettles around pond 2 and remove to burn site.
30	Clean notice board
May 4	Clear branches from moats to burn site. Litter pick. Collect golf balls (25)
6	Clean notice board
11	Rained off
18	Brush cut bottom of moats. Litter pick. Collect golf balls. Trim footpath. Move fallen wood from east moat, pond 3 and pond 4. Butterfly survey.
25	Cut regrown saplings in south moat and remove to burn site. Slash nettles along paths. Collect golf balls. Trim round fruit trees. (Green flag assessment in morning)
10	Camp in area between orchards with large fire pit.
14	Clear camp from area between orchards.
22	Ravensden lower school visit in the morning. Burn cuttings. Clear debris from moats. Litter pick. Butterfly survey.
July 6	Brush cut round orchard trees and back of orchard and southern boundary. Butterfly survey. Dead head hogweed. Collect golf balls.
20	Dead head hogweed. Litter pick. Butterfly survey.
Aug 10	Clear leat by hand. Butterfly survey.
17	Clear leat by hand. Clear debris from pond 2. Pick 247 up golf balls. Butterfly survey.
24	Clear leat. Brush cut rampart. Pick up golf 444 balls. Butterfly survey.
26	Dave brush cut rampart. Pick up 51 golf balls.
31	Finish brush cutting rampart. 3 brush cutters. Rake rampart. Collect 240 golf balls.
Sept 2	Clean notice board. Fire had been lit at burn site since Wed. Man from Fusion collecting golf balls.
7	Brush cut a third of the courtyard. Brush cut bottom triangle of meadow. Pick up golf balls.
11	Dave brush cut top of meadow. Ivy covered tree fallen in east moat.

14	Finish brush cutting courtyard. Part cut island. Pick up golf balls. Chain saw fallen tree and remove some wood to burn site.
15	Meadow cut.
18	Moved cuttings from rampart to meadow and some from the courtyard.
19	Some cuttings moved from courtyard to meadow.
21	Brush cut island and orchard. Move cuttings from courtyard to meadow.
28	Rake orchard and move cuttings to tree line by golf course. Collect golf balls.
Oct 5	Rake island and remove cuttings to burn site. Pick up 82 golf balls. Fill holes in paths with wood chippings. Slash nettles round pond 2.
12	Brush cut southern hillside. Rake and remove cuttings to south of scheduled area. Collect golf balls.
19	Brush cut southern hillside. Rake and remove cuttings to south of scheduled area. Collect golf balls.
26	Rake bramble from southern hillside and remove some scrub. Collect golf balls. Cut and pull nettles round pond 2.
Nov 17	Fence at bottom of footpath extended.