

FRIENDS OF PUTNOE WOOD and MOWSBURY HILLFORT

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 7 November 2023 via Zoom

Members present: Lynn Caudrey, Jon Bishop, Rachel Howton, Anne Lilliman, Chris Moss, Dave Parratt, Diana Readhead, Peter Stathers, John Wallace, , Chris Wedge, Helen Wilkie, Andy Wilkins, Allison Wilkins.

- 1 **Apologies for absence** were received from Mick Lilliman and Marion Wallace.
- 2 **Minutes of meeting held on 27 November 2022 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 2022/23**
Dave presented the Chairman's report appended to the minutes. A diary of activities at Putnoe Wood and the Hillfort, as recorded by Lynn, is 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 7th November 2023									
2019/20	2020/21		2021/22		Opening balances		2022/23		
538.47		387.81		320.10		bank		£457.86	
0.00	538.47	0.00	387.81	0.00	320.10	Petty cash		£0.00	
Income									
						Petty Cash (found)		£24.85	
200.00		0.00		0.00		Borough equipment funding		£906.02	
						Borough Funding top up (D Parrett)		£37.82	
66.21		0.00		0.00		Sale of tea etc			
150.00		0.00		0.00		Wassail donations		£201.00	
				200.00		Misc. Receipts (Ayredale Nursing)		£250.00	
416.21	954.68	0.00	387.81	200.00	520.10	Total income		£1,419.69	
Expenditure									
						Petty cash (Wassail charity donation top up)		£2.77	
45.47		49.71		62.24		Web site		£13.19	
0.00		18.00		0.00		Tools and equipment		£943.84	
2.50		0.00		0.00		Photocopying			
38.60		0.00		0.00		Wassail costs		£421.55	
111.40		0.00		0.00		Wassail charity Donation (food Bank)		£147.33	
17.77		0.00		0.00		Tea and sugar			
63.60		0.00		0.00		Reinstate bench			
287.53		0.00		0.00		Tree protection			
566.87	387.81	67.71	320.10	62.24	457.86	Total expenditure		£1,528.68	
Closing Balances									
387.81		320.10		457.86		bank		£476.89	
0.00	387.81	0.00	320.10	0.00	457.86	Petty cash		£22.08	
						total		£498.97	
Treasurer:							Sign	Date:	
Peter Stathers									
Audited by:							Sign	Date:	

The Friends' bank balance at the time of this report stands at £476.89 with a petty cash fund of £22.08, which at first glance is at a similar level to what it was at the end of 2022. However, £250 of this is a donation for seating to be located in the Hillfort area, and therefore our actual available fund is only £248.97 (total).

A Wassail took place this year which enabled us to make a £150 donation to the local Foodbank . Also, as we have continued to bring our own refreshments, there has not been any other regular income. The only other income received this year was the recent £250 donation noted above. We also received a grant from the local authority of £906.02 which funded the purchase of equipment.

Our only other item of expenditure this year was for the Web Site which had been negotiated down from previous levels. Our 'kitty' is likely to continue to decrease in the absence of any regular income.

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, with the other option being to reinstate communal refreshments. Other suggestions are of course welcome.

5 Election of Officers

Chairman	Dave Parratt
Proposed by	Martin Fannon
Seconded by	Chris Wedge

Secretary	Helen Wilkie
Proposed by	Peter Stathers
Seconded by	John Wallace

Treasurer	Peter Stathers
Proposed by	Helen Wilkie
Seconded by	Chris Moss

Task and Events Co-ordinator	John Wallace
Proposed by	Chris Wedge
Seconded by	Helen Wilkie

All members present in agreement.

6 Any Other Business

Jon Bishop congratulated the Friends on the work they had done over the last year. The Hillfort and Putnoe Wood were in excellent condition and used and enjoyed by many people.

The Chairman closed the Annual General Meeting.

APPENDIX 1

Chairman's report 30 Nov 22 to 7 Nov 23

I will seek to pick out the main events of the year in my meeting overview. Lynn has kindly kept a full record of our work over the last year, which will be included with the minutes.

I will start by acknowledging the sad loss this year of John Wilkie, one of our longest serving members. John acted as treasurer for the Friends for many years and was a very active member and the go to guy for all of our wood-working needs. He is very much missed.

Mowsbury Hillfort

The Wassail took place in January 2023 and £150 was raised for Bedford food bank.

In February 47 trees were planted at the bottom of the meadow with a view to eventually reducing the number of golf balls coming on to the site. All but two seem to be healthy.

In March the information board was replaced with a spare as the original had warped. A range of new tools were bought with Borough Council ward funding. Most have now seen active service.

In April red mason bees were installed in the orchard, but no sign that they used the bee boxes this year. Unfortunately, the bee release box has now been chewed, probably by squirrels. The seat, hillfort sign and info post were painted.

In June the site was entered into the CPRE Living Countryside Awards and made it to the last stage.

A Green Flag was awarded in July following a mystery shopper visit.

£250 donation from Airedale Nursing Home is to be used for benches at the hillfort and wood.

Putnoe Wood

Coppice plot 1f and the scallop opposite were coppiced from November 22 to February 23.

On March 6 oak saplings were planted in coppice plot 1e and one sapling in coppice plot 1f. Thanks to Fiona for growing them in pots for several years.

Mick has made temporary repairs to the bridge from the playing field.

In July a Green Flag was awarded following a visit hosted by John Wallace and Chris Wedge.

Particular thanks

Thanks go to Andy for maintaining the website and Facebook page, Marion for hosting the zoom meetings and Peter as treasurer. Chris for co-ordinating the butterfly surveys and Green Flag applications. Lynn for keeping the events log. Especial thanks to John Wallace for sorting out the tasks and to Helen for continuing the secretary's duties through a difficult year.

Additional notes on Mowsbury Hillfort

A planning application for 3 detached bungalows was made to Bedford Borough Council in September on land adjoining the public footpath, west of the hillfort site. A formal objection was made on behalf of the Friends.

The meadow was mown on the 12 Sept 23. The courtyard, ramparts, island, orchard, bottom of meadow and south scarp slope have been brush cut with patches left uncut for invertebrates overwintering. Cuttings composted at the edges of the site. Thanks to Mick, Martin and Tom for their brush cutting efforts.

A large branch fell into pond 2 and was cut for removal. Some branches remain in the pond as it has been too wet to remove them. A lower branch fell from the dead pine. Jon Bishop is to commission work on the trees to ensure their safety.

Martin and Sue have done sterling service in picking up golf balls over the year.

Mick and Anne have done litter picks on Sundays and Chris Wedge has organised the butterfly survey.

Additional notes on Putnoe Wood

Small balsam was brush cut and pulled in June. Debris has been removed from the stream including a toilet seat and a railway sleeper.

Some widow maker branches were dealt with and the friends have helped to clear cut trees/branches and occasional fallers.

APPENDIX 2

Activities at Putnoe Wood 30 November 2022 to 6 November 2023

Nov 2022 30	Brush cut bramble in coppice plot 1f. Coppice in plot 1f. Litter pick.
Dec 7	Coppice in plot 1f
14	Coppice in plot 1f. Litter pick.
January 2023	
11	Coppice in plot 1f. Litter pick.
25	Coppice in plot 1f and in scallop opposite. Litter pick.
Feb 1	Coppice in plot 1f and in scallop opposite. Litter pick. Grind off remains of metal posts in gateway to prevent them being a trip hazard.
8	Coppice in plot 1f. Remove trip hazard on western perimeter path.
15	Brush cut and tidy in coppice plot 1f. Litter pick.
March 1	Plant six oaks in coppice plot 1e and one in plot 1f.
22	Cleared felled oak in coppice plot 1b. Litter pick.
29	Tidy coppice plots where dead trees have been felled. Litter pick. Clear some debris from stream. Cross path 3 blocked by fallen trees to be cleared by Jon Bishop.
May 3	Cleared rubbish from stream. Pulled Spanish bluebells.
24	Cleared rubbish from stream. Pull small balsam
26	Clean notice boards.
31	Pull and brush cut small balsam. Litter pick. Trim paths.
June 7	Pull and brush cut small balsam. Litter pick.
21	Pull and brush cut small balsam. Trim paths.
July 19	Pull small balsam. Trim south and east paths and cross paths 2 and 3.
Aug 23	Trim paths.
Oct 18	Remove railway sleeper from stream. Clear fallen tree from west ditch.

Activities at Mowsbury Hillfort 30 November 2022 to 6 November 2023

Dec 2022 7	Burn cuttings. Litter pick
January 2023 4	Collect wood for wassail.
17	Prep for wassail. Wassail in evening.
18	Clear up after wassail.
Feb 22	Plant 48 trees along driving range fence at bottom of meadow.
March 1	Prune apple trees in east orchard. Clear litter from 2 camp sites in woodland between the old orchard south and the east orchard.
8	Prune apple trees. Remove some invasive periwinkle plants from the western tree belt. Litter pick. Replace broken tree guard on newly planted tree on edge of driving range.
15	Prune apple trees. Litter pick. Loosen plastic mesh on some apple trees. Stack cuttings on orchard.
19	Notice board unstuck from stand.
22	New notice board stuck on to stand.
31	Large log on meadow split to prevent it being rolled around and causing damage.
April 3	Meeting on site re red mason bees.
5	Put up bee boxes. Fill some holes in path. Move fallen trees from pond 1. Bridge to island had been made with logs and overlaid with fencing taken from apple trees in the orchard. Removed fencing so that it can be replaced round apple tree. Removed plastic chair from camp site between the orchards. Some litter removed and a few golf balls collected.
12	Replaced wire round apple tree. Remove logs from moat. Move cut scrub from back of driving range.
19	Move some logs to top of meadow for chipping. Litter pick. Fill holes in courtyard. Pick up golf balls (106)
26	Painted seat, hillfort sign and information sleeper. Painted bee boxes. Chris gave talk on red mason bees. Cleared fallen branches in east moat. Slashed nettles by north viewpoint. Cleared round fruit trees. Cleared ash branch which had cracked over the raised walkway. Cut some bramble on uncut patch in courtyard. Pick up golf balls.
May 10	Move some wood to chipping site. Butterfly survey. Pick up golf balls.
17	Chip logs for filling holes. Litter pick. Collect golf balls. Remove some periwinkle from western tree belt. (footpath had been mown)
June 16	Butterfly survey
18	Clear debris from partying at burn site.
19	CPRE visit
21	Butterfly survey
28	Brush cut round newly planted trees. Brush cut part of leat. Trim informal path north of hillfort. Butterfly survey
July 5	Brush cut leat. Brush cut south moat and some of west moat. Trim path north of hill fort. Cut seed heads on hogweed in orchard. Butterfly survey.
12	Brush cut back path in orchard. Strim round fruit trees. Brush cut public footpath. Strim paths in hillfort. Strim under bench and sign. Rake leat and remove overhanging and dead branches.
19	179 golf balls picked up. Butterfly survey.

26	Rake and trim leat. Pull and slash nettles round pond 2. Dead tree fallen into pond 2. Butterfly survey. Pick up golf balls. Butterfly survey. Litter pick.
Aug 2	Saw some of the fallen tree in pond 2 and remove wood to edge of hillfort. Cut scrub in leat. Removed fallen branches from moats and remove to burn site. Picked up 334 golf balls. Butterfly survey.
9	Brush cut dogwood on meadow and remove to burn site. Butterfly survey. Pick up 163 golf balls. Buried dead muntjac deer.
16	Move cut dogwood to burn site. Butterfly survey. Pick up 120 golf balls. Cut bramble runners on footpath.
23	Burn cuttings. Butterfly survey.
26	Dave began brush cutting south rampart. (Large lower branch had fallen from dead pine)
27	Brush cut more of south rampart. Pick up golf balls. Litter pick by Mick and Anne.
30	Brush cut triangle at bottom of meadow and part of rampart. Patches left uncut on rampart for wild liquorice. Rake cuttings into piles. Pick up 200 golf balls. Butterfly survey.
Sept 4	Dave brush cut in courtyard. Snipped round newly planted trees on meadow.
6	Finished cutting ramparts. Raked ramparts. Butterfly survey. (weather very hot)
7	Dave brush cut in courtyard (weather 27 degrees c). Picked up 53 golf balls from uncut meadow.
11	Dave brush cut in courtyard. Picked up 56 golf balls from uncut meadow.
12	Meadow mowed
13	Moved cuttings from rampart onto the meadow. Picked up golf balls.
14	Moved some cuttings from courtyard to meadow for collection.
15	Dave brush cut in courtyard. Grass on meadow collected.
17	Dave brush cut in courtyard.
19	Dave brush cut in courtyard.
20	Dave brush cut in courtyard in morning. Task cancelled due to rain.
27	Tom brush cut in courtyard. Cuttings moved to compost area in western tree belt. Trimmed blackthorn on east of courtyard. Pick up golf balls.
29	Cut and remove dead elder which had fallen onto raised walkway.
Oct 1	Dave brush cut top edge of meadow and edge of courtyard.
4	Brush cut island and orchard, 3 brush cutters. Patches left in orchard for insect larva. Rake in courtyard and island, cuttings to compost at burn site. Rake left over cuttings on meadow and remove to compost.
11	Brush cut bramble on south of site. Rake orchard and remove cuttings to edge of site towards golf course.
18	Snip round newly planted trees. Site inspection. Rain.
25	Rake south scarp and remove to edge of site. Pick up golf balls.
Nov 1	Trim both sides of hedge on lower half of footpath. Trim south path to maintain vehicle access. Clear fallen tree from path between ponds 3 and 4. Pick up 185 golf balls.